

The Influence of New Media Technologies on African Literature

By

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Abstract

This study investigates the role of new media technologies in the development of African literature. It examines the different ways that these new technologies such as the Internet and mobile phones have revolutionised the way Africans write and read literary works on the continent. African literature refers to literary works written mostly by Africans in any language. Over the last decade, new African writers have created a stir in the arenas of creative writing. Uses and gratification as well as diffusion of innovation theories were adopted as the theoretical framework for this study. A total of 30 African writers and 300 readers completed a survey questionnaire designed to elicit responses on how new media has influenced African literature. Some of the writers interviewed have distinguished themselves in their fields, their works have appeared alongside works of other international writers. The readers were chosen from a popular literary society. The results of the study indicate that the Internet has a big impact on reception of African literature, creating endless opportunities, easy accessibility, promotion of work and networking with peers and literary community. The findings also show that social media also increases networking opportunities and provides a platform where readers access, share and discuss African literature. Mobile phones also play a significant and functional role in the reception and promotion of African literature. Overall, these findings suggest that new media technologies have created opportunities for African literature to be appreciated globally, and have enabled readers to access, share and discuss new works.

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Chapter 1

General Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This study investigates the influence of new media on new African literature by exploring how new technologies have shaped the way Africans write, publish, and read literature. It thus touches on a range of technological developments – from the Internet to the mobile phone. The research focuses on African writers’ and readers’ use of new media in an era that promotes connection among people, and how writers and readers have explored resulting opportunities for sharing ideas with large audiences. This study also discusses how new media platforms have become tools for African writers and readers to experiment and transform the literary form. Additionally, the research explores how these technologies transform existing genres. This study employs specific examples to theorize more broadly the relationship between writing, reading, and new media technologies. This research seeks to determine not just how new media operates in continuity with African print and oral cultures but also how these new technologies affect how, more generally, literature is consumed.

This study employs a mixed methodology to investigate the influence of new media on African literature. Two surveys were conducted in this study; qualitative and quantitative data were collected through questionnaires administered to readers and writers. Interview participants were selected through purposive sampling guided by set

criteria. In total, 330 participants were interviewed (30 writers and 300 readers).

However, it must be pointed out that the researcher initially administered questionnaires to 40 writers but only 30 eventually completed the study. Similarly, although the researcher sent the questionnaire link to a large database of readers, only 300 responded to the study. The rationale for selecting these respondents are described in Chapter Three. The researcher employed uses and gratification as well as diffusion of innovation theories as theoretical framework for the study. This study applies these established media paradigms to contemporary literary research in order to cross-contribute to both fields. The rationale for selecting these theories are discussed in Chapter Two.

The rationale for this research is driven, in part, by the researcher's deep interest in African literature. The researcher, himself a writer, has at various literary events noted discussions on African literature and new media. For instance, at the workshop "Language Power and Society: Orality and Literacy in the Horn of Africa," which took place in London at the School of Oriental and African Studies in 2003, participants from Africa, Europe, and the United States explored the themes of orality and literacy. During discussions, it was agreed that vibrant African cultures were being kept alive by new media formats. As a writer, this researcher has taken part in literary events that further discussed emerging technologies and African literature. For instance, he was a participant in the 2009 Cadbury Fellows Conference (which took place at the University of Birmingham), where participants discussed new directions in African literature. As a reader of African literature, this researcher has also attended several book readings across Africa and the UK where participants discussed Africa's digital infrastructure and the challenges and opportunities it provides for the future of African literature. One such event, a book fair in Lagos, Nigeria in 2010, incorporated a series of discussions

on technology and the future of the book in Africa. At that occasion, guest speakers talked about how African publishing industry could take advantage of the digital boom. Despite these discussions and deliberations within African literary circles, little academic research has investigated how new media has created new opportunities for the production and consumption of African literature. However, interest amongst researchers on the influence of new media in Africa itself regarding access and use (Hilliard, 2002; Gitta & Ikoja-Odagu, 2003; Jagboro, 2003; Burell, 2012) and mobile phones (Castells et al., 2007; Aker and Mbiti, 2010; Wakunuma, 2013; Ezenwa and Brooks, 2013) has grown, and the current study seeks to bridge this gap.

1.2 An Overview of New Media

Lister et al. (2009) state that different people view the term new media differently; some people refer to it in terms of the Internet, others to digital TV, a computer game, or a blog. As a result, it is “a term with broad cultural resonance, rather than a narrow technicist or specialists application” (Lister et al., 2009, p. 12). In this regard, Lievrouw notes that “new media (like other communication technologies) can be defined as the combination of material artefacts, people’s practices and the social and organizational arrangements involved in the process of human communications” (2011, p. 15). These devices and artefacts include hardware, such as mobile phones, and software, like Wordpress (Lievrouw, 2011). Similarly, Backlund and Sandberg (2002) argue that new media is an emerging field of communication, one with the capability to affect politics and culture. On the other hand, Lin et al. (2015) define new media in terms of creation and distribution. They argue that new media is often created digitally and distributed via the “Internet, usually in hypertext or hypermedia format. That is, the

information is chunked into small segments and linked with hyperlinks” (Lin et al., 2015, p. 2).

Lister et al., however, ask the following questions: “What is new about new media? What is continuity? What is radical change? What is truly new, what is only apparently so?” (2009, p. 10). In responding to these queries, it is necessary to look at history. Peters (2009) believes that a historical review of the term ‘new media’ dates back to the second half of the 20th century, when communication scholar Marshall McLuhan used it in relation to its technical features, such as the ability to gather information electronically, and its wide reach, which was considered ground-breaking at that time. Indeed, Castells (2000) and Rifkin (2000) also agree that the major technological breakthroughs in new media can be traced back to the period after the Second World War, which witnessed the arrival of the computer and the transistor. These technologies kick-started the information technology revolution that was witnessed during the 20th century. However, new media technologies were only widely adopted around the 1970s, prior to the development of new theories of technology use (Castells, 2000; Rifkin, 2000). Manovich (2001) expands these views by arguing that the history of new media brings together the separate histories of media technologies and computing, that originated respectively in the 1830s with Babbage’s Analytical Engine and Daguerre’s daguerreotype.

Manovich states that on August 19, 1839, people thronged the Palace of the Institute in Paris to see for themselves the new reproduction procedure that had been invented by Louis Daguerre. In less than a year, several descriptions of daguerreotype were published across the world, beginning with daguerreotypes of architecture and

landscapes. A few years later, after some modifications had been made, people were then able to take pictures with the new media machine (Manovich, 2001). Similarly, in 1833, the scientist Charles Babbage designed a product, the Analytical Engine, which had most of the main characteristics of the modern computer (Manovich, 2001). At that time, people used punch cards to input data and the information became available in the Engine's memory. Manovich (2001) observes that the invention also had a processing unit, which was able to carry out operations using the data and print final results. Manovich (2001) states that the Engine was invented to solve any mathematical problem and, in doing so, was able to decide how to execute tasks. He further points out a difference between the two technologies: the daguerreotype was a tool to reproduce reality, but the Analytical Engine was not.

Manovich (2001) thereby reminds us that modern media and computers developed around the same time. He argues that modern society became dependant on both media and computing machines, which both became essential to communication (e.g., sending texts, images, and sounds to people) and documentation (e.g., keeping track of materials like birth or police records). Manovich (2001) believes that mass media and data processing technologies complement each other; they perform similar functions and develop side by side. Interestingly, Peters (2009) queries Manovich's historical work, arguing that he has mistaken 'digital visual media' for 'new media', and therefore does not take into consideration the relationship between contemporary media and previous technologies. Peters reasons that Manovich's view on "numerical representation, modularity, automation, variability and transcoding do not capture the singular essence of 19th century new media developments in radio, magnetism, mesmerism, artificial intelligence and acoustics" (2009, p. 19). However, Lauer (2011)

agrees with Manovich that around both 1850 and 1950 new technologies, e.g., the telegraph and the television, provided new opportunities for communication, thus changing the public information environment. Therefore, during the 19th and early 20th century, new media started to change the way people received and gathered information, which suggests that new communication technologies provide new opportunities for humans to convey and organise information. Within the span of a few decades, the amount of visual and audio information expanded dramatically due to a range of media advancements and new technologies: e.g., TV, radio, motion pictures, X-ray machines, lie detectors (Lauer, 2011).

At the same time, Lehman-Wilzig and Cohen-Avigdor (2004) remind us that new media does not necessarily have to carry out a new task or perform an entirely different function; it can do what older media has done but in a more efficient, inexpensive, or easy way. As a result, Lehman-Wilzig and Cohen-Avigdor suggest, producers of older media sometimes quickly understand that new media poses a possible threat and react by improving services to close the performance gap. A new medium's initial advantage may be short-lived if older media is able to modify and improve — for example, when Internet telephony was introduced in the mid-1990s it was less expensive than making a long-distance call, but over time telephone operators lowered prices and Internet phones went into decline (Lehman-Wilzig & Cohen-Avigdor, 2004).

The term “new media” also includes both software and hardware (Manovich, 2001). These two terms are discussed in relation to the responses from the writers and readers. For instance, how hardware such as the mobile phone has enabled readers to

read works from new writers. However, some software products are developed for professional users while some are designed for general use: e.g., web browsers, search engines, applications (Manovich, 2001). In the 1990s, web design remained primarily a professional domain, but today many non-specialist users design basic web pages using software such as Wordpress. Despite this fact, Manovich (2001) argues that new media does not alter the relationship that exists between a professional and an amateur, since a skills gap will always exist between the amateur and the professional. With old media such as film, this gap had much to do with technology, skills, aesthetics, and economics, but as those gaps closed new media professionals developed new standards and formats in order to stay ahead of the curve: “the continuous introduction of new web design features along with the techniques to create them that followed the public debut of HTML around 1993 —rollover buttons, and pull down menus, DHTML and XML, Javascript scripts and Java applets — can in part be explained as a strategy employed by professionals to keep themselves ahead of ordinary users” (Manovich 2001, p.25)

Software programmes therefore also help new media producers to design new media objects, and Manovich suggests that software used by consumers to access these objects help them to both appreciate and understand new media. In this regard, Lister et al. (2009) break down new media into three aspects:

- Textual experiences: e.g., new genres and texts, new ways of consuming media such as computer games
- Methods of representing the world: e.g., immersive virtual environments that present possibilities and represent experiences

- Relationships between those who consume media technologies: i.e., changes in the way people use communications media

New media also played a major role in the traditional media, and as Scolari (2009) points out, the popularity of broadcasting during the middle of the 20th century led to the formation of theoretical views on ‘new media’ such as radio and TV. These theories were later integrated into a research tradition that cut across journalism, public opinion, and the media, culminating in Theories of Mass Communication (TMC), and these eventually were absorbed into a wider field where scholars discussed issues related to mass communication. Craig adds that “various traditions of communication theory each offer distinct ways of conceptualizing and discussing communication problems and practices” (1999, p. 120).

Following from the above, communication scholars tend to react to the proliferation of digital media in the 1990s in two major ways: either criticising the resultant revolutionary change or embracing it wholly. Critics of new media often dismiss claims that the world witnessed significant changes due to new media. For instance, Lister et al. argue that new media was merely “the continuity in economic interests, political imperatives and cultural values that drive and shape the ‘new’ as much as the ‘old’ media” (2009, p. 3). Hamelink (2000) also asserts that there was nothing dramatic about a change from the television to the computer and that it is wrong to consider the change as dramatic as the early 20th-century move from the horse-drawn carriage to the motorised vehicle. Similarly, regarding the computer, Robins and Webster (1999) argue that the so-called revolution is rather a continuation of what already took place more than 70 years before the invention. Robins and Webster’s

criticism is “intended as a rejection of the hollow prophetic discourses of the techno-visionaries . . . we don’t believe that we are going through a revolution. We are not expecting a brave new world” (1999, p. 233). May (2002) is also sceptical about describing new media technology in revolutionary terms. He argues that those who describe it as such have merely looked at recent events in the technology world. May stresses that if people understood that there has been a steady growth of relevant technologies long before the 21st century, they would cease to view it as “new” media.

Despite their anti-revolution position, Lister et al. (2009) believe there has been a move from passive audiences to active users which has resulted to consumers becoming producers.

1.2.1 The Internet, the World Wide Web and Social Media

This thesis discusses how the Internet, the web and social media have enabled both writers and readers to access or discuss African literature. Some websites and social media platforms that have been used to promote African literature are highlighted. However, it is important to differentiate between the Internet and the World Wide Web. The Internet enables computer networks to be interconnected and interchange data through packet switching; it is a network of networks that are linked together via copper wires, fibre optic cables, and other technologies (Wessels, 2010; Sutherland, 2000). Slevin (2001) believes that as the Internet becomes part of daily life, it is adopted for various purposes and people view it in different ways. For example, a computer programmer views the Internet as the “interface between the computer and the human, between the virtual and actual, digital and analogue” (Imken, 1999, p. 93), and views her or his duty as being to ensure that this interface works seamlessly (Imken, 1999).

Several studies have examined the influence of the Internet on creative industries. For example, a 2003 Pew Research Centre survey on how musicians use the Internet revealed that two-thirds of the respondents stated that the Internet is “very important” in the creation and distribution of their works (Madden, 2003). Ninety percent (90%) of the respondents said that the Internet gave them ideas and inspiration, and 87% said that they used the Internet to promote and publish their work. They also used it to distribute free copies of their work, which in turn, helped boost sales and concert attendance. The study found that approximately 66% of musicians use the Internet to work together with other musicians, and in fact, the Internet has helped a number of independent musicians to circumvent traditional distribution outlets (Madden, 2003). However, it must be remembered that the Internet is driven largely by hardware and software, as Ellis and Kent note:

“While the rapid development of hardware technology is a driving force behind the internet’s level of network utility the software applications partnering with this hardware also play a major role in determining the nature and accessibility of the online environment” (Ellis & Kent, 2011, p. 68)

In the beginning of the 21st century, Internet cafés were the primary places most people accessed the Internet in Africa (Burell, 2012). Burell notes that Internet cafés in Ghana were business ventures set up by local entrepreneurs and not part of any developmental aid programme; in fact, these cafés did not offer much additional formal support beyond giving customers access to computers and connectivity. The less-privileged Internet users who visited these cafés did not receive formal training and these cybercafés often became places where young people could go and browse the

Internet without their parents monitoring their activities online (Burell, 2012). The activities of cybercafé Internet users vary from country to country. Gitta and Ikoja-Odongo (2003) argue that the tremendous potential of the Internet in Uganda was demonstrated by the range of IT skills of its cybercafé users. Although several issues, such as bandwidth speed and lack of access in rural areas, affect Internet use, Gitta and Ikoja–Odongo (2003) insist that the Internet has a high potential to meet the needs of users. A study of Internet use among Nigerian students by Jagboro (2003) revealed that cybercafés were the most popular places to access the Internet. These cafés existed across Africa and helped to spread Internet use in the region.

Many conferences held across Africa have highlighted the rapid growth of Internet on the continent. In 2012, the Youth Marketer Converge Conference took place in Lagos, Nigeria and at the event, guest speaker Jimmy Wales, the American entrepreneur, predicted a future of low-cost mobile computers and fast Internet bandwidths in Nigeria — something already being experienced in some parts of the country. Wales observed that the Internet speed in Lagos was almost as fast as those he witnessed in New York City; this implied that Africa was already catching up with technological advancements (Akingbolu, 2012). According to the International Telecommunications Union, the reach of the Internet has grown exponentially in Africa from 2% of the population in 2005 to 19% in 2014 (International Telecommunications Union, 2014). There are plans to expand the infrastructure in Africa even further, including the upgrading and installation of underground cables and innovative projects to connect those in remote communities, supported by technology companies like Microsoft, Google, and Facebook (Rice-Oxley & Flood, 2016). As the Internet grows in Africa, this new technology will continue to have an impact on the web.

The web or World Wide Web consists of documents with a special mark-up language accessed via the Internet (Sutherland, 2000; Wessels, 2010). Web browsers enables users to browse web pages that may contain text, images, or videos, and can be navigated using hyperlinks (Sutherland, 2000; Wessels, 2010). Today, the World Wide Web is witnessing increased participation by people from all walks of life who use the technology to create and exchange ideas (OECD, 2007; Lister et al., 2009; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). This participative nature of the web is often referred to as Web 2.0 (Scholz, 2008; Zimmer, 2008; OECD, 2007). Zimmer (2008) points out that Web 2.0 supports anyone using new Internet technologies to share information and interact within a wide range of communities, and this empowers creativity while also encouraging collaboration. “But Web 2.0 also includes a set of unintended consequences emerging from the resultant blurring of the boundaries between web users and producers, consumption and participation” (Zimmer, 2008, p. 5). Allen (2008) also supports the view that Web 2.0 empowers people while adding that it creates more engaged media consumers. Cormode and Krishnamurthy (2008) state that the popularity of Web 2.0 has resulted in collections of friends exchanging content in various formats, including text, audio, and video. As more and more people have access to the Internet, this new medium influences the creation and reception of new media narratives. In the past, only those with specialized skills could create content online, but Web 2.0 has now enabled those without such skills to do so (Page & Thomas, 2011).

This interactive feature of the World Wide Web displays that the web has moved from a read-only tool to an online community where people exchange information and communicate using web-based tools and social media. While Burns (2009) describes social media as a collaborative method that people use in exchanging text, photos, or

videos, Kaplan and Haenlein view it as “a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content” (2010, p. 60). Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, and LinkedIn are all examples of social media (Scholz, 2008; Zimmer, 2008; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). According to a study by the BBC, social media is a powerful tool that has changed how news media engage with its audience (Bakhurst, 2012). The media is also eager to hear back from its audience, and social media allows them do this through online forums and comment pages integrated within media organisation website story pages (Bakhurst, 2012).

The popularity of the social media site Facebook has itself become an object of study. In a study of the use of Facebook amongst Indian youths, Kumar (2014) notes that Facebook offers them the opportunity to create international ties, thereby helping to change their perceptions of the world. Through Facebook, these youths became members of an international online community of friends. Kumar argues that Facebook has many functions for these users: it is a provider of entertainment, a platform for networking and building friendship, and a tool for self-development. Facebook is also a useful platform for storytelling (Page & Thomas, 2011). In Africa, organisations have studied how Twitter is emerging as a leading platform for short message communication and social networking on the continent. An example is Portland Communications and Tweetminster 2011’s unique study into the use of Twitter in Africa (Portland, 2012). Their study revealed that Africa’s top tweeters (that is, frequency of use) were between 21 and 29 years of age. According to the study, Twitter in Africa was mainly used for social conversations: 81% used Twitter to converse with

friends, approximately 68% used Twitter to monitor the news, and 57% of tweets were sent from mobile phones (Portland, 2012).

Brugger (2016) asserts that the World Wide Web continues to evolve due to the combination of social media and hardware like smartphones. He argues that people should see the development of the web, social media, and mobile media in three major ways. First, social media began and developed on the web. Second, social media became linked to new mobile media platforms, like smartphones; the social media that originally was created to work on the web, now has been modified for use through mobile apps that work at the same time with their websites. Third, the advent of social media that is born on and with mobile media, and primarily app-based, most notably Instagram, Snapchat, and Tinder (Brugger, 2016).

1.3 Understanding African Literature

Culler (2007) argues that in attempting to define literature, people can describe what literatures does, how it works in different societies, or if there are certain qualities that literary works have that differentiate them from other cultural materials. Culler states that “literature has been given diametrically opposed functions — a set of stories that seduce readers into accepting the hierarchal structures of society, and a practice where ideology is challenged or subverted” (2007, p. 229). Literature has therefore always played an important role in society. In this regard, Gikandi believes that literature “has been the lamp of knowledge, a symbol of enlightenment and a path to immeasurable freedom through sometimes violent encounters” (2012, p. 20). Gikandi goes on to describe the transformative power of literature in the classroom; students in his literature classes often reflect on atrocities and calamities such as war through engagement with literary works. Gikkandi details a challenge that faced his own

teachers, who battled to maintain literature's role as a mode of consciousness. His teachers adopted Jean-Paul Sartre's *What Is Literature?* at a time (around the 1960s) when Sartre was no longer celebrated in Europe, his influence having waned in the wake of Claude Lévi-Strauss's structuralism. However, at the University of Nairobi, where Gikandi studied, Sartre's book was greatly celebrated. Gikandi explains:

"But if Sartre provided my generation with an important gateway to what was to become postcolonial theory, it could also be said that his ideology of literature foreclosed the other side of the literary — the affective. It is not an exaggeration to say that my literary education, mediated through Marx, Sartre, and, later, Fanon, was contemptuous of modes of literary understanding that were not connected to what was considered the practice of thinking" (2012, p. 20).

What, then, is African literature? Chinweizu et al. state that African literature includes "Works done for African audiences, by Africans and in African languages, whether these works are oral or written, constitute the historically indisputable core of African literature" (1980, p. 11). In 1986, "A Conference of African Writers of English Expression" took place in Uganda and constituted a significant gathering of the continent's writers (Mading de Ngor, 2006). At this conference, writers discussed the concept of African literature and whether or not it included literature written by non-Africans (Mading de Ngor, 2006). No consensus was reached and consequently scholars have since described African literature as works created by Africans, whether written in a European language or an African language (Adejunmobi, 1999; Lindfors, 1997). This lack of consensus has led Nnolim to describe African literature as "mixed grill," that is, "it is oral, it is written in vernacular or tribal tongues; written in foreign tongues —

English, French, Portuguese” (2010, p. 4). Theories of African literature is often borrowed from contemporary theories such as postmodernism, Marxism, feminism and postcolonialism, formalism, structuralism and post-structuralism (Bamgbose, 2013).

Chinua Achebe, a pioneer of modern African literature (Amuta, 1988; Schipper, 1989; Larson, 2001; Nnolim, 2010), produced a novel titled *Things Fall Apart* (1958) that employs several striking linguistic devices, including narrative proverbs, folktales, and anecdotes (Obiechina, 1992). Achebe was the founding editor of the Heinemann African Writers Series (AWS), founded in 1962 (Amuta, 1988; Nnolim, 2010). The AWS provided opportunities for many writers from all over the continent to share their work. According to Achebe, the introduction of the AWS was a game-changer in modern African literature, a publishing initiative that made it possible for a new brand of writing to thrive across the continent by enabling Africans to read books written by Africans for Africans (Achebe, 2003). This line of thinking argues that authors such as Cyprian Ekwensi, Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Christopher Okigbo, Flora Nwapa, Ayi Kwei Armah, Peter Abrahams, Okot p'Bitek, Leopold Senghor, Ama Ata Aidoo, Ngugiwa Thiong'O, Athol Fugard, and Nadine Gordimer should be considered the first generation of African writers (Lindfors, 1997; Larson, 2001).

Most of the early works of these writers are sad tales depicting a conflict of cultures. Many of these works also show how a previously closed African society/community was destroyed after its exposure to Western influences, such as various church denominations and schools. Hence, many of these authors posit that colonialism did not bring happiness or justice to Africa; instead, it brought disorder to what had been an already orderly society (Lindfors, 1997; Larson, 2001). Consistent

with the above argument, Gikandi (2004) agrees that an investigation into the works of early African literature will reveal a deep connection with colonialism. He further maintains that the influence of colonialism in Africa was so strong that writers could not resist writing about it in their works (Gikandi, 2004). This is particularly so since authors often have many purposes: (a) to convince the reader that they are credible, (b) to advance a particular ideology, (c) to tell the truth, or (d) to motivate the reader to act in a particular way (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999).

A generation of literate Africans emerged following the spread of formal education and literacy (Schipper 1989; Amuta, 1983), to include writers and readers of literature. Missionaries contributed significantly to the advancement of printed literature in Africa. For instance, in South Africa, the Morija Press began printing the creative works of Basotho writers around 1861 (Maake, 1992). To build a thriving literary culture among the Basotho, missionaries helped some of their educated converts publish their stories, creating a literary movement that complemented their missionary work (Maake, 1992). In other parts of Africa, the literary scene developed differently.

In Nigeria, the Onitsha Market Literature (popular booklets sold in markets in Onitsha, south-eastern Nigeria), also played a part in the development of the literary movement in Africa (Obiechina, 1973). The first book in the Onitsha Market Literature series was published around 1947 (Obiechina, 1973). It did not take long before these publications were enjoyed by a large population, not just in Nigeria, but also in Cameroon, Ghana, and other West African countries (Okoro, 2002). These booklets also caught the attention of international book reviewers. Consequently, the first review of Onitsha literature was published in the Times Literary Supplement on 10 August 1962

(Obiechina, 1973). This review drew similarities between the stories told by the various authors and the actual events happening in Nigeria at that time (Obiechina, 1973). According to Achebe (1975), the market literature series began at Onitsha because it was a region with various kinds of schools, from day schools to grammar schools. In fact, Onitsha was also noted for its trading activities. Generally speaking, Onitsha was known as a city whose people were eager to learn, teach, and earn (Achebe, 1975).

In Africa, a large number of writing talents have emerged since the start of the 21st century; notable among them are Binyavanga Wainaina, Uzodinma Iweala, Brian Chikwava, Petina Gappah, Chimamanda Adichie, Jackee Batanda, Helon Habila, Nick Mulgrew, and Chika Unigwe. Habila (2007) suggests that although it is possible to say that older writers were always conscious of their roles as pan-Africanists, this is a lesser concern for new writers and works in their favour by allowing them to explore more diverse themes. Similarly, Olaniyan (2006) argues that new African writers are refreshing and innovative. They continue the tradition of writing about social justice, but their political positions are subtler than those of preceding generations (Olaniyan, 2006). These new writers have been rewarded by new literary prizes. An example is the Caine Prize for African Writing, established in 2000 to reward a published short story by an African writer based in any part of the world (Caine Prize, 2013).

The Caine Prize is often called the “African Booker” because it is managed by the Man Booker Prize team. Winner of the Caine Prize is awarded £10,000 in cash and the shortlisted writers also receive a cash award. These shortlisted stories are usually posted online for people to read free of charge. Established writers have lent their support to this prize. In 2012, Ben Okri, winner of the 1991 Booker Prize, became the

new vice president for the Caine Prize (Caine Prize, 2013). This appointment helped validate the prize. Validation also comes from statements by the winners; E. C. Osondu, the 2009 winner, states that “The Caine Prize is a wonderful prize. It’s really unique. Some of the things that writers face are fear, uncertainty and doubt. What the prize offered was some validation” (Adibe, 2010, p. 8). Interestingly, Osondu’s winning story “Waiting” was first published online.

1.4 New Media and Literature

Around the 1990s, some critics (e.g., Aarseth, 1997; Landlow, 1997) began to make claims for a narrative revolution due to the proliferation of hypertext and gaming. These critics discussed a range of narrative techniques, including plot, interactivity, temporality, the way readers experience stories, and how new technology enables texts to become fluid (Looy & Baetens, 2003; Page & Thomas, 2011). Aarseth notes that “the emerging new media technologies are not important in themselves, nor as alternatives to older media but should be studied for what they can tell us about the principles and evolution of human communications” (1997, p. 17). The 21st century heralded changes in the types of narratives available in digital media and the different ways critics analyse them. In the 1980s, hypertexts were published mostly on CD-ROM, but today Internet applications such as web browsers enable hypertexts to reside online (Page & Thomas, 2011). Pressman (2014) corroborates that in the mid-1990s innovations in graphical interfaces expanded the possibilities of the text, and this changed the nature of electronic literature. Pressman says that first-generation electronic literature has been replaced by a new generation of dynamic, visual, animated works.

This second generation of electronic literature exploits the features of new authoring software packages, notably Flash, to add multimedia elements (Pressman,

2014). As “technologies develop, possibilities for extending conceptions of narrative or realising different aspects of narrative arise” (Doloughan, 2011, p. 61). Similarly, Smith (2012) argues that new media writing extends existing literary traditions by incorporating 20th-century experimental writing techniques, including those by modernists and post-modernists: “Therefore new media writing is a very diverse and challenging field which stretches from animated poetry and interactive fiction to computer-generated text and computer-interactive installations” (Smith, 2012, p. 102).

Koskimaa (2007) describes digital publishing as a process that involves producing and distributing books using digital technology, including e-books, print-on-demand publishing, AudioBooks, etc. In terms of content, Koskimaa insists that digital literature is literature in the traditional sense, with digital technology used only to package and distribute the work. Pressman (2014) uses the terms “electronic literature” and “digital literature” interchangeably because she believes both terms describe how creative works use computational processing to create text-based art. Electronic literature is seen as a post-modern literary form that thrives on technology, and involves text based on machine codes, platforms and networks, and algorithmic procedures and structures (Pressman, 2014). However, Tosca (2002) notes a key difference between an e-book and electronic literature. An e-book is a digital version of a print book, to the degree that if anyone prints out an e-book, it resembles a print book (Tosca, 2002).

Electronic literature, on the other hand, is multilinear and multimedia — it often uses sound, images, and hypertext, so that its content and design are separated by mark-up language, enabling it to be published in different forms to meet the needs of the reader (Tosca, 2002). In this regard, electronic literature does not exist to be read like a printed book, but also to be seen or listened to (Carbone, 2002). One popular example

of electronic literature is *Inanimate Alice*, created by the writer Kate Pullinger and the digital artist Chris Joseph, both formerly staff at De Montfort University. In *Inanimate Alice*, Pullinger and Joseph attempt to explore digital narrative by combining certain aspects of literary and cinematic storytelling and extending them through new media (Doloughan, 2011). As in the cinema, images in digital narratives provide a sense of atmosphere and set the scene. The reader of *Inanimate Alice* progresses through the novel by clicking, and this type of link between text and image, and the resultant reading process, differs completely from that of printed novels (Doloughan, 2011).

In February 2007, faculty (including Kate Pullinger) and students at the Institute of Creative Technologies, De Montfort University, partnered with Penguin Books on a collaborative online writing project, the “wiki-novel” *A Million Penguins* (Thomas et al., 2007). This initiative produced a fiction that was written collaboratively yet remotely, with contributors able to edit work produced by one another. The end product was a piece of online writing that had undergone many changes; approximately 80,000 people viewed the creative work, which had been written and edited by about 1,500 people (Thomas et al., 2007). In this vein, Madej (2016) states that collaborative writing necessarily involves the willingness of writers to admit that other writers can bring their own unique experiences to bear in order to create and share knowledge. It is not that new technologies provide better storytelling, but rather “the ways in which narrative is realised or instantiated across media, is in part a factor of the capacities of those media and the ways in which particular modes and media interact” (Doloughan, 2011, p. 61).

Collaboration is largely encouraged by the concept of ‘open-source’ which advocates the availability of free software such as wiki for the purposes of writing, editing and publishing (Thornton, 2013). Open source differs from open content which

promotes the idea that content should be made available for free in order to advance knowledge, and therefore Thornton (2013) believes that a wiki, enables several users with diverse skills to make changes and update the content on a particular wiki site. This type of multi-authoring is considered “open-source” because a material can be worked on by several people; the incorporation of a user-friendly interface allows these people to also add images or other audio-visual components and hyperlinks to the wiki pages. Thornton maintains that a key quality of a wiki is its ability to be utilized for a wide range of projects, an example being the Wikipedia project, where thousands of individuals are involved in the creation of the online encyclopaedia, with the ability to instantly update and edit materials created by multiple people across the world: “As a result of their collaborative nature, many Web 2.0 technologies, including wikis, have been heralded as being able to promote a collaborative or collective intelligence in which the sum of what is produced collectively brings more conceptual understanding than what could be produced independently” (Thornton, 2013, p. 52).

The *A Million Penguins* project also resonates with Harper’s (2011) view that if we are in an era which promotes connection among people, even across borders and time zones, then we are also in an age that presents great opportunities for sharing ideas and knowledge, and collaborating with others. Similarly, in this era, writers may distribute their works using different new media and these new formats have the capacity to retransmit and redistribute creative works to other audiences (Couldry, 2008). New media technologies, including mobile phones, have continued to influence literature. Established communities of creative writers have made use of mobile devices to create new forms of arts. In Australia, Berry and Goodwin (2012) describe how mobile media has brought together readers and writers to create new forms of art in a

virtual city of literature that enables people to distribute Twitter-length poems. In this regard, “The use of social media for literary expression is a deviation from the more traditional print forms, and challenges the older paradigms of dissemination and publication” (Berry & Goodwin, 2012, p. 925).

1.5 Scope of Research

This research study cuts across the following aspects of new media technologies: the Internet, mobile phones, the World Wide Web and social media and their impact on new African literature. The rationale is explained in the paragraphs below.

In Africa, within a very short time, the mobile phone has changed the way people communicate on the continent (more in Chapter Two of this study). Although electronic literature was not common in Africa, mobile phones offered people on the continent an opportunity to create new forms of expression. For instance, in South Africa, Pieter Traut set up CellBook in 2007 to create an opportunity for publishers who wanted to reach out to readers via their mobile phones (News Wire Today, 2009). Traut recounts that the opportunity to distribute books on mobile phones was welcomed by publishers as a new revenue stream tapping a larger audience than those who bought books, and since his company was established, over 100,000 books have been distributed on mobile phones in South Africa alone (News Wire Today, 2009). The use of mobile phone to distribute fiction confirms a notion by Castel et al. that the combination of textual and audiovisual media would be made popular by the power of wireless technology: since “language is closely related to the formation of culture, we are clearly in a process of cultural transformation associated with the spread of wireless communication” (Castells et al., 2007 p. 255).

Two years after CellBook was launched, the South African writer Karen Michelle Brooks sold her adventure novel *Emily and the Battle of the Veil* to the mobile phone novel publisher MXit platform; the 27-chapter book kick-started MXit's mobile books series, and within a couple of weeks, Brooks's work had sold 5,000 copies (Books LIVE, 2009). Michelle Brooks believes that access to books via a mobile platform is the best way for her to develop her audience in the country (Books LIVE, 2009). In Nigeria, Okadabooks was set up by engineer Okechukwu Ofili in 2013 to use mobile phones to sell books to a growing audience (Jackson, 2017). The platform, which has over 120,000 registered users who have downloaded about a million e-books, has become so popular and demanding that Ofili resigned from his full-time job in an oil company to focus on the business (Jackson, 2017). These mobile books from South Africa and Nigeria also support the view that mobile devices serve many purposes, some highly useful to professionals, such as maintaining social networks and gathering and sharing information (Castell et al., 2007).

Over the past few years, organisations have been using the Internet to promote African literature across borders, culminating in the publication of short stories and poems in online magazines. An example is the Crossing Borders mentoring initiative, which is partly supported by the British Council and focuses on promoting new African literature across the world (Crossing Borders, 2009). In 2001, the Council asked the British writer and academic Graham Mort, based at Lancaster University, to explore and test this mentoring programme at the University of Makerere in Uganda. Thereafter, British Council offices across some Western, Eastern, and Southern African countries including Uganda, South Africa, Cameroon, Nigeria, and Ghana also delivered the Crossing Borders mentoring initiative (Crossing Borders, 2009). Other African

countries, including Kenya, Malawi, Zimbabwe, and Botswana, also supported the initiative (Crossing Borders, 2009). The British Council offices in each of these countries provided training in IT skills and Internet access to the participants (Crossing Borders, 2009). In the United Kingdom, the University of Lancaster provided a staffed office, training, and induction for mentors whilst also maintaining a dedicated website manager to oversee online activities. Mort (2006) notes that an Argentinean teacher stated during a British Council Oxford Conference that discovering of the Crossing Borders website gave her materials on contemporary African literature. Overall, Crossing Borders made it possible for new writers across Africa to publish their works online for a global audience.

This study also focuses on the World Wide Web because, as Gerhards and Schäfer (2010) note, websites are important forums in the public sphere because they can collectively communicate relevant issues to large audiences. Habermas (1964) conceives of the public sphere as a space that promotes conversations, where anyone irrespective of class, converged to discuss issues that concerned the public. Traditionally, however, these citizens were educated and were mostly men. Today, the public sphere is not so exclusive. The practical accessibility of the web broadens the public sphere, and opens it up to new ways of discussions (Usher, 2008), thus enabling writers and readers to communicate directly.

In Africa, the growing power and reach of social media now makes it possible for online communities to come together even when the individuals who make up that community are far apart, hence a focus of this study. In 2013, this researcher attended an event titled “Publishing in the Age of Social Media” moderated by co-founder of the

prize-winning Cassava Republic press Bibi Bakare-Yusuf, during the Lagos Social Media Week, in Nigeria. At that event, Bakare-Yusuf argued that social media could be used to raise awareness about a book and create the desire for more people to buy and to read it. She said that social media could help to break new ground in terms of access to e-books. Websites and social media channels are important aspects of interactions, and as Bakare-Yusuf noted, publishers have come to value them.

“New” African literature, defined as works published from the year 2000 to now, is the focus of this study. Thirty new African writers, some of whom have won the Caine Prize, were interviewed to determine how new media has influenced their works (the selection rationale is discussed in Chapter Three). The types of writing that this study focuses on include short stories, novels, poems, literary reviews/essays and drama. It excludes journalistic or educational writing. Similarly, the readers for this study are those who read these creative works. The reading of newspapers or textbooks is not included. It must be noted that not all new African writers reside in Africa; many are scattered across the world. These writers are part of a transformative global migration, and their migrations were often triggered by events in their home countries. While Ahmed (1999) questions the meaning of “home,” Waters and Jimenez (2005) argue that today’s immigrants are largely assimilating into new societies. Morley (2000) asserts that “home” can refer to a virtual community, not just a group of people inhabiting a physical area. Morley offers the key or the suitcase as symbolic items to represent the lost home. In these symbolic suitcases, immigrants keep special, personal belongings — not necessarily dresses that they wear often or photos to be fixed to walls, but perhaps traditional dress or items that the immigrant may look at from time to time, triggering memories (Morley, 2000).

Many immigrants also maintain close contact with family and friends in their homeland, sending money home and following events in their home countries (Burrell & Anderson, 2008). New media has made it possible for migrants to maintain close, ongoing ties with their home countries in an unprecedented way (Burrell & Anderson, 2008) and Africans in the diaspora use the Internet to connect with their home countries (Shohat, 1999). With hardware such as the computer and the mobile phone, it has become “possible for one to sense and dwell with the other without physically moving oneself or without moving physical objects” (Urry, 2000, p. 70). Therefore, the Internet promotes “a re-articulation of the idea of homeland, as subject constructions become multiple with overlapping and contradictory identifications and affiliations” (Shohat, 1999, p. 230).

This study has included a few African writers who live outside of Africa because Clark (2007) argues that writing by Africans based abroad is increasingly interconnected with writing by Africans based on the continent. Clark argues that these African writers voice concerns about the current socio-political conditions in Africa and expose frustrations about living abroad. Such aspects reinforce the concept of “home” for the African immigrant — which may mean living somewhere while remembering and desiring another place (Clifford, 1997). Though living abroad, these writers remain actively interested in the affairs of the homeland, so turn to new media for information and to tell their stories. The term “African diaspora” or “diaspora” is therefore applied loosely to refer to Africans who live abroad.

1.6 Research Aims and Objectives

This research aims to explore opportunities created by new media for new African literature. This study seeks to achieve three core objectives:

- To explore how new media technologies have influenced African literature, for instance, how new technologies are used in the production and consumption of literary works
- To explore the opportunities created by new media for new African writers and readers
- To identify the various ways new African writers and readers use new media

This study reviews relevant literature and analyses findings from data collected during its course to achieve these purposes.

1.7 Research Questions

Martin and Bridgmon (2012) argue that every research study should have its questions determined before the study begins. Research questions are the foundation of research work and sustain such studies (Ackerly & True, 2010). This study examines the various opportunities new media presents to African literature since the beginning of the 21st century. This study pursues the following research question:

How has new media created opportunities for new African literature and how are writers and readers making use of these opportunities?

In answering this question, this study explores the different ways new African writers are influenced by new media technologies. Through reviewing relevant literature and analysing responses from new African writers, it will seek to discuss the impact of

these technologies on the production and of writing. This study also analyses feedback from readers to determine how they use new technology to consume works produced by writers.

1.8 Organisation of Thesis

This research is divided into six chapters. In Chapter One, the topic is introduced and an overview of the study provided. This introductory chapter also offers a brief history of the development of new media technologies, a short discussion on African literature, the rationale for the study, and the research question.

Chapter Two provides a review of the relevant literature. It discusses how the African literary tradition has developed — starting from orality up to the advent of publishing via new media. This chapter also discusses some theories of reading and of the consumption of literature in new media formats. This chapter also develops the theoretical framework used for this study. This research has adopted two core theories: diffusion of innovation theory and uses and gratification theory. The rationale for choosing these theories are also provided.

Chapter Three provides the research methodology, with an overview of the research methods used in the study. It explains the process of generating responses to the research question and explains the context in which the data was collected.

Chapter Four analyses the responses of the 30 emerging writers that formed the sample for this study. They were asked to describe the opportunities that new media provides them. This chapter also includes a critical discussion of these findings and draws implications from them, making comparisons between the research findings and the published literature.

Chapter Five discusses how readers make use of new media. It examines the responses of 300 readers on their reading habits and analyses those responses using the diffusion of innovation theory.

Chapter Six concludes the study by highlighting the original contributions to knowledge of this research. It also summarises the answer to the research question and evaluates the research process.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This thesis straddles fields of technology, sociology and literature. As such, the literature review has focused on identifying arguments in these areas while seeking to provide some answers to the research question: How has new media created opportunities for new African literature and how are writers and readers making use of these opportunities? In particular, the literature search was focused on the key areas of oral cultures, the origins of writing in Africa (in ancient times, writing was a trade practised by artisans), and how these relates to debates on reading and technology and the consumption of literature in digital formats. As this thesis focuses on Africa, issues related to the use of technology in developing countries, digital divide, and theories of new media use and adoption of new technologies were also included in the literature review. The scope of literature searched included publications and new media initiatives developed and successfully implemented in Africa to promote creative writing. Attempts were made to strike a balance between significant academic books by leading experts (e.g. Ong, 1995; Jenkins, 2006; Marshall, 2004; Rogers, 2003) and contemporary papers from academic journals, as well as news stories. Online sources were also widely used, in line with this thesis' topic. The rationale for this was to present works that provide as many point of views as possible in order to fulfil the objectives of this study.

2.2 Historical Context of African Literature: Orality

Both Finnegan (2012) and Barnes and Carmichael (2006) have argued that Sub-Saharan Africa houses the continent's richest oral cultures. This region is also known for its quest for political identity and for unique cultural identity (Amuta, 1988; Finnegan, 2012; Barnes & Carmichael, 2006). Prior to the development of writing, people preserved their cultures through oral mediums (Finnegan, 2012). For example, oral artists skilled in reciting lengthy oral literature served as the keepers of ancient wisdom and beliefs (Ajunwon, 1985). These artists were spread across the African continent. In Burkina Faso, for instance, Burkinabe praise singers and storytellers kept records, re-counted births, deaths, and the history of relationships within and outside of the community (Morrison, 2005). Since writing was unknown to them, they learned by practice, listening to and observing others, reiterating what they heard, becoming fluent in the use of wise words and proverbs, and talking to elders in the community (Ong, 1995).

Oral tradition is a form of second-hand testimony, but it differs from rumours in that the information is transmitted vertically through time, rather than horizontally across space (Law, 1997; Chinyowa, 2001). Mnemonics were used to retrieve such oral information. Ong stresses that, "in a primary oral culture, to solve effectively the problem of retaining and retrieving carefully articulated thoughts, you have to do your thinking in mnemonic patterns" (1995, p. 34). Poets used these mnemonic patterns, which is why Afolabi (1998) suggests that modern African poets owe much to memory and oral traditions. Oral literature of this type was not restricted to Africa; Lee (2004) adds that the ancient Greeks, and other early societies in the Mediterranean, made use of

advanced memory devices and oral practices to pass on information from generation to generation.

According to Gunner (2004), orality did not exist in isolation but sometimes coexisted with music in the form of song and dance. Examples can be found among the Yoruba in Nigeria, the Nzema in Ghana, and the Galla in Kenya (Kolawole, 1997). Storytelling and praise singing are also distinctive features of orality. In Sudan, grandmothers played the role of storytellers to the extent that they became widely known for that (Kolawole, 1997). In South African literature, praise singing is an important part of political and literary expression (Lupenga, 2004). Among the Nguni language groups in South Africa, heroic praise poetry constitutes a rich body of literature ranging across the last 400 years, and this poetry is treasured by those peoples as their highest form of literary expression (Lupenga, 2004). Pfukwa (2001) believes that orality is also associated with the struggle for freedom, as seen in the case of fighters in the Zimbabwean liberation war of the 1980s, who abided by rules laid down in their military code. These rules were transmitted through folklore, songs, myths, and legends handed down from generation to generation.

Storytelling in Africa involves performance; it involves the body of the performer, the music of his or her voice, and the relationship with an audience (Scheub, 2002). Performers are storytellers and craftspeople who use narratives to create arguments or elicit responses from their audiences; storytellers use story to move the audience towards deeper and more complex experiences (Scheub, 2002). They do this by putting together unlike images, then with the full participation of the audience, they reveal the connections and similarities between them (Scheub, 2002). In Africa,

performance plays a prominent part in oral literature; a storytelling performance connects the major arts (music, song, and dance) by involving gestures, movements, and sounds to communicate with the audience (Scheub, 2002). Obafemi (2007) thus describes understanding performance as the first step towards understanding African literature. While discussing how he came across the unique literary traditions of Europe during his studies at the University of Leeds in the 1970s, Obafemi states that:

“Sitting through theatre performances in those beautiful theatres in England, with specific reference to the Leeds Playhouse which I visited very frequently and even acted in, I felt like a fish out of water. Once or twice I made to offer interjections and approbations as is common back at home, only to be faced with reproachful glances from an audience that must reserve their comments to the extended claps at the end of performance” (2007, p. 2).

Obafemi was shocked to discover that the hearty contribution and lively engagement of the audience, which is an important aspect of African theatre, was nowhere to be seen on the European stage

2.2.1 Evolution of writing in Africa

Ong (1995) observes that in ancient times writing was not a common activity but limited to a select few as a trade practised by artisans. These artisans were hired to write letters in the same way a carpenter would be hired to build a bed. Such trade was popular in the West African region, particularly in Mali, up until the 20th century (Ong, 1995). Since paper and ink were scarce, skilled artisans used other materials (such as tree bark and stones) to write (Ong, 1995). Writing thus went through several phases of development in some parts of Africa. Bekerie (1999) collaborated with the John Henrik

Clarke African Library of Cornell University to document these African writing systems. One such writing system, Ethiopic, had a significant impact across Africa but also on cultures outside of Africa, to affect world history. The Ethiopic writing system was founded in Ethiopia, and consists of “sylographs” organised in columns (Bekerie, 1999). Nsibidi, a writing system that originated in southern Nigeria and Cameroon, can be traced to secret societies and might have been one of the earliest forms of writing in these parts of Africa (Wilson, 2005). However, little is known about this writing system because members of the cult kept it to themselves (Macgregor, 1999). Nsibidi writing was found among the Efik, Ibibio, Ekoi, and Ejagham peoples of the old Cross River State, the Igbo in eastern Nigeria, and the Mom of the Cameroon (Wilson, 2005).

Africa’s print industry developed when Europeans started arriving there (Mytton, 1983). However, Mytton (1983) adds that before the arrival of the Europeans, Arab traders had already brought literacy to the continent, so that Africans were able to adopt the new Western printing technology. Mytton (1983) believes that the first printing press appeared in Africa around 1797. He stresses that Christian missionaries played a pioneering role in the introduction of the printing press in Africa, while noting that these missionaries were not the first to introduce social communications. Evidence suggests that Africans had developed a model of governance and communication channels in both small and large communities (Mytton, 1983). These structures were improved when missionaries arrived, and they took advantage of these structures for their missionary work (Ugboajah, 1985). In light of the foregoing, Griffiths states:

“Literacy education became the primary means by which the Christian missionaries sought to effect change and set up the conditions for conversion. From the

19th century until well into the 1940s, the missionary societies were not only the dominant educative force in establishing literacy in Africa, but also the major patrons of writing and the written text” (1997, p. 147). Interestingly, Eastern and Central Africans did not come into contact with these early Europeans, which affected the way the printing press developed in that region (Mytton, 1983). Europeans first landed in West Africa due to the proximity of the transatlantic sea route leading to Europe, but not until the 19th century did a large number of Europeans start arriving in East and Central Africa (Mytton, 1983).

2.2.2 *Writing and Orality*

The subject of orality and writing has given rise to much intellectual discourse over the years, and scholars have argued both for and against the value of writing relative to orality. Mason (1998) argues that written works destroy oral traditions and Gehrmann (2005) argues that orality can never be properly reproduced in a written text because the written form loses the specific character of the oral performance. He maintains that the basic elements of performance cannot be retained in a written text, no matter what techniques are used to compensate. Underpinned by the above, Khamis (2005) suggests that orality should not be technologised whilst Ahmad (2005) agrees that it is not proper to convert narratives from family and communal meetings into written texts that could then be widely distributed. Ahmad also postulates that; “writing drains oral literature of much of its colour and dynamism as well as its spontaneity” (2005, p. 221).

Many studies do not support the views expressed by Ahmad (2005). Obiechina (1992) opines that oral culture does not suddenly disappear when it comes into contact with writing. He maintains that oral literature does not enter extinction because of the

dynamics of written literature. Instead, a fusion takes place whereby characteristics of orality are adapted and used in a new way. In Nigeria, Yoruba poets have drawn on the available range of rich verbal expressions, proverbs, wise sayings, and idiomatic language and applied these to written texts (Nnodim, 2005). Obiechina (1992) believes that written literature cannot take the place of orality but important aspects of oral traditions such as proverbs and idioms can be integrated into writing. Such integration is only possible when the writer has an excellent understanding of the oral cultures; therefore, such writers help keep orality alive (Obiechina, 1992).

2.3 Writing and Technology

Technology has always influenced writing — e.g., the pen, typewriter, computer — and today's new media combines features and functionalities from varying media, information technologies, and content, while blurring the lines between those who use and produce media (Smith, 2012; Lievrouw, 2011). Therefore, advancement in new media technologies has opened new doors for literature: “in new media writing — or networked and programmable writing, e-literature or digital writing as it is variously called — the screen replaces the page” (Smith, 2012, p. 102). In this type of writing, Smith suggests, authors can play with words, pursue several types of interactivity, and link different web pages while also enabling the merging of text, sound, and image to immerse readers in their storytelling. Couldry (2008) believes that writers across the world are increasingly using new media forms to publish their works, sometimes in collaboration with others. Oftentimes, these writers use new technologies to compose, thereby changing the nature of writing and publishing (Smith, 2012).

The 21st century has brought about abundant changes in how people involve themselves in the processes of reading and writing. Technology is the key enabler of these changes, which suggests that older technologies (i.e., writing tools such as pen and paper) may become a thing of the past (Bromley, 2010). Thornton (2013) agrees that mobile reading devices such as Kindles, iPads, smartphones, and various tablets are becoming more widespread across the world. However, Merchant (2007) argues that since the activities of writing and reading are linked to their production technologies, it is important to consider what is really “new” about digital writing. Merchant suggests that some qualities of how digital texts are produced and consumed present opportunities for interactivity, but it is possible for people to overlook these opportunities because they are linked to the materiality of the technology. For instance, when someone writes with a pen, the activity links the hand and the text: that writer creates words using knowledge of the alphabets. However, when someone writes with a keyboard or the buttons of a mobile phone, that writer selects from a number of letters and the writing then becomes visible on a screen (Merchant, 2007). Merchant (2007) thereby identifies a range of features of writing on-screen:

1. Fluidity of texts: the text is no longer limited by pages
2. Texts mingle with other texts through hyperlinks
3. Increased ability to revise, update and append texts
4. Texts can sometimes be collaborative, involving links and comments, thus bringing together the reader and writer
5. Blurring of boundaries: onscreen texts can be used for work or leisure, and for public or private use

Hudson states that new media technologies have made it possible for people “to produce cleaner texts and have allowed both ‘common’ and professional writers to share their writing formally and informally” (2007, p. 94). Hudson argues that “e-writing” is changing the nature of written communications in the same way that the alphabet, paper, and the printing press did. Hudson believes that as writing technologies have evolved, the art of writing “has become an even further-reaching and more connective and interactive process and product — more concentric than linear” (2007, p. 94). Hudson therefore argues that e-writing is in many ways an “interactive technology” that requires people to be fluent in certain skills before they are able to use it effectively. “In this sense, writing systematizes language while language systematizes writing, a dual process that enables us to use that language system in order to network” (Hudson, 2007 p. 96). Software such as Adobe Flash enabled writers and artists to create digital texts (Page & Thomas, 2011). In modern online forums, members of online communities use different types of shortened forms to ensure that their writing fits within the medium, as Nazaryan and Gridchin, observe: “The use of syntactically-reduced forms: acronyms, symbols, word clippings are therefore purely for practical reasons — they reduce the time and effort necessary to communicate” (2006, p. 12). New media requires users to be quick, particularly when responding to queries or comments from other members of the community; therefore, users have developed simple versions of long words (Crystal, 2001). These variant spellings are used mostly by the new generation, particularly teenage users (Crystal, 2001).

2.3.1 Blogging

In recent times, people have turned to blogs to write and share information. Bowman and Willis define a blog “as a web page made up of usually short, frequently

updated text blocks or entries that are arranged in reverse chronological order” (2003, p. 23). A blog can also be seen as a communications platform that enables users to not only read but also respond by posting public comments (Kaye, 2007). Blogs differ from websites due to the fact that they “allowed users to post entries into predesigned templates which led to an explosion of short-form diaries, but the reverse-chronological format has remained constant” (Blood, 2003, p. 61). Usher (2008) observes that in an electronic world where anyone can be a reporter, bloggers have made a significant number of exclusive reports, and the mainstream media has seen its power challenged. In this regard, Page and Thomas note that “Where once the ability to create online text would have entailed specialist knowledge of programming techniques, the advent of . . . Web 2.0 technologies . . . has enabled users with relatively low technical skills to upload and manipulate text with unprecedented ease” (2011, p. 2). Larsson and Hrastinski (2011) have also studied how blogs influenced the coverage of politics and fostered communication among people and organizations. As certain blogs become prominent, people now ask whether bloggers should have any responsibilities and to what extent they should comply with professional ethics (Cenite et al., 2009). Some blogs target only small audiences; other bloggers set out to approach broad audiences (Cenite et al., 2009).

Blogging sometimes “reflects and constructs social norms and cultural concepts, such as individual and community, privacy and publicness, experience and memory” (Van Dijk, 2004, p. 9). Through blogging, African women have been able to express themselves and encourage others to do same (Somolu, 2007). Women from other developing countries have also used blogs to express themselves. In a study exploring migrant women from the Philippines and their motivations and rationales for blogging,

Yao (2009) found that these women having left their comfort zones, and without friends and relatives abroad, turned to blogging to express themselves and interact with others. For these migrants, blogging served as a medium to creatively express themselves through writing; the blogs also served as tools for recording and storing memories connecting them to their past selves (Yao, 2009). Pepe (2015) argues that blogging has also opened up opportunities for literary criticism. Such arguments regarding blogging confirms the views of Joyce (2002), who argued that the Internet would do for the World Wide Web what Ong claimed the phonetic alphabet did for writing: convert a “complicated” form into a communication tool that anyone could use. Morrison (2013) asserts that blogging offers opportunity for digital conversation, which encourages connection between authors and readers since it allows direct feedback from readers. For instance, most blogging software contains the “comment” feature, and comments are in many ways similar to email: “as an electronic document it is amenable to the full range of computer-based tools and applications and can be easily filed, modified, updated and edited; it is archived by default and can be retrieved at any time; and it is ostensibly economical” (Kibby, 2005, p. 20).

However, critics do not always view blogs in good light. For instance, Peter Stothard, the Man Booker prize judge in 2012, once claimed that blogging was not helping literature (Flood, 2012). Since Stothard (ironically) blogs regularly, it was somewhat surprising to hear him assert that “If the mass of unargued opinion chokes off literary critics . . . then literature will be the lesser for it” (Flood, 2012, p. 12). Stothard’s point that the publication of blog reviews has eroded the power of traditional critics, since almost any person can now become a critic, is expanded by El-Sadda: “Blogging has resulted in the creation of literary counter publics, forums for alternative

literary genres, languages and style that are adjacent or parallel to mainstream literary centers” (2010, p. 315). Koskimaa (2007) states that blogs provide an opportunity for literary dialogue where publishing is near-instantaneous and discourse almost occurs in real-time. Due to the fact that posts are archived, there is also potential for discussions to carry on for a long time. Koskimaa therefore argues that the literary blog is a type of “asynchronous communication” which resembles real-time communication. Koskimaa adds that in literary blogs the discussion is often poetic, which is completely different from the information-oriented discussion that can be seen on other discussions online. Additionally, literary blogs and discussion forums engender literary education, because students can engage in discussion with authors of the works they study, and with others interested in similar literary topics (Koskimaa, 2007).

2.4 Reading

Readers are an important aspect of literature, and without them there would be no audience for writers. This section therefore looks at differing theories of reading, and their divergent paradigms which range from traditional views that put emphasis on the text to cognitive views that focus on the influence of contextual knowledge. More contemporary theories of reading include the metacognitive view, which focuses on the control that a reader exerts when comprehending a text.

2.4.1 The Traditional View

Dole et al. (1991) remind that beginner readers acquire skills that help build their ability to comprehend text. After these skills have been mastered, readers become experts at textual comprehension. “Meaning” is therefore situated within the text and the reader is expected to search for it. Nunan (1991) asserts that this traditional view of

reading involves a process of decoding a set of texts for its aural qualities in order to make sense of those texts. Nunan calls this process the “bottom-up” view of reading.

2.4.2 The Cognitive View

The cognitive view of reading might conversely be described as the “top-down” model, opposite of this “bottom-up” view of reading (Nunan, 1991; Dubin & Bycina, 1991). The top-down model also involves the psycholinguistic model. Goodman (1967) describes the reading process as a “psycholinguistic guessing game” wherein a reader goes through the text, makes some guesses, determines if they are correct, and then continues guessing. Here, the reader (instead of the text) leads the reading process. This “psycholinguistic model” of reading encourages a reader to predict meaning based on what they know of syntax and semantics. Simply put, a reader’s prior knowledge of oral language offers a concept of the appropriate ordering of words and the types of meanings that words have in different settings. Smith (1975) views reading comprehension as the ability of the reader to make sense of what they read by applying what they already know. This implies that a reader must be able to apply prior knowledge and language skills in order to obtain meaning from a text. In many ways, therefore, the way a reader interprets a printed message is usually determined by the reader’s background, knowledge, and culture, which create a context for understanding discourse (Anderson, 1976).

Another paradigm that fits within the cognitive view of reading is “schema theory.” Rumelhart (1977) views this as “building blocks of cognition” that enable people to interpret sensory data and retrieve previously stored information. Rumelhart (1977) argues that if we do not have a complete set of schemas then it is difficult to process and understand text. Schema theory aims to describe how the reader is able to

interact with the text and both shape and store information (Adams & Collins, 1979). It assumes that meaning is not only found within the text itself but also in the interaction with the reader's cognitive structure (or schema). This schema provides a framework that helps readers to understand new information. In this regard, the reader possesses a cognitive structure that serves as a filter through which to see the world and make sense from texts.

2.4.3 *Meta-Cognitive View*

Research on reading comprehension has further examined the control readers exert when understanding a text. Block (1992) calls this control "metacognition" — the ability to think about what somebody is doing while reading a text. Klein et al. (1991) argue that this metacognitive view of reading involves attempting to determine the aim of one's reading before starting to read. It also involves determining the form or type of the text before reading. The metacognitive view of reading also takes into consideration the general characteristics of the text and the author's purpose when writing (Klein et al. 1991). Reading is just half of literacy, and writing is the other half, according to Baron (2013). Baron notes that the fact that someone can read (is literate) does mean that person can only read but also write; writing often accompanies the act of reading, since writing skill is typically used to produce original texts and to annotate or copy portions of existing texts. When people read, they often mark different areas of the same texts much differently from one another depending on the purpose of their reading: a student of literature, for instance, may mark areas of a literary text for reference or reflection purposes (Baron, 2013). Some people may find it easier to read this way because it helps them to recall and reflect on what they have read; the annotated texts aid retention, which is integral to reading (Baron, 2013).

2.4.4 Reading and Technology

Research interest in psychology, human-computer interaction, and the relationship between reading on paper and on screen has increased (Goodwyn, 2014; Baron, 2013; MacFadyen, 2011; Holt, 2011). Jabr (2013) states that this increasing research does not generally favour one view, but rather brings to the fore a complex and constantly changing scene. For instance, the printed medium seems to support the idea of deep reading and active learning, due largely to the belief that the physical features of the codex-form book encourage exploration and retention (Rockinson-Szapkiw et al., 2013). E-readers are viewed as used more for leisure reading, and perceived to be less suitable for the sort of rigorous reading expected of students and scholars (Ballatore & Natale, 2015).

In 2014, a not-for-profit organisation, Publishing Technology, presented findings from their mobile reading research, which investigated how people in the UK and the US used their mobile phones to read (Ingenta, 2015). According to the Publishing Technology's research, almost half of the people surveyed said that they had read an e-book on their mobile phones in the last year. Two-thirds of the surveyed participants said that they were reading more frequently on mobiles than they did the previous year — an indication that more people were embracing the mobile phone as a literary device (Ingenta, 2015). A study by Baron and Segerstad (2010) regarding mobile phone use among students in three countries, namely: Japan, Sweden and the US, revealed that students felt strongly that mobile phones are first of all communication devices. However, they also noted that mobiles phones are increasingly being used for other purposes, such as listening to music and reading. In the UK, the organization Quickreads carried out a survey on e-reading. According to its findings,

48% of UK adults engaged in e-reading stated that mobile devices encouraged them to read more books, and 62% of respondents said that access to free e-books introduced them to books they would otherwise never have known (Edidin, 2014).

Goodwyn (2014) argues that reading on a computer or any other technological device can never replicate the experience people feel when reading a book. Goodwyn points out that the close rapport between a reader and the physical book has been able to survive despite various technological innovations that compete with books. However, Goodwyn (2014) admits that one can view the book itself as an object of technology, one that has been mass-produced and made widely available to people. Goodwyn (2014) also warns that the term “book” can be a bit ambiguous because physical books come in various sizes, shapes, and costs, whereas e-books are more uniform in these areas. Nevertheless, Goodwyn (2014) acknowledges that the reader-book relationship is being threatened by the popularity of e-readers. Baron (2013) believes that digital reading platforms encourages certain aspects of reading more than others, and points out that they are particularly helpful when one is reading for information.

Access to and possession of book collections were once the sole privilege of scholars and the rich, and allowed them an increased ability to make cultural statements and impacts (Goodwyn, 2014). When public libraries were opened, the poor and the less privileged gained access to books. Goodwyn makes an interesting comparison between an online catalogue of e-books and a physical book collection. On the one hand, he sees them as the same — an online catalogue is similar to a collection of physical books because of the way it has been arranged, either alphabetically or via some other system. On the other hand, online catalogues differ from book collections because the sense of the scale of collection and its attractiveness can be lost online due to the small size of

the screen, while large libraries can arouse the mind because of the perceived grandeur of their size and substance. According to Goodwyn, “The e-reader is therefore a rather hybrid device, it is genuinely a new use of technology with some innovative features, but it deliberately disguises its technological character by emulating bookishness. Books are produced by technology and, it might be argued, even the hand-written texts produced pre-Caxton, needed a writing/painting tool and a suitable surface” (2014, p. 264).

Today, the mobile phone has made e-reading more common. In a cross-cultural study of mobile phone use, Baron (2013) found that university students often used their mobile phones to kill time. With the proliferation of apps on mobile devices, “killing time” by reading snippets of text is becoming increasingly common. Baron (2013) argues that it took about ten years for e- readers to penetrate the market, due largely to the fact that early technologies were not user-friendly. Due to the functionality of mobile phones, people are increasingly turning to them for reading. Students said that mobile devices were lightweight and could contain dozens of books, and allowed them to easily access materials related to their reading, such as dictionaries and web pages (Baron, 2013).

Despite the unique features found in e-readers, Goodwyn (2014) suggests that there are some key features of a physical book that an e-reader cannot easily emulate. He identifies the following:

- the physical properties of the book, for instance, the weight
- the ability of a book to have a particular smell
- readers turn pages using fingers and the text remains static on the page

Regarding the sense of smell, Ballatore and Natale state that paper smells often elicit responses from the reader: “Moreover, print books, especially cheap ones, ‘remember’ the reader’s passage by altering their physical structure, while e-readers are seen as impersonal, static and doomed to obsolescence in unstable technological markets” (2015, p. 6). Regarding the properties of text during reading, a reader’s experience of reading is not determined by the content of the text or the style, genre, or mode of writing so much as how that text has been received whether physically or socially by a reader (Leahy, 2013). Leahy goes on to state “the fact that there is a reader physically present in/with the work may suggest that the artist use technology that is responsive to this presence” (2013, p. 303).

Rapatzikou and Leonard (2016) point out that, due to advancements in digital publishing, readers do not only interact with text but also a digitally-processed interface that requires a set of consumption strategies. In this regard, new media technologies such as touchscreen devices enable readers to become involved in the production of narratives: “With such works, the screen becomes not a superficial layer through which readers pass in order to construct interactive texts, but a surface that demands attention and tactile interaction” (Rapatzikou and Leonard, 2016, p. 5). New media enables the passive reader to become an active participant and determine *how* to read in line with personal interpretations of the text: “The decentred nature of electronic text empowers and invites the reader to take part in the literary process” (Looy & Baetens, 2003, p. 7). Irrespective of its format,

“The novel demands both from the novelist and from the reader a gift of empathy, the ability to slip imaginatively into circumstances and conditions of life beyond their immediate milieu. Writing or reading a novel implies this

widening of the imaginative capability of writer and audience, so that the one can manage a faithful portrayal of social reality and the other an adequate reception of the vicarious experience. Both the novelist and reader are themselves products of a literary tradition which gives the capacity and training that the mind requires to absorb facts, realities and experiences which may not be part of the immediate milieu” (Obiechina, 2007, p. 326).

Following from the above, it is clear that “literature” is not limited to books. It can be encountered on stage, in publications, in oral performances, and recently in electronic media environments. Koskimaa (2007) believes that this variety indicates that literature is being expressed in new ways. Koskimaa sees this as a good thing, “one which helps maintain and even increase the relevance of literature in the contemporary digital world” (2007, p. 5).

2.5 Passive and Active Audiences

In discussing audiences, Marshall (2004) believes that the concept of being “active” can be examined in different ways, such as from the viewpoint of an engaged audience or the perspective of someone reading a newscast. Marshall adds that someone reading a book could be viewed as being as “active” as someone playing a computer game. Interactivity therefore “implies some sort of transformative relationship between the user of the media and the media form itself” (2004, p. 13).

The idea that audiences do not just receive or consume media has been of much interest to scholars in cultural and media studies (e.g.: Jenkins, 2006; Marshall, 2004; Meyers, 2012). These scholars have argued that audiences are not at all passive, but active in many ways when they interact with media. However, what constitutes “active

consumption” is still debated. The phrase implies that meaning is often not revealed by the producer so much as created within the text by the reader (Meyers, 2012).

Audiences often critically and actively consume text to create meaning, and in this view, Meyers argues that “audiences matter because how they interpret texts and what they do with those interpretations offer insight into how audiences produce cultural meaning through everyday media consumption” (2012, p. 1024). However, Meyers notes that new media technologies did not give birth to the active audience, but instead gave more powers to audiences. Gone are the days when traditional media or professional producers created and circulated content to be consumed by passive audiences; we are now witnessing the rise of an “audience/producer” enabled by new media technologies. This audience/producer oftentimes takes part in media production for pleasure. Audience/producers “take advantage of new media technologies that enable them to archive, annotate, appropriate, and recirculate media content” (Jenkins, 2006, p. 136) alongside texts produced by commercial media.

In discussing audiences, Jenkins observes that fan bases have been “the most active segment of the media audience, one that refuses to simply accept what they are given, but rather insists on the right to become full participants” (2006, p. 131). To Jenkins, fans prove that audiences can be actively involved in influencing media culture. Fans not only consume texts but create various texts that display their love for the original texts. Jenkins (2006) describes written texts created by fans as “slash fiction” and argues that their existence challenges traditional views of audiences as consumers and the power of professional producers. These fans, which may not necessarily represent all fandom, redefine consumption of media in new ways previously not considered in reference to active audiences. Prior to the Internet, fans

were only able to circulate a small amount of texts and commercial media organisations generally controlled what texts were publicly available, but new media technologies enables texts produced by fans to become more visible by “providing a new distribution channel for amateur production” (Jenkins, 2006, p. 131) that alters the power of traditional media while promoting and encouraging fan-produced texts. Jenkins believes that this practice extends types of cultural production traditionally linked with fandom through their adaptation by various new media audiences. In like vein, “the ‘audience’ member has become a producer of their content. In some instances, that action of producing is quite limited to just moving from website to website in a particularly individual and idiosyncratic way; in other cases, the user is actively transforming the content for redistribution” (Marshall, 2006, p. 638).

Audience participation has interested many scholars and there are many different approaches to the subject. Hargittai and Walejko (2008) focus on how content is created and shared online. However, online participation is a very different activity from Internet browsing; when people participate online, there is usually a high level of commitment (Hargittai, 2002; van Dijk, 2006). Online participation takes more time and effort than Internet browsing, and it requires some skills (Hargittai, 2002; van Dijk, 2006). Other scholars (Blank & Reisdorf, 2012; Schradie, 2011) consider how Internet users act while online; some people might not engage interactively even while on public forums. New media research considers not only issues of Internet access but also how people participate in online discussions because active use of the Internet can provide both economic and social benefits (van Deursen & van Dijk, 2014). Lutz and Meckel explain further:

“By sharing and discussing information, users not only gain knowledge, but also self-confidence. Accordingly, established authorities — such as doctors, teachers or politicians — are called into question. Traditionally hierarchical relations, e.g., in health care or education, are shaken up by increasingly self-confident and self-organizing users” (2014, p. 18)

Heinz and Rice (2009) identified some qualities that encouraged sharing and participation in online groups: frequency of interaction with group members, shared language, commitment, and openness. As e-books evolve, publishers develop innovative ideas to make reading more active and fun. Abrams (2015) describes BookGrabbr, a social media application that enables readers to download free e-books. BookGrabbr’s readers access the books after agreeing to share information about them through Facebook, Twitter, or LinkedIn. BookGrabbr enables publishers and authors to obtain some critical details on readers who download their books. This way, they can target readers regarding specific news or releases. BookGrabbr also ensures that writers who post on their own social media sites will have their works sent to their contacts. The author’s fans are then able to “grabb” the free e-books and share their experiences with others (Abrams, 2015). Also exploring this type of shared user experience, Twitter, Inc. launched the first Twitter Fiction Festival (#TFF), in 2012, using its account, @TwitterBooks. Vlieghe et al. note that the five-day social media literary experience brought to the fore creative approaches to storytelling by festival participants, and state that “the intertwining of literary and social media practices and their ongoing development causes a shift in our understanding and attention towards literary experiences” (2016, p. 4).

Additionally, “the characteristics and affordances of social media indeed contribute to a more social experience of reading and writing fiction, as is often claimed — implicitly or explicitly — by developers of social media” (Vlieghe et al., 2016, p. 25). Similarly, in June 2015, publishing houses in Germany hosted an online romance festival named Herzenstage (Days of the Heart). Süßmann (2015) observed that this virtual festival was hosted via social media platforms, particularly Twitter and Facebook. Authors chatted with their fans and gave away their books for free, and the hashtag #herzenstage trended on Twitter.

The above examples indicate the changing nature of consuming literature. Rapatzikou and Leonard argue that new open source software and open access literary journals highlight new directions for literature and technology, and are signs that there will be more collaboration and increasingly rapid retrieval of knowledge: “Literary efforts nowadays do not break with the past, but they, certainly, highlight the importance of retaining and enhancing the communication between mediums of expression with which we are familiar (print) and with which we are becoming acquainted (digital)” (2016, p. 14). Marshall (2004) is of the view that, in new media, we are involved in the process of producing the text and images that we use. For instance, when we click on a mouse to navigate links and websites, we “shift our default media consumption from that provided for us to one that is fabricated by us” (Marshall, 2004, p. 25). However, choosing what we desire to see is not only unique to the Internet; the TV remote control also made it possible for people to flip through channels. New media, however, “has intensified the cultural experience and made it more routine in our everyday lives” (Marshall, 2004, p. 25).

2.6 New Technologies in Developing Countries

This section looks at arguments surrounding new technologies in developing countries. As the focus of this research is on Africa, it is important to review some issues related to technology use on the continent, and how these might affect the way people quickly make of use new devices to read or publish literature. Burrell (2012) argues that a new technology often takes longer for its impact to be known, and the process of acquiring specialist knowledge especially for computer technologies is equally a long process. Therefore, early evaluation can misjudge the true potential of technology. Science and technology studies have shown that technology is not separate from sociology, but is an important part of its success, consequently successful technologies are those that create profound social benefits for users (Luyt, 2008). An example of such is the mobile phone.

Chen (2015) identifies three concepts that should aid creation and development of new technologies for developing countries:

1. **Simplicity.** New technologies should be simple to use and easy to maintain.
2. **Infrastructure independence:** new technologies must have access to reliable electricity, reliable transport or even network connectivity.
3. **Modularity:** new technologies should be designed in such a way that that parts can be easily replaced locally.

Hanson and Narula (2013) have called on developing countries (DCs) to introduce new technologies able to meet the needs and skills of their citizens, in line with global best practices. However, they note, “the important task before developing countries is to assess technological options in terms of public needs, characteristics and

actual performance, cost effectiveness and available country resources” (Hanson & Narula, 2013, p. 6). While it is important to develop and make good use of new technologies by promoting these technologies themselves, and developing related applications and skills, Hanson and Narula suggest that old technology does not encourage development of local technology growth. This is primarily because technology created for use in developed countries might be relevant in developing countries despite the fact that “the two worlds differ socioeconomically, culturally, and often ideologically. These problems call for responsive policies for transfer and import of technology knowledge, and training, and consideration of a policy of indigenous production” (Hanson & Narula, 2013, p. 6).

Several factors have prevented the advancement of information technology in many developing countries (Kunda & Brooks, 2000). Some of these include infrastructure, finance, culture and politics, and Kunda and Brooks believe that substantial resources and a desire to find long-term solutions to these problems must be pursued: “Although identification of problems faced by DCs is a very complex task, the concentration should be on those problems that are unique to the DCs and which may have a significant impact on the assimilation of the IT” (2000, p. 124).

Developing countries set their eyes on one key outcome: providing a better life for its citizens (Mansilla, 2007). The definition of better life varies from country to country, but it involves increased income and education levels, improved healthcare and high life expectancy. Today, development is now linked to the rising use of information and communication technology, towards achieving a better life for people in developing countries (Mansilla, 2007). Mansilla makes reference to the Statement of Principles of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) that new

technology can be used towards achieving the Millennium Development Goal. To put it in perspective, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) attempted to proffer solutions to the challenge of advancing new media technologies through its World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) in Geneva in 2003 (ITU, 2008). Two years later, a follow-up summit was held in Tunisia with the objective of using the power of new media technologies to promote the Millennium Development Goals (ITU, 2008). The WSIS urged governments and stakeholders in the telecommunications sector to work towards providing cheap information access for everyone, including those who lived in villages (ITU, 2008). In discussing the role of the summit, Balleste argues that the second phase of the WSIS in Tunisia was a “beginning rather than an end” (2012).

Importantly, discussions at that forum eventually brought in other stakeholders including civil society, the private sector, NGOs, the United Nations, and Internet registrars and registry operators (Balleste, 2012). Around the time that the WSIS was held, developing countries began to witness investments in telecommunications, leading to the proliferation of mobile phones. This can be linked to policies on ICT developed by many African nations that sought to use new technologies to foster development. Governments of several African countries believed that the wide use of new communication technologies would propel their nations to a knowledge intensive economy (McBride and Stahl, 2009; Wakunuma, 2013). The section below reviews some literature on the mobile phone and its application across developing countries.

2.6.1 Mobile Phones

The mobile phone phenomenon in developing countries is rightly observed by Pew Research Centre, who states that in a relatively short period of time, mobile phones changed the face of communications in developing countries, allowing them to

“leapfrog the landline and go straight to the wireless lines” (2015, p. 1). Castells et al. (2007) had earlier purported this view, while adding that in several developing countries landlines have been unable to meet the requirements of the citizens. In those countries, mobile phones provided the services that landlines would have ordinarily provided. Similarly, De Bruijn et al. (2009) believe that Africa’s communications landscape has gone through many changes since mobile phones were introduced. They note that in 2000, only 1 in 50 Africans owned mobile phones, but the number rose significantly by 2008, when 1 in 3 had access. They see this as a “revolution in terms of voice communication, especially for areas where land lines were still rare at the end of the 20th century” (De Bruijn et al., 2009, p. 11). Castells et al. (2007) note that the increasing use of mobile phones in Africa is due to the inability of operators to meet the demand for telephone lines, in addition to new regulations that opened up the telecommunications sector to private investors throughout Africa. However, beyond these reasons, Castells et al. state that:

“Not only do mobile phones and the wireless Internet play a role in the integration and disintegration of communities, they also provide a genetic social space in which collective practices become regularized and formalized, giving rise to social norms that shape future development in the social uses of the technologies” (2007, p. 94).

Indeed, the mobile phone is doing in Africa what the steam engine did in Europe: pushing social and economic transformation (Wallis, 2016). African startups have therefore taken advantage of this mobile device to produce mobile apps that can make life more meaningful, from herding cattle in Kenya to mobile washerwomen in Uganda (Wallis, 2016). Kenya’s mobile-money system, M-PESA launched in 2007 is

seen as one of the most innovative uses of mobile phones in Africa (Economist, 2015). Over two-thirds of the adult population in Kenya use the service to transfer cash via their phones (Economist, 2015). In recent years, millions of people in Africa (who have no desktop computers or broadband) have been able to get online through the mobile phone (Mutiga and Flood, 2016). Interestingly, there are now more mobile phones than adults in most African countries. In Ghana, for instance, a country populated by 28 million people, mobile subscription is over 30 million (Laary, 2016).

A quick look at history shows that several steps have been taken over the years to ensure that developing nations catch up with advances in new technologies such as telecommunications. In 1975, the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) planned the “New World Information Order” (Stevenson, 1988), which was adopted a year later and saw Western nations make a pledge to help developing countries establish their information systems. This heralded the beginning of an information renaissance in the 1980s (Stevenson, 1988). As a result, other United Nations agencies followed suit. Specifically, the United Nations Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF) helped connect Africa with the United States and Western Europe and the United Nations Special Initiative for Africa developed an information and communication technologies (ICT) initiative for the continent (Stevenson, 1988). In 1992, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) launched a pilot networking programme in 12 countries (Hilliard, 2002). The ambitious Africa One project — an undersea fibre optic system that circles Africa and provides countries with extensive telecommunications capabilities — has connected the continent, as several countries in Africa (including Benin, Nigeria, Ethiopia, and South Africa) were part of the \$1.6 billion cable project (Campbell, 2002; White, 2002; Hilliard, 2002).

Marshall (2004) explains that mobile phones developed first as business tools and then were used to maintain family and social networks. In the 1980s, he argued, the mobile phone was used in cars by busy chief executives; by the early 1990s it became part of everyday business in many wealthy countries, and over the past few decades integration of cameras and other functionality has made mobile phones quite useful to people, therefore “ultimately the technology has crossed from being designed for work to one of play and connection” (Marshall, 2004, p. 40). Mobile phones are also being integrated into other technologies — for instance, people can use their mobile phones to vote on reality TV programmes. Phones are also integrated with cameras and people can use them to take pictures and create videos. Mobile phones are hybrid devices used for a variety of purposes (Goggin, 2009, p. 2). Hahn (2008) also insists that mobile phones should not be viewed merely as devices for talking, and urges people to see them as part of the local material culture. In the case of Africa, Aker and Mbiti suggest that, as the popularity of the mobile phone grows on the continent, the device is evolving from a talking tool into a multidimensional platform which “has shifted the development paradigm surrounding mobile phones from one that simply reduces communication and coordination costs to one that could transform lives through innovative applications and services” (2010, p. 208).

Castells et al. (2007) believes that in advanced economies, mobile phones are seen as mobile tools for communication on-the-go. However, for people who live in developing countries, mobile phones are seen as a form of connectivity, and this means that how people value mobile phones varies from country to country (Castells et al., 2007). For those who have a landline already, mobile phones provide an added advantage: “To those for whom the mobile phone is the first form of personal

communication to be owned, the major prize is to be connected at last, the phone is acquired not in order to be mobile, but in order to be connected, although mobility is an added bonus” (Castells et al., 2007, p. 218). This is a major distinguishing feature of those who own mobile phones in areas with a large number of landlines and those who live in areas with low number of landlines (Castells et al., 2007).

Research on mobile phone use in Ghana shows that phones are used to maintain family relations (Hahn, 2008), echoing Slater and Kwani (2005), who describe the mobile phone as a tool that enables people to establish and maintain relationships when social mobility has brought about physical distances between friends and family. The telecommunications company Vodafone also commissioned research on the use of mobile phones in Africa in 2008. That study revealed that people who could not afford to buy their own mobile phones accessed mobile services through family and friends or through phone shops in their communities (Vodafone, 2008). Mobile phone owners surveyed in South Africa said family members and friends used their handsets for free and the practice of sharing devices has helped foster relationships (Vodafone, 2008). In Nigeria, Ezenwa and Brooks (2013) state, the government and other organisations have worked to achieve much success with the use of mobile phones, particularly in the banking sector. They argue that the use of mobile banking in that country has led to changes in business practices, modernized the way people manage their finances, and expanded access to banking systems to those who had previously been excluded from the formal financial ecosystem.

Therefore, mobile phones provide an alternative method of banking that is much more convenient and cheaper than traditional banking; in mobile banking, customers can make use of SMS to pay bills or transfer money from their comfort of their homes,

without the need to visit the bank (Ezenwa & Brooks, 2013). Ezenwa and Brooks (2013) have also highlighted how mobile phones can help improve the way health data is monitored and managed, to generate accurate information for decision makers in Nigeria. They state that mobile phones can help offer healthcare to citizens wherever they reside in the country, to uphold their fundamental rights. Wakunuma (2013) believes that the mobile phone has certainly brought about social and economic growth in Africa, but strong policies should also focus on other areas, including Internet broadband and computer access, to encourage the strengthening of the economy. She also calls on stakeholders to consider how to combine other technological elements with mobile phones in order help solve some of Africa's problems, particularly those faced by women. Wakunuma believes that solving these economic problems requires a multidimensional effort that takes into consideration several factors.

The adoption of mobile phones in Africa has been accompanied by policies on surveillance. Some of these include SIM registration, whereby subscribers are required to give their names, addresses, fingerprints, and other details (Donovan & Martin, 2014; Castells, 2007). Those who refuse to register their SIMs will have their lines disconnected, as Donovan and Martin (2014) note that the interesting thing about SIM registration compared to other forms of surveillance is that people who fail to comply automatically lose their phone lines. This has not always been so; before 2006, no country in Africa insisted on SIM registration, but in 2014, 49 African countries made it mandatory for subscribers to register their SIMs, although there have been cases in Kenya, Tanzania, and Nigeria, where mobile communications policies have been linked to corruption (Donovan & Martin, 2014). So, there is some aspect of information control being exercised by several governments in Africa. In Egypt, for instance, the

government wants centralized control of the information society (McBride and Stahl, 2009). Wilford reminds that “the potential for constantly increasing levels of surveillance could create a panoptic society of universal scrutiny of citizens which ultimately could lead to the democratic process being undermined” (2008, p. 133). Those who want to participate in a technological society must therefore give up some privacy in order to enjoy the benefits (Wilford, 2008).

2.6.2 *Digital Divide*

Despite the fact that mobile phones have helped to improve telephone access in developing countries, a wide gap remains between developed and developing countries involving the way technology is available and used (Castells et al., 2007). Over the past decade, scholars have used the term “digital divide” to describe the gap between those who adopted technology early and those who had no access at all in developing countries (Potter, 2006). Gunkel (2004) argues that as new media emerges, the term will evolve to have different interpretations. Van Deursen and van Dijk (2011) remind us that the term “digital divide” was originally used to distinguish those who had no access to computers from those who did. As people across the world began to adopt the Internet, “digital divide” was then used to distinguish those with Internet access from those without (van Deursen & van Dijk, 2011). One divide that is often not discussed is the “rural-urban divide within developing countries” (Castells et al., 2007, p. 217). Research on the digital divide was once limited to physical access to the Internet, but consequent research recognised this limitation, and researchers now pay attention to factors such as social and cultural backgrounds (van Deursen & van Dijk, 2011). Trucco (2013) asserts that in Latin America there is substantial access gaps, made even

more difficult by another gap of use and appropriation. Hirata (2013) also speaks of “double digital divide” in East Asia, arguing that there is a high number of people who don’t have access to the Internet in the region. She calls it double digital because there is both digital divide that exists in each Asian country and another that exist throughout the continent. However, Andreasson (2015) believes that gaps in access and usage have existed since ICTs were invented. Due to Internet growth, various gaps are increasingly debated, such as differences in adoption and how this prevents some people from participating in the digital economy (Andreasson, 2015). Therefore, the different ways technologies is used and developed is creating poverty and exclusion and promoting existing inequalities and social divisions (Wessels, 2013).

The concept of digital divide can be seen from different perspectives, including cultural, gender, and generational lines (Marshall, 2004; Potter, 2006; van Deursen & van Dijk, 2011). Wessels (2013) lists some of the formats of digital divide as follows:

- One: demographic lines such as age, ethnicity, age, gender, and education
- Two: technological divide exists among some regions which prevent them from joining the global economy
- Three: the knowledge gap involving people who lack access or skills is widening across the world

Norris (2001) also sees digital divide from three broad perspectives: first, the global divide – the different ways internet is accessed in developed and developing countries; second, social divide – the gap between those who have information technology and those who don’t have and third, the democratic divide – the difference between those who can and those who cannot use digital technology to participate in

democracy. Such participation is seen during elections and campaigning in Africa. In 2011, Goodluck Jonathan, the former President of Nigeria announced via Facebook that he was running again for President. Essoungou (2011) stated that 24 hours after the announcement on Facebook, over 4,000 more fans joined Goodluck's page, and on the day Nigerians went to the poll, he had over half a million followers. A year later, Nigerians in the diaspora, who were not pleased with the Jonathan administration, turned to the Internet. Chinua Achebe, who was still living in the US, issued a statement that urged President Jonathan and his administration to immediately end the state of lawlessness in the country. In this regard, the "embedding of digital technology in social, economic, democratic processes and cultural forms is materialising and is experienced unevenly and differently by people across the globe" (Wessels, 2013:18).

Research on current digital divides has examined varying concepts including motivation, access, skills, and use (van Deursen & van Dijk, 2015). Motivation in this context refers to why people use or do not use the Internet and can be examined in terms of how people engage with or create content for digital media. Van Deursen, Helsper, and Eynon (2016) identify four Internet-based skills: operational, information-navigation, social, and creative skills. These category break downs enable researchers to study the distribution of Internet skill levels within a given population and how these skills affect Internet use. Operational skills are primary practical skills required to use the Internet. Information-navigation skills include searching for specific information on the Internet. Social skills involve using the Internet to share meaning with others; this oftentimes involves searching or selecting contacts online and even attracting attention. People need creative skills to produce quality content for the Internet — for instance, the ability to produce and upload music, video, or photos. These four skills represent

the range of what one needs to know to participate in online spaces (van Deursen, Helsper, & Eynon, 2016).

Van Deursen and van Dijk (2015) speak of “autonomy of use,” the relative freedom people have to use a particular technology whenever and wherever they want without undue interference. Van Deursen and van Dijk (2011) observed that young people are often more skilful Internet users than their elders, whilst highly educated people usually have computers that are connected to the Internet at home and this enables them to spend more time online. Singer et al. (2012) emphasise the need to classify users because a wide range of people, both young and old, are now using new media technologies. Classification helps researchers determine what sorts of support different users require. It is also possible to classify users through various approaches: for example, by studying how long someone has been using the Internet or their frequency of use, whether daily or monthly (Singer et al., 2012). Hargittai (2002) says that when we refer to Internet use statistics, it is important for us to go beyond classifying people in terms of users versus nonusers and look at people’s web uses so that we understand where there may be gaps pertaining to new information technologies. This approach focuses on why people use the Internet, and how important it is for them to use the new technology. Access to the Internet at home is usually seen as autonomous, particularly with a high-speed connection (Livingstone and Helsper, 2007).

A study of internet access locations in America by Hassani (2006) reveals that those with several places to access the Internet are more likely to take part in online activities that will be of benefit to them than those with limited Internet access points, and a study of Internet use among American adults found that those with good

educational backgrounds are more likely to visit websites that would enable them learn something new (Hargittai, 2008). But more recent studies indicate that about 15% of American adults do not use the Internet at all, and among those non-internet users, 19% of them say it is because owning a computer or paying for an Internet access is expensive (Zickuhr, 2013). It is interesting to see that cost inhibits access to the Internet in America. Cost also prevents people from accessing the Internet in Africa. Awotwi (2015) observes that in Ghana, most people access the Internet via mobile phones as PCs are too expensive. Internet service providers charge a lot of money, and people generally have issues with broadband (Awotwi, 2015). However, in the UK, Internet use among the adult population is linked to age, sex, disability and location (Office for National Statistics, 2015).

The information society provides huge benefits to its citizens, but there are likewise negative consequences for people who cannot take part. Marshall (2004) believes that several governments in developing countries have not done much to open up technological access to their citizens and this attitude has unconsciously led to a noticeable technology gap between these developing countries and their developed counterparts. In other words, developed countries enjoy all the benefits of new media while developing or underdeveloped countries have far less access to these benefits, and this raises concerns about how these gaps could be closed (Mansell & When, 1998). Luyt (2004) however acknowledges that many developing countries are tackling the digital divide and those who fail to keep up with the accelerating pace of new media innovations might not have the opportunity to participate fully in the information society and economy. Awotwi (2015) believes that in order for governments to properly bridge the digital divide, they need to identify the particular ICT that would be most

suitable and then make them affordable and available. Awotwi (2015) therefore suggests that because Internet facilities are not immediately available across the country, any digital initiative should make use of the mobile phones, since these devices are more widely available. However, it should be noted that in Africa, while many view mobile communication technologies as gender-neutral, some researchers are finding different levels of use.

Castells et al. state that “there are clear gender differences in acquisition and use, a blurring of traditional gender lines in usage or observations of no gender differences, and culturally specific gendered usage patterns” (2007, p. 45). Wakunuma (2013) also believes that there are gender differentials in the way people access and use technologies. Women, for instance, are more likely to be held back by poor education (Wakunuma, 2013). Women in remote regions often do not know how to use these technologies, which are perceived to be expensive, and mothers and wives are more concerned with providing shelter and food for their families. Wakunuma (2013) suggests that stakeholders must understand the link between poverty, globalisation, and gender inequality. While some projects are created specifically for women, policies should also enable women to buy new mobile technologies that might present them with new opportunities (Wakunuma, 2013). A few years after Wakunuma made the call for a new policy on gender and connectivity, a report by the Alliance for Affordable Internet shows that although the world has witnessed about 50% global internet penetration, a large percentage of women in developing countries are still offline due to the fact that they are unable to afford to connect (Alliance for Affordable Internet, 2017). While the Alliance also commended the global community for setting a target of achieving universal Internet access as part of the Sustainable Development Goals by

2020, they say that without some serious policies, the target will be missed by over 20 years.

2.7 Theoretical Framework

This section discusses the theoretical framework of the current research. Many theories give different perspectives on similar issues. Therefore, it is up to the researcher to decide what relevant theory to use for arguing and explaining key findings. Researchers in the field of media, technologies, and culture have available a range of theories for study of the influence of technology on culture. Some of the theories include:

- Technology Acceptance Model
- Diffusion of Innovation Theory
- Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology
- Uses and Gratification Theory

Davis (1989) has used the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) to describe how people adopt and accept technology in different settings through perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU). According to Davis PEOU is, “The degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would be free of effort” (1989, p. 320). PEOU helps to explain those characteristics that lead to adoption of information systems such as ease of use and flexibility. This means that users prefer an information system that requires not much effort to use compared to one that is more complicated to use (Davis, 1989). According to Davis, PU is “[When] a person believes that using a particular system would enhance his or her job performance” (1989, p.

320). This implies that using a type of information system or technology could help someone perform better at work. In general, this theory is commonly applied to information technology systems (Lee, Kozar, & Larsen, 2003); for this reason, it was not deemed appropriate for this study, which intersects sociology, literature, and technology.

The Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) describes those main determinants for using an information technology (Venkatesh, Morris, Davis, & Davis 2003). Venkatesh, et al. have argued that the following determinants — performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and facilitating conditions — influence user adoption of IT. According to Venkatesh et al, performance expectancy is the degree to which someone knows that using the IT will help boost job performance. Venkatesh, et al., (2003) describe effort expectancy as the level to which IT is easy to use. They explain that social influence is the extent to which someone is influenced by others to use new IT. Facilitating conditions refers to the degree that someone believes that he/she has the required support that will enable them to use IT (Venkatesh, et al., 2003). Just like TAM, UTAUT deals primarily with information technology, which is not the sole focus of this study, hence the rejection of this model for the purposes of analysing findings.

This study instead makes use of the Uses and Gratification Theory (U & G) and Diffusion of Innovation Theory (DOI). This study makes use of two theories in order to help the researcher make more sense of the data. As described in Chapter One, two surveys were conducted, which produced two sets of data. The use of two theories would complement each other and strengthen the findings. The wide range of media now available requires writers and readers to make many choices. People who use the

Internet decide which websites to visit and what tools to use, making deliberate decisions to click on links or search for particular information. Borah (2015) investigates common theories used in published literature on emerging communication technologies. Her unit of analysis was peer-reviewed journal articles published between 1998 and 2013, and Borah's results show that the U & G theory is the most common, followed closely by the DOI theory. The sections below provide a thorough description of these theories, highlighting the various arguments surrounding them and their application in several contexts, including new media research.

2.7.1 *Uses and Gratification Theory*

The uses and gratifications (U&G) theory is deeply rooted in mass communications research. Katz (1959) was one of the earliest proponents of U & G theory, which deals with what people do with the media available to them and argues that people generally turn to a particular medium to meet specific needs. It was propounded to discuss how people used traditional media like radio, TV and newspapers. Therefore "any attempt to speculate on the future direction of mass communication theory must seriously include the U&G approach" (Ruggiero, 2000, p.3).

Wimmer and Dominick (1994) claim that U&G can be traced to the 1940s when scholars wanted to study why audiences listened to the radio or read newspaper. So, early studies on U&G were mostly descriptive. McQuail (1994) agrees that in the beginning, U & G was mostly focusing on behaviours or an individual. The researchers then did not take into consideration the links between the gratifications that they identified and the psychological or sociological origins of the needs. However, between the 1950s and 1960s, scholars included some social and psychological determinants that

they felt contributed to the way media was consumed (Wimmer & Dominick, 1994). Several variables were identified, for instance, Schramm, Lyle, and Parker (1961) argued that a child's mental ability as well as relationship with his/her parents influenced how the child watched TV. Scholars also felt that it was important to analyse the consequences of media use (Klapper, 1963). In this regard, Mendelsohn (1964) argued that people generally listened to radio for companionship, as well as for information. Gerson (1966) also suggested that a person's race also determined media use.

Research on Uses and Gratification, up until the 1970s, did not include gratifications outcomes (Rayburn, 1996). Around the 1970s, researchers began to study the motivation of audiences and identified other reasons people use media to fulfil their various needs. Rosengren (1974) argued that someone's problems and perceived solutions could lead to different reasons that person seeks gratification from the media. In the 1980s, scholars began to modify, refine and extend studies on U & G (Rubin, 1983). For instance, Bantz's (1982) investigated the differences between those who generally watched TV and those who only watched specific programmes. Also, in the 1980s, U&G researchers (e.g., Levy and Windahl, 1984; Rubin, 1981; Windahl, 1981) began to take a look at the concept of an active audience. In the 90's, with the popularity of the web, scholars (e.g., Morris and Ogan, 1996; Newhagen and Rafaeli, 1996; Ruggiero, 2000), began to call for the adoption of U & G theory to understand new media use.

According to U & G theory, "we all have differing primary, secondary and even tertiary needs for various types of information in our complex and sometimes confusing world" (Larson, 2010, p. 352). It is important to note that U & G theory answers

particular questions, including, “what do people do with the media? What do they use the media for and what do they get from their media use?” (Fourie, 2007, p. 297). In answering these questions, Fourie highlighted the following motives:

- Diversion: people often use media to escape from boredom or routine work
- Personal relations: people also use media for companionship and sociability. They use it to establish and maintain relationships with friends
- Personal identity: people use the media to make sense of their identity
- Surveillance: people can use the media to monitor happenings around the world. The information they gather helps them plan their lives.

In research on mediated communication, Katz et al. (1974) observe that people use media in order to meet some of their needs. They identify these needs as cognitive, affective, escapist, and integrative (Katz et al., 1974). Lev-On (2011) examines how those affected by conflicts use media to suit various needs and discuss political issues. Lev-On believes that U & G can be very useful in times of crisis, arguing: In crisis situations the degree of uncertainty is heightened, which can cause anxiety, stress, anger, and even depression as a result of the undermined sense of stability and security and the lack of control and knowledge about the near future. In such periods the importance of receiving relevant information which could alleviate anxiety and help in dealing with crisis, increases (2011, p. 101).

2.7.1.1 Criticisms and Limitations of U & G Theory

Scholars have criticised U & G for relying too much on self-reports and not taking into consideration the social backgrounds of audiences. This view is shared by both Rossentein and Grant (1997) and Severin and Takard (1997); these scholars argue

that the methods employed by U & G, especially those that depend on self-reported typologies, tend to interpret the lifestyles rather than the behaviours of audiences, thereby making them too simplistic. Stanford criticizes some of the findings and analysis of U & G scholars, arguing that, “the discussion ranges far from the results, which do not support their theoretical underpinnings” (1983, p. 247). Elliott (1974) said that because U & G focussed mostly on audience consumption, the theory was too individualistic and its findings were not broadly relevant. Therefore, Elliott believed, it was hard to use U & G to study the impact of media use on society. White (1994) and Anderson (1996) conclude the theory misjudges the individual’s ability to control both content and interpretative value, in effect stating that what was being consumed is often beyond the individual’s control.

2.7.1.2 Rationale for Adopting U & G Theory in this Research

In spite of the criticisms described above, Ruggiero (2000) insists that it makes sense to employ U & G theory in new media-related research. He believes that with increased adoption of new media technologies, it is important to investigate people’s motives for using them, know why people become involved in mediated communication, and learn what gratifications they receive:

“Although we are likely to continue using traditional tools and typologies to answer these questions, we must also be prepared to expand our current theoretical models of U & G to include concepts such as interactivity, demassification, hypertextuality, asynchronicity, and interpersonal aspects of mediated communication” (Ruggiero, 2000, p. 36).

Several scholars have since expanded U & G models to adapt them to the 21st century. By employing the U & G theory, researchers can determine how and why people use new media and take part in online discussions. Soh, Charlton, and Chew (2014) argue that an adapted U & G theory can help explain the motivation behind adolescent Internet use and addiction. They highlight escape, social interaction, and erotic motives as the major factors and note that “dysfunctional parental attachment and a consequent need for psychological escape are likely to be more highly implicated in the aetiology of internet-related addiction than peer attachment” (Soh et al., 2014, p. 54). Griffith and Papacharissi (2010) find it important to question how people express themselves on new media. Although sometimes people seem to engage in meaningless chatter online, in the midst of so-called “worthless” discussions, when people are given an opportunity, they can also discuss serious issues (Griffith & Papacharissi, 2010). In this vein, Chen (2013) uses U & G to analyse results from a sample of women bloggers, and his study revealed three basic motives that propel women to use social media: information, engagement, and recreation. Chen points out that these motives differ according to the type of social media used. For instance, some people preferred to use Facebook for engagement, and Twitter to gather information.

Kaye and Johnson (2002) state that the U & G theory is effective for studying how and why people use the Internet. They contend that when people watch TV they are able to flip through channels using a remote control, and people navigate the Internet in a comparable way: “the two-way nature of online technologies such as email, bulletin boards and chat rooms requires audience members to be active users” (Kaye & Johnson, 2002, p. 56). Similarly, Newhagen and Rafaeli (1996) posit that, since researchers have been using U & G to carry out research in mass communication,

the same theory can also be applied when studying the Internet since it is a valid field of mass-communication research.

Having reviewed the advantages of U & G, it was felt that this model is suitable for the current research since it examines the influence of new media technology on new literature from Africa. U & G has a long history, just like African literature. As described earlier in this chapter, African literature has its origin in orality, and progressed through print and the new media, without losing its unique features. Similarly, over the years, U&G has been used to understand the gratification derived from media use, from radio to TV, and now media. U & G theory assumes that people use media to achieve gratification. The writers in this study are already using new media. So the theory is relevant to this study as it will be employed to determine the gratification writers derive from using new media. Therefore, U & G theory as a theoretical framework for the present study helps explain some of the findings of the surveys with writers. Specifically, the theory adds value to the work by helping with understanding how new media (for example, the Internet and social media) has allowed African writers to achieve gratification in a number of areas, including staying connected with their audiences, networking with fellow writers, and promoting and disseminating their works.

Indeed, the survey with African writers aims to elicit responses on how these writers engage with new media. As noted earlier, U & G has a long history, but can still be used for new media studies, in light of advances in communication technologies. Therefore, analysing survey responses using the U & G will help modify the theory in relation to the aims of this study. Specifically, it will help the researcher propose new motives for using new media beyond those advanced by the theory's founding

proponents. Importantly, the application of U & G theory provides insights into how new media can be applied to African literature – the essence of this study.

2.7.2 *Diffusion of Innovations Theory*

The previous section discusses the application of U & G theory in new media research, while this section looks at the Diffusion of Innovations (DOI) theory. Sharma and Romas (2012) state that, historically, DOI theory dates back to the early 1900s, when Gabriel Tarde, a French sociologist, wrote *The Laws of Innovation*. This work looked at what caused innovation to spread. Sharma states that a contemporary of Tarde, Georg Simmel, later included the concept of a “stranger” — someone who belongs to a system but is not really attached to it — and this concept became integrated in DOI theory. Early empirical work on DOI theory can be traced to a study of hybrid seed corn by sociologists at Iowa State University (Sharma & Romas, 2012). Around the 1940s and 1950s, the diffusion of innovation concept was used mostly in the field of sociology, but in the 1950s Everett Rogers became keen on the theory while working towards his PhD at Iowa State; he thereafter published his first book on diffusion of innovation in 1962 (Sharma & Romas, 2012).

In defining this theory, Rogers states that “diffusion is the process in which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time, among the members of a social system. It is a special type of communication, in that the messages are concerned with new ideas” (2003, p. 5). Rogers sees innovation as something that appears new to an individual. It does not really matter if the object or idea is entirely new; if the user has not seen it before, then it is an innovation to that person. Rogers states that total diffusion and adoption of all innovations is not necessary. Sometimes, innovations may appear harmful or inefficient to an individual. The same innovation

may be useful to someone in a particular situation but completely unusable to another adopter in another situation (Rogers, 2003). However, Livingstone (1999) argues that diffusion should be seen as a social process due to the complex interaction between those who actually use a medium and those imagined to use it. She believes the Internet has opened up a new frontier for discussing the link between what is private and what is public, and also provides an opportunity to study different levels of knowledge and how knowledge is handed down (Livingstone, 1999).

Digging deep into different levels of knowledge, Rogers discusses “the main questions that an individual typically asks: what is the innovation? How does it work? Why does it work? What are the innovation consequences? What will its advantages be in my situation?” (2003, p. 14). In answering these questions, Rogers highlights some characteristics of innovation that lead to adoption:

- Relative advantage: the extent to which an adoption exceeds the expectations of the adopter; “the degree of relative advantage may be measured in economic terms, but social prestige factors, convenience and satisfaction are also important factors” (2003, p. 15)
- Compatibility: the extent that an innovation is in line with previous experiences of prospective adopters.; “An idea that is incompatible with the values and norms of a social system will not be adopted as rapidly as an innovation that is compatible” (2003, p. 15)
- Complexibility: the extent that an innovation is seen as “difficult to understand and use. New ideas that are simpler to understand are adopted more rapidly than innovations that require the adopter to develop new skills and misunderstandings” (2003, p. 16)

- Trialability: the extent to which an innovation can be trialled; an idea that can be easily tried provides “less uncertainty to the individual who is considering it for adoption” (2003, p. 16)
- Observability: the extent to which people can see the results of an innovation; “The easier it is for individuals to see the results of an innovation, the more likely they are to adopt” (2003, p. 16)

2.7.2.1 Criticisms and Limitations of Diffusion of Innovation Theory

Baron and Davis (2009) have stated that in the process of diffusion, adopters oftentimes do not even understand the innovation being introduced. In addition, the theory does not acknowledge someone’s resources or the support needed in order for the person to adopt the innovation. They argue that “mere top-down diffusion of innovation didn’t guarantee long-term success” (Baron & Davis, 2009, p. 273). Parcel, Perry, and Taylor (1990) criticise DOI because it can only be used with adoption of behaviours instead of explaining how to prevent or stop some behaviours, and therefore cannot be applied in certain areas like healthcare, where people would first of all adopt an innovation in order to prevent something terrible from happening at a later date. For instance, a smoker needs to give up cigarettes in order to live a cancer-free life later. In this regard, DOI in healthcare can be a long process that takes place at different levels using different strategies and settings (Parcel, Perry, & Taylor, 1990).

Gatignon and Robertson (1985) believe that there is too much focus on direct effects in DOI theory, arguing that DOI places less emphasis on other factors, such as individual innovator characteristics. Lambkin and Day (1989) also criticise DOI for being too linked with demand, arguing that the theory only provides descriptive and not

facilitative information regarding the process of adoption. Lambkin and Day (1989) conclude that DOI theory does not take into consideration other elements such as competition, resource allocation, and how these factors affect the swiftness of diffusion alongside the product life cycle.

2.7.2.2 Rationale for Adopting Diffusion of Innovation Theory in this Research

Despite these criticisms, Fourie (2007) states that DOI theory can be used for new media studies in two basic ways: first, given the innovation of new media items, and second, in terms of how media spreads innovation of new ideas or beliefs. According to Fourie, “the media itself is an innovation. With each development in media technology, new forms of communication are established. These new forms of communication are established” (2007, p. 299). Scholars have in fact adopted DOI theory for new media studies. For instance, Raynard, (2016) uses the theory to analyse a study on the use of e-books in a tertiary institution. The study sought to understand how and why people were using academic e-books. Similarly, Smyth and Carlin (2012) use the theory to analyse a study on how and why undergraduate students use e-books and the reasons why some students do not use e-books. Smyth and Carlin (2012) also use the theory to consider other things like barriers to use. Interestingly, their findings reveal that undergraduates use e-books 30 times more than print books. However, beyond e-books, across the world, scholars have also used DOI theory to study activities related to other aspects of new media. For instance, Jung (2012) uses the theory to analyse how people connect to the Internet in Japan.

Zhou (2008) integrates DOI and TAM to study the way Chinese journalists adopt the Internet. He proposed four adoption categories: voluntary adopters, forced adopters, resistant non-adopters, and dormant non-adopters. Similarly, English (2014) employs DOI theory to study how Twitter has been adopted by sports journalists in media organisations in Australia, India, and the United Kingdom. His study reveals that the UK journalists adopted the technology more quickly, ahead of both Australia and India. Dilaver (2014) uses DOI theory to investigate perspectives on computers and mobile phones. He chose to study these particular tools “because both are electronic devices with microprocessors, illuminated screens and keyboards. They have acquired increasingly similar functions in terms of accessing the internet and supporting textual and voice communication” (2014, p. 1218).

Proponents of DOI concern themselves with the notion that diffusion is the process whereby an innovation passes through peer channels during a particular period. However, innovation is also linked to ideas or products that an individual sees as new. What are those features of an innovation that have led readers from Africa to adopt reading on new media platforms? Several features of innovation have been identified to lead to adoption (i.e.: relative advantage, compatibility, complexibility, trialability, and observability; Rogers, 2003). DOI theory has practical relevance to this study for analysing the survey responses from readers in relation to these features. This reader survey sought to elicit responses, especially on why readers adopted new media technologies (e.g., mobile devices) and social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Twitter) in reading various works and connecting/engaging with writers and others. Therefore, application of DOI theory becomes important in achieving this objective. Importantly, as Pew Internet Centre (2015) revealed, mobile phone ownership has grown

significantly in Africa. Understanding how this diffusion of mobile devices has helped readers access, share, and discuss new African literature is in line with the objectives of this thesis, and therefore DOI would help achieve this purpose. The theory will help to determine if indeed the characteristics of an innovation play a key role in reader's adoption decision.

While U & G seeks to determine why writers use the media, DOI seeks to understand the characteristics of new media that makes it possible for readers to adopt it. Both writers and readers are the core components of literature, therefore analysing the gratifications and the features of new media from the perspectives of the reader and writer, would provide a thorough understanding of the influence of new technologies on African literature. This researcher opted to study needs in relation to adoption, because a combination of theories would enable him to understand the extent that new media blends with the pursuit of some gratifications that bring about the adoption of new media. The use of two theories would enable the researcher to consider all possible ways data could be interpreted in order to enhance the findings. Due to the fact that this study involved two sets of data, the researcher decided to analyse from different perspectives in order to produce a thorough conclusion. The analysis would also attempt to show how the two data sets may shed light on each other, as well as how the theories could be applied to each other. Collaboration between readers and writers in the production of text, exemplifies the relationship between the two theories. Indeed, alongside U & G theory, DOI theory offers a good theoretical framework for analyzing the data obtained in this study. Importantly, the theories provide insights on how new media technologies have helped spread new African literature, thus furthering our

understanding of the subject. Therefore, the use of more than one theory helps to provide an enriched approach and outcome to the study.

2.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the literature review relevant to this study, reviewed previous research related to culture, literature, and technology, and provided the theoretical framework for this study. Following a review of assumptions underlying these theories, it was determined that U & G and DOI theories serve as good frameworks for analysing survey responses from writers and readers. Application of these theories will help determine how new media has influenced the reception of African literature. Overall, this chapter has helped to provide some context and answers to the research question: How has new media created opportunities for new African literature and how are writers and readers making use of these opportunities? The next chapter provides a description of the processes involved in the data collection.

Chapter 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a general overview of the data collection processes undertaken to address this project's research objectives. It discusses and justifies the research methods. The chapter first provides an overview of different philosophical paradigms, including those underpinning the research methodology. A description of the population sample is then provided, alongside a discussion of related demographics and participant-selection techniques. Several ethical guidelines used in conducting research with human participants and a clear demonstration of how they were implemented is also provided. The data, its collection procedure, and relevant strategies and techniques used in its analysis, are also described.

3.2 Philosophical Assumptions

According to Myers (1997), fundamental assumptions underpinning valid research must be understood before engaging in a research activity. These assumptions are philosophical, but determine the practical choices of appropriate research methods (Antwil & Hamza, 2015). Appropriate methodology depends on the paradigms informing the research process, and acknowledging these research paradigms remains a core issue for researchers (Sobh & Perry, 2006). Kuhn (1977) defines a paradigm as a research culture that involves a set of shared assumptions, values, and beliefs that underpin the nature and conduct of research. In other words, a research paradigm is both

the “basic belief system or world view that guides the investigator” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 105) and an approach to thinking about the research process itself (Antwil & Hamza, 2015). Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, and Jackson (2012) stress the importance of having a coherent philosophy that will enable researchers to be proactive from the onset in evaluating different research methods and selecting appropriate ones, while avoiding inappropriate or irrelevant methods, to create an overall research strategy that is itself coherent.

Many philosophical paradigms have been identified and they include positivist, interpretive, and critical research paradigms (Myers, 1997). These models outline three core ways an investigation can be carried out: in terms of ontology, epistemology, and methodology (TerreBlanche & Durrheim, 1999). According to Oates (2006), ontology focuses on different views about the nature of our world, and how researchers define truth and reality (Guba & Lincoln, 1994), whereas epistemology focuses on how we can acquire knowledge about our world (Oates, 2006) and the means by which researchers come to uncover truth and reality (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Methodology focuses instead on the methods used in conducting the research (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Addressing all three elements provides the basis for interpretation, which guides the entire research process. In the section that follows, a description of various philosophical paradigms is provided alongside a justification of the core paradigm chosen.

3.2.1 *Positivism*

The philosophical ideas of the French philosopher August Comte led to the development of the positivist paradigm (Antwil & Hamza, 2015). Positivism has its root in natural sciences and employs scientific methods in social science investigations.

According to this perspective, the main ways to understand human behaviour are through reasoning and observation. The aim of the positivist viewpoint is to discover truth by means of empirical observation (Henning, Van Rensburg, & Smit, 2004) and test theories in order to understand phenomena (Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991). In positivism, truth about knowledge is dependent on sensory experience and derived through observation and experiment. According to Orlikowski and Baroudi, for a research to be classed as positivist, there must be “evidence of formal propositions, quantifiable measures of variables, hypotheses tested, and the drawing of inferences about a phenomenon from the sample to a stated population” (1991, p. 5). For a positivist, knowledge about science involves facts, and its ontology insists that reality does not depend on social construction (Walsham, 1995). Lincoln and Guba (1985) outline various criteria that suggest the use of positivist paradigms in research, which include the fact that the researcher and participants act separately to explain the phenomena under study.

3.2.2 *Interpretative Paradigm*

The assumption underpinning the interpretative paradigm is that “people create and associate their own subjective and intersubjective meanings as they interact with the world around them” (Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991, p. 5). Meaning, according to this perspective, arises through the researcher’s own perceptions (Merriman, 1998). Unlike positivism, studies based on the interpretative paradigm does not seek to prove or disprove a hypothesis; instead, these studies provide explanations for the relationship and interdependence of social settings (Oates, 2006). According to Creswell, the interpretative paradigm involves “individuals seeking understanding of the world in which they live and work” (2003, p. 24). In the interpretative paradigm, the nature of

inquiry is interpretative, and the aim is to gain insight about a particular phenomenon rather than generalising to a wider population (Farzanfar, 2005). Researchers adopting this paradigm are often referred to as “naturalist” because they tend to apply real-world approaches in their understanding of phenomena (Antwil & Hamza, 2015). Personal contact is usually established between the researcher and the participant group (Ulin, Robinson, & Tolley, 2004). Cooperating with study participants is seen to shed more light towards understanding phenomena, which in turn contributes to the depth and richness of data (Antwil & Hamza, 2015). A shared belief amongst positivist and interpretative researchers is that humans often behave in a patterned and regular manner. Although interpretivists feel these patterns occur as a result of social interactions, positivists see them as the result of cause and effect (Neuman, 2003).

Interpretative researchers rely on first-hand information and experience to gain insight about social phenomena. They therefore quote conversations, and truthful reporting forms the views of insiders (Merriam, 1998), as opposed to testing laws of human behaviour as positivists do (Bryman, 2001; Farzanfar, 2005). They adopt data collection methods in line with the settings and context of the research (Neuman, 2003). Methods such as interviewing, forming focus groups, and participant observation are informed by the interpretative paradigm.

3.2.3 *Critical Research Paradigm*

Guba and Lincoln (1994) argue that positivist stances can be criticized as “naïve realism,” whereby reality is captured, and knowledge easily apprehended and simplified in a context-free form. A number of post-positivism paradigms have developed in an attempt to address what are seen as the ontological and epistemological flaws of positivism (Zachariadis, Scott, & Barrett, 2010), including the critical research

paradigm. According to Myers, the main “task of critical research is that of social critique, whereby the restrictive and alienating conditions of the status quo are brought to light” (1997, p. 25). The main tenet of this paradigm is that the existence of the world is not dependent on our perception (Zachariadis et al., 2010). Critical research centres on the conflicts, contradictions, and oppositions in modern society and seeks to remove causes of domination and alienation (Myers, 1997). Researchers inspired by this philosophical paradigm believe that social reality is traditionally organised, produced, and reproduced by people (Myers and Avison, 2002).

3.2.4 Chosen Research Paradigm for This Study

In the positivist paradigm, data exists independent of the researcher’s influence. Knowledge is not dependent on the meaning a researcher assigns to it or the peculiarities of any single individual (Creswell & Miller, 1997) but viewed as something external to the researcher. The realist/objectivist ontology and the empiricist epistemology that underpins the positivist paradigm support an objective research methodology (Antwil & Hamza, 2015), which involves manipulating variables and testing hypotheses in order to establish cause and effect relationships (Sarantakos, 2005; Marczyk, DeMatteo, & Festinger, 2005).

The aim of this thesis is to explore the views and shared experiences of writers and readers regarding how new media has influenced African literature. Research with the writers involved the use of open-ended questionnaire, a method that provides rich qualitative data (Bankauskaite & Saarelma, 2003), whereas the research with the readers involved the use of closed-ended questionnaire, a method that provides rich quantitative data (Howitt & Cramer, 2011). Therefore, both the interpretative paradigm utilising qualitative methodology and the positivist paradigm utilising quantitative methodology

are appropriate theoretical perspectives. Additionally, since the interviews with the readers involved the use of a close-ended questionnaire, which yields quantitative, numerical data, arguably the purpose of that questionnaire is to capture the views of readers on the subject matter rather than attempting to establish causality to test a hypothesis (Levy & Henry, 2003). Therefore, even though the close-ended questionnaire yielded quantitative data, it did not reflect a pure positivism.

3.3 Overview of Research Methods

According to Carlson (2007), new media and communications research have changed over the past years in response to shifts in political systems, rapid industrialisation, and the advent of new media technologies — all of which have affected the communications and media disciplines. New media and communication studies have always been interdisciplinary projects drawing input from several other disciplines, such as linguistics and (most notably) literary theory (Carlson, 2007). Kara (2015) asserts that a research project is generally the result of many decisions: e.g., a researcher must decide on a topic, on questions, and on a method of gathering and analysing data. Even after the research has begun, Kara (2015) maintains that there are still several decisions to make. For instance, when an interviewee seems agitated, should an interviewer stop the interview and calm things down? According to Kara, the researcher also has to decide what quotations to use when analysing the results and what words or phrases best explain what the research sets out to do. Kara also states that:

“One of the defining features of creativity in research is that it intends to resist binary or categorical thinking. Mixed-methods research grew from

people thinking, “hang on a minute, why is it qualitative or quantitative?

Why not both?” (2015, p. 2)

Oftentimes, new media and communications studies involve the audience, as Deacon and Keightley stress:

“The history of audience research is often presented in a simple and straightforward manner with the pioneers of quantitative methods cast as abstracted empiricists whose effects research is hermetically sealed from subsequent discoveries of the importance of social contexts and audience activity enabled by qualitative methods” (2001, p. 302).

A wide variety of methods are used in new media and communications research. These methods differ in terms of how information is sourced and sampled, and what tools are used during the data collection process. Methods also differ in terms of the nature of the data collected (i.e., qualitative, quantitative, or both). In the following subsection, a description of qualitative and quantitative research methods is provided. Following this, the research method suitable for this study is provided, along with justifications.

3.3.1 Qualitative Research Method

Qualitative research methods help researchers to study socio-cultural phenomena (Myers & Avison, 2002). Although qualitative research can be subjective, it aids in determining the meaning of certain social and human activities (Collis & Hussy, 2003). Wimmer and Dominick (2006) posit that qualitative research allows researchers to observe the behavior of people in natural settings. This, they believe, can help researchers deepen their studies, especially when such research has not been carried out

before. According to Priest, “qualitative methods are designed to explore and assess things that can’t easily be summarized numerically” (2010, p. 6). Qualitative research often relies on how we interpret what people do (which may involve describing their practices based on observation) or say (which may involve using open-ended questions) without using standardized measurements (Priest, 2010). According to Howitt and Cramer, “qualitative researchers attempt to avoid some of the characteristics of positivism by concentrating on data which are much more natural” (2011, p. 293). Qualitative research methods involve the collection of data through various methods, including focus groups, field observations, in-depth interviews, case studies, and require the researcher to use different questioning approaches (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006). Some of these methods are described in the section below.

3.3.1.1 Focus Groups

A focus group is a type of qualitative research method whereby a small number of participants take part in a discussion facilitated by a moderator; the sole aim is to understand the experiences, attitudes, and/or perceptions of others on a given topic and maximise participant interactions in a non-threatening context (Hennessy & Heary, 2005). Daytime television discussion shows are popular examples of focus groups where the presenter talks about few issues and asks questions whilst inviting the audience to debate the issues (Howitt & Cramer, 2011). These groups typically consist of between six and eight people, with participants generally being the same sex or a mixture and of a similar age depending on the topic. According to Howitt and Cramer (2011), the main advantage of focus groups is that they provide more dynamic responses than interviews. Focus groups also allow for useful exploration of ideas and concepts because the data generated is rich and represents the product of a group

situation (Howitt & Cramer, 2011), revealing an in-depth and thorough understanding of the issues being debated through a combination of ideas presented by group members. Therefore, focus groups are assumed to generate more details compared to the sum of input obtained through individual interviews (Howitt & Cramer, 2011). Despite these advantages, focus groups require a considerable amount of time and effort in terms of organising, running, and transcribing data obtained from these groups, and finding a moderator with excellent facilitative skills poses a large challenge (Howitt & Cramer, 2011).

3.3.1.2 Case Studies

Yin views case study research as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (1994, p. 13). In explaining case studies, Woodside stresses that this is “an inquiry that focuses on describing, understanding, predicting and/or controlling the individual (that is process, animal, person, household, organization, group, industry culture or nationality)” (2010, p. 1). To conduct a case study, an all-in-one method is used because a case study involves different processes, kinds of evidences, and previous theories (Yin, 1994). Case studies are thorough research methods that help researchers become aware of real-life occurrences, but require the use of appropriate tools (Yin, 1994). Wimmer and Dominick (2006) identified four different ways of doing case studies:

- Use of documents (e.g., brochures or historical data)
- Interviews (e.g., face-to-face interviews, use of questionnaires)
- Observation
- Use of artefacts (more common in anthropology than in communications)

According to Wimmer and Dominick (2006), a combination of these methods can produce better results. Zainal outlines one of the advantages of case study research: “the detailed qualitative accounts often produced in case studies not only help to explore or describe the data in real-life environment, but also help to explain the complexities of real-life situations which may not be captured through experimental or survey research” (2007, p. 4). Despite this advantage, case studies have often been criticised for being time-consuming, difficult to conduct, and yielding massive amounts of documentation (Zainal, 2007).

3.3.1.3 *Ethnography*

Ethnography as a research method dates back to the 1900s, when anthropologists Bronislaw Malinowski and Alfred Radcliffe-Brown carried out studies in remote communities, living in these communities and documenting their activities (Reeves et al, 2008). Ethnography generally involves studying how people interact with others, the behaviours and observations that take place amongst communities, to understand how people behave in various cultures and the meanings of these behaviours (Machin, 2002; Yin, 1994). Machin (2002) stated that a person’s behaviour should be seen in the context of that person’s interaction with others in his society. In other words, ethnographic research methodology looks at how various people understand the world in which they live (Hammersly & Atkinson, 1995). Researchers using ethnographic methods seek to understand how people live and interact in their own natural environment everyday (Machin, 2002; Yin, 1994).

Ethnography also seeks to determine why people carry out certain daily activities and how the actions and behaviours of people affect and guide how they interact with others (Machin 2002; Brewer, 2000). One limitation of ethnographic research is that events in a natural setting cannot be reproduced (Nurani, 2008). Ethnographers observe a society and the individual behaviours in that society by joining the society (Machin, 2002; Brewer, 2000). This is known as participant observation, and involves researchers getting close to people under study in their usual locations. Ethnographers observe these people while taking part in their community activities (Machin, 2002). According to Brewer (2000), in participant observation, a researcher participates directly in some environments or activities so as to collect details while observing the actions of others. Participant observation methods also help researchers gain a deeper sense of people and their communities. Schmuck (1997) notes that this method enables researchers to understand nonverbal cues from community members. Marshall and Rossman (1995) support this view, and believe that participant observation allows researchers to study events that informants might not want to discuss when doing so could be seen as inappropriate. Although getting involved in the community under study can be time-consuming, Yin (1994) insists that building trust and being a participant are important when conducting ethnographic research. However, as Nurani (2008) suggests, the attempt to be both member and researcher might lead to too much subjectivity.

3.3.1.4 In-depth Interviews

Interviewing is a common qualitative research method used in media and communication studies (Jensen, 2012). Researchers can opt for structured or semi-structured interviews. In a structured interview, the interviewer has well-formulated,

specific questions that require answers from the interviewee (Howitt & Cramer, 2011). In this type of interview, the interviewee is expected to stick to the point at hand and not allowed to digress or express idiosyncratic views in relation to the subject matter. Structured interviews yield less details compared to semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews, otherwise known as in-depth interviews, are special types of conversations that take place in a different context than a normal conversation (Howitt & Cramer, 2011). This process usually involves the interviewee talking about themselves while the interviewer listens. In fact, the interviewer often has an interview schedule (a list of questions or topics to be addressed), which serves to guide the conversation and as a memory aid (Howitt & Cramer, 2011). Compared to a structured interview, the agenda is interviewee led and the interviewer does not necessarily need to have prepared questions in advance of the interview. An advantage of this type of interview is that it provides rich details, although the amount of detail leads to an extensive and time-consuming coding process (Howitt & Cramer, 2011). Due to the fact that a number of respondents taking part in this study live a nomadic life – moving from country to country, pinning them down for a one-on-one interview would have proved a difficult task, hence in-depth interviews were not selected as the method.

3.3.2 Quantitative Research Methods

Quantitative research, just like qualitative research, uses several data collection methods including experiments, surveys, and content analysis. Survey was adopted as the method for this study. The rationale is explained in the section below and section 3.3.

3.3.2.1 Surveys

According to Weisberg et al. (1996), surveys are the best method to investigate people's actions and, as Hansen and Machin (2013) suggest, the method most

frequently used to study people in general and media audiences in particular. Over the years, surveys have become a major tool for both business and academic study, and used to measure beliefs, opinions, preferences, and habits (Sapsford, 2007; Gunter, 2000). Surveys help determine the features of a population and its needs and opinions (Sapsford, 2007). According to Weisberg et al. (1996), if a researcher needs to investigate people's thoughts and actions, surveys are appropriate. In the field of media and communications, surveys are helpful in gathering details from a population sample about its media consumption behaviour (Hansen et al., 1998). Mass communications research has also made use of survey methods to study varying media audiences and producers (Gunter, 2000). Hansen et al. (1998) argue that surveys help investigate how and why people embrace different media outlets.

Surveys are used mostly to determine the various perspectives, views, and attitudes that exist regarding issues or events (Gunter, 2000; Hansen et al., 1998). Although surveys might seem expensive, Wimmer and Dominick (2006) argue that this cost is justified when one takes into consideration the quality and relevance of the information gathered using this research method (particularly the case for Internet-based surveys, which only take a few hours to become available online, and reach respondents across the world). Since respondents can take their time to complete the survey and the researcher can see the responses as they come in, Wimmer and Dominick argued that Internet-based research projects can run for long if the researcher wants. Researchers have used surveys to measure the impact of new media. For instance, for a study of top American political bloggers, Ekdale, et al. (2010) employed surveys to study motivations for blogging and the offline behaviours of bloggers. Although surveys

cannot infer causality, they can be used to explore degrees of association and relationships between variables (Gunter, 2000).

3.3.3 Comparison between Qualitative and Quantitative Methods

According to Mack et al. (2005), qualitative and quantitative research methods differ along several dimensions (e.g., question types, flexibility of the study design, types of data collection instruments). Mack et al. argue that the key difference between quantitative and qualitative research methods lies in flexibility. Quantitative methods are usually assumed to be inflexible. For instance, when using quantitative methods such as surveys and questionnaires, investigators tend to present participants with ordered questions that are identical in nature, which have anchored or close-ended response options (Mack et al., 2005). The benefit of this arrangement is that it allows researchers to compare responses across respondents and study environments. By contrast, qualitative methods are generally flexible and allow for greater freedom and meaningful interaction between the investigator and participants. Questions usually follow open-ended formats and are often varied across the participants. Importantly, this method allows for greater spontaneity so that the participants may respond as they wish and in their own words (Mack et al., 2005).

3.3.4 Mixed Methods

According to Wimmer and Dominick (2006), scholars have long debated the use of qualitative and quantitative methods in new media research but ultimately accepted that both methods are equally useful. This has led to “triangulation . . . the use of both qualitative methods and quantitative methods to fully understand the nature of a research problem” (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006, p. 50). Yin (1994) agrees that sometimes a research method might not be completely qualitative or quantitative. At

times, he argues, studies might involve the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data, using open-ended and closed-ended questions, respectively. At other times, an experiment might produce both observations of behaviours and measures of response time and accuracy (Yin, 1994).

According to Johnson et al. (2007), through mixed research methods a researcher makes use of both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Mixed methods enable researchers to collect, analyse and combine both qualitative and quantitative data in one study or a series of studies addressing the same research question or phenomenon (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2008). Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) outline several advantages and disadvantages of mixed methods research. Strengths include the use of mixed methods to allow researchers to test a grounded theory (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). A wider number of research questions can be answered because the researcher is not restricted to a single method. Combining qualitative and quantitative methods is a complementary technique, thus making mixed methods a useful approach in a research study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Nevertheless, the use of mixed methods has its own shortcomings. For instance, the use of the two methods can be overwhelming for a researcher unskilled in using both methods simultaneously, and mixed methods research is time-consuming and expensive (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

3.4 Research Design

The current study used a mixed-method design, the rationale being that it leads to greater insight and understanding of the phenomenon compared to either singular

method (Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). In mixed-method design, qualitative data is collected using open-ended responses and quantitative data makes use of closed-ended responses, which are common in questionnaires (Creswell, 2014). Since the present study involves the use of both a closed-ended questionnaire (quantitative) and an open-ended questionnaire (qualitative), a mixed-method approach was deemed appropriate. According to Creswell (2014), studies adopting mixed methods usually consist of both quantitative (e.g., a survey) and qualitative methods (e.g., open-ended interviews), an approach which is useful for gaining detailed responses from participants. Similarly, as discussed in Chapter 3, this thesis employs mixed theories (DOI and U&G) to analyse the findings from the writers and readers. Previous studies (for instance Coursaris, et al. 2010) have used U&G and DOI interchangeably in their analyses of the use of social networking sites. However, in these studies, the theories were only applied to the same sample, unlike this present study which comprises two sets of samples – writers and readers. Therefore, due to the use of more than one sample in this study, the analyses would be kept discrete and unmixed, with U&G being applied to responses from the writers, and DOI being used for readers. However, the integration of the two theories would be discussed in Chapter 6.

The current study used two surveys to explore the opportunities created by new media for new African writers and readers. Regarding writers, survey responses aid in understanding how new media technologies have shaped the way Africans write, publish, and read literature. Regarding readers, survey responses aid in understanding how new media has influenced how readers access, share, and discuss African literature. Questionnaires remain the central instrument for data collection in survey research. The questionnaire sent to the readers had a closed-ended question format, which yielded a

quantitative data, whereas 13 of the 17 questions sent to the writers had an open-ended format, yielding qualitative data. The following section provides a detailed discussion of questionnaires as an instrument of data collection, including the rationale for choice of questions, their number, and the language used.

3.5 Research Instruments-The Questionnaire

Questionnaires offer either lists of carefully worded questions with a range of response options (closed-ended questions) or with a lot of space provided for respondents to enter their answers in their own words (open-ended questions) (Hansen & Machin, 2013). According to Gillham (2000), questionnaires can be used to obtain quality data from respondents within a short time and are convenient for respondents because they may complete the questionnaire on their own schedule. Kumar (2005) agrees that the questionnaire is an inexpensive method of data collection, and Wimmer and Dominick (2006) identify four basic rules of question design:

1. Keep the goals of the project in mind and present relevant questions
2. Questions should be clear — avoid all forms of ambiguity
3. Questions should communicate what is required from respondents
4. Researchers must never assume that respondents will understand the questions

To get the most out of respondents, Flick (2015) suggests that questionnaires be standardized. He states that researchers must determine how to formulate a sequence of questions and possible answers to ensure that the same responses are always received from the respondents (Flick, 2015). Researcher must apply the rules of formulating a questionnaire to design the it in a similar way for all participants (Flick, 2015). Survey questionnaires can either be self-administered or completed through an interview (Flick,

2015). Self-administered questionnaires allow respondents to complete them online, over email, or through post, and must be self-explanatory since the researcher is not physically present to guide the respondent (Gunter, 2000). A survey questionnaire can also be administered through an interview in which the researcher or interviewer fills the questionnaire depending on the answers provided by the respondent (Hansen & Machin, 2013). It is now common for researchers to collect questionnaire data using the Internet. This is usually not expensive and can be easily conducted because researchers do not have to travel to collect data (Gillham, 2000; Savage & Burrows, 2007; Wimmer & Dominick, 2006). Several methods of Internet data collection exist (e.g., respondents can obtain an emailed questionnaire or website link): “Computer-formatted questionnaires have advantages both of speed and reliability over traditional printed questionnaires filled in by hand” (Hansen & Machin, 2013, p. 222).

Computer-based questionnaires can be set up so that the answers are analysed quickly, and particularly for “analytical surveys, statistical packages such as SPSS can be used, while less demanding descriptive surveys can be analysed using MS Excel” (Hansen & Machin, 2013, p. 222). Wimmer and Dominick (2006) suggest that methods of gathering data online date back to the 1990s, when some researchers and organisations began to use the Internet to carry out focus groups (although the methodology differed from that for traditional focus groups). Indeed, as this research deals primarily with new media use, it was felt that collecting data via the Internet fits well with the aims and objectives of this study. Research literature distinguishes between two types of questionnaire: open-ended and closed-ended (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006; Berger, 2014; Flick, 2015). A researcher asking an open-ended question expects respondents to come up with their own answers, while closed-ended

questions offer respondents limited choices in that they usually select from a researcher-provided list of responses (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006; Berger, 2014, Flick, 2015). Open-ended questions give respondents the freedom to provide in-depth responses (Flick, 2015; Wimmer & Dominick, 2006). This technique provides researchers with leeway to probe further and gain more details, clarifications, or insights into the interviewee's inner perspectives, past experiences, and feelings on the subject (Lindlof, 1995; Wimmer & Dominick, 2006; Deacon, et al., 1999). Close-ended questions, as Berger (2014) suggests, are usually supplied in multiple-choice or Likert scales format.

3.5.1 Formulating the Questions for this Research

In this section, a description of the questionnaires used for both writers (open-ended) and readers (close-ended) is presented, alongside an overview of the relevant literature.

3.5.1.1 Questions for Writers

A 17-item questionnaire was developed by the researcher to explore how new media technologies have shaped the ways Africans write, publish, and read literature. According to Flick, "questions should collect, directly or indirectly, the respondents' reasons for a specific behaviour or attitude and show their level of knowledge concerning the issue under examination" (2015, p. 134). Thus, questions were developed based on previous literature that has demonstrated the impact of new media technologies on creativity (Berry & Goodwin, 2007; Smith, 2012; Lievrouw, 2011), including the role of new media in creating networking and publishing opportunities for writers (Couldry, 2008).

The first four questionnaire items were closed-ended questions and the remaining thirteen questions were open-ended. According to Punch (2005), open-ended questions provide more insight, but interviewing people face-to-face or over the phone can be time-consuming and expensive, especially for a large sample. Question language was simplified, with close attention paid to word choice, since “word choice and question formulation can easily influence or skew the answers” (Hansen & Machin, 2013, p. 220). Since questions needed to be clear to respondents (Gillham, 2000), they used common words or phrases, as suggested by Wimmer and Dominick (2006). Questions were kept short — about two sentences at maximum — because scholars suggest that respondents may not have the time to carefully consider long questions (Gillham, 2000; Wimmer & Dominick, 2006). The question: ‘what extent do you think social media influences creative writing?’ was meant to determine the writer’s views on social media, in line with the objective of the study. Similarly, the questions: ‘Do you think that the Internet is changing the way that African writing is being appreciated?’, ‘Could you outline how the internet has influenced your career? do you think African readers have benefited from the internet?’ and ‘How do you use the internet to interact with other writers and readers?’ were designed to seek opinions of the writers on the Internet. The question, ‘The rise of the so-called "ebook" has divided the publishing world, with some predicting "the death of the book" and others arguing that the traditional printed version will remain the favoured format. What do you think is the future of writing and publishing?’ was designed to sample the views of readers on e-books, especially as it pertains to Africa.

Initially, 15 questions were generated, based on the objectives of the study. Pilot studies suggested that the questionnaire was well-received and easily understood by the

respondents. However, two additional questions were included following discussions with and feedback from pilot study respondents. The two additional questions were: (1) *How would you rate online writing? To what extent do you think online writing differs from print?* and (2) *Do you think that the internet or social media has made it easier for you to gain access to other writers and/or publishers and/or readers?* For a full list of the questionnaire used for readers, please see Appendix B.

3.5.1.2 Questions for Readers

A ten-item questionnaire was developed by the researcher to explore the opportunities created by new media for African readers. The questions were developed in light of previous literature that has demonstrated the impact of new media technologies (McEwen & Dube, 2015; Gitsaki & Robby, 2014), particularly research concerning mobile devices (Baron & Segerstad, 2010; Castells et al., 2007), the Internet and social media (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Lister et al., 2009; OECD, 2007; Kumar, 2014), and e-reading (Baron, 2013). A ten-item questionnaire was originally generated for the reader surveys. Following the pilot studies, two questions were modified based on responses from the pilot study participants. For instance, the age range in Question 3 was expanded to include age groups up to 44. Interactions with readers also led to inclusion of another option for Question 9: *Receiving an alert via SMS or through an app on my mobile phone*. The 10-item questionnaire completed by the readers presented close-ended questions with categorical response options. Punch (2005) suggests that researchers provide potential responses within the questionnaire and, when doing so, to list all of the likely answers. Close-ended questions were adopted for this study along with limited numbers of potential answers.

The following question ‘Compared with paper books, what are the advantages of e-readers in your opinion?’, was designed to seek the opinions of readers to compare it with those of writers. Other questions, such as: ‘What genre do you usually read on your device?’, ‘Have you paid for ONLINE literary content, or accessed a paid for ONLINE literary content in the last year?’, were designed specifically to determine how readers responded to literary content, in line with the objectives of the study. As Punch (2005) suggests, respondents can answer these types of questions quickly and the responses can easily be represented in graphs and diagrams. As with the writers’ survey, the language of the questions presented to the readers was simple and paid close attention to word choice. For instance, the question ‘Which of the following have you used for reading, sharing or discussing literature?’ was formulated to acquire information on readers’ interactivities. Beyond acquiring information on behaviors and attitudes, Punch (2005) suggests that researchers can acquire information on the age, gender, and occupation of respondents, which helps provide some basic demographic information useful when analyzing the research. In keeping with this assertion, the researcher included questions to determine the age range, gender, and educational level of the respondents (i.e., the readers). For a full list of the questionnaire used for readers, please see Appendix B.

3.6 Sampling Technique

A survey usually is administered to a sample, which Wimmer and Dominick define as “a subset of the population that is representative of the entire population” (2006, p. 88). It follows that a sample that does not fully represent the population, no matter its size, cannot be used for testing purposes due to the fact that findings cannot be generalized beyond the population sample. However, it must be noted that sometimes it is difficult to identify an entire population, due to time and financial

constraints. Indeed, as Wimmer and Dominick argue, “measurements of large numbers of people often affect measurement quality” (2006, p. 88).

According to Punch, since a researcher cannot study everyone in a population, “sampling decisions are required not only about which people to interview or which events to observe, but also about settings and processes” (2005, p. 187). Another consideration when carrying out a survey is determining how large a sample should be in order to provide the desired results, because as Wimmer and Dominick note, “certain sample sizes are suggested for various statistical procedures, but no single sample size formula or method is available for every research method or statistical procedure” (2006, p. 100). This statement is also supported by Salant and Dillman (1994) who identify the following determining factors for sample selection:

1. Type of project
2. Purpose of project
3. Project complexity
4. Amount of error allowed
5. Time constraint
6. Cost constraint
7. Previous research in that field

Flick (2015) is also of the opinion that there are several requirements for sample size, stating that a sample should be “a minimized representation of the population in terms of the heterogeneity of the elements and the representativeness of the variables” (2015, p. 101). Flick (2015) identifies two types of sampling: random and non-random. A random sample is selected using mathematic guidelines whereby a unit’s chance of

being selected is known. An example of this is selecting a sample from a card index, wherein elements of the population are written on the card. According to Punch, “in random selection, each element in a population has an equal chance or equal probability of being chosen. Due to its nature, the chances of introducing biases are low as all members of the target population have equal chance of being selected” (2005, p. 102). However, with large target populations, this sampling technique is difficult and time-consuming, with no guarantee that the sample will be representative (Punch, 2005).

Punch also notes that “stratifying the population along different dimensions before random selection produces stratified random samples” (2005, p. 102). One advantage of this sampling technique is that it is representative, since all subsets of the population have been taken into account during the sampling process. However, it is difficult and time-consuming. On the other hand, in non-random sampling, the method of selecting a sample is not haphazard — researchers select the sample based on defined criteria (Flick, 2015; Punch, 2005). This method of sampling includes purposive and convenience sampling: “purposive sample includes subjects or elements selected for specific characteristics or qualities and eliminates those who fail to meet these criteria” (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006, p. 92). Despite its wide use, making use of the right purposeful sampling technique in any study poses problems (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006). In convenience sampling, a researcher selects respondents relevant to the research on the basis of their willingness to be interviewed (Hansen & Machin, 2013). In convenience sampling, participants the researcher can easily access are more likely to be selected for the study. However, this sampling technique has been criticized because most people in the target population have little chance of being selected to participate, and therefore there are issues regarding the generalization of the findings (Suen, Huang,

& Lee, 2014). In the section that follows, a description of the sample used in the current study is provided, including justifications for the selection and sampling techniques.

3.6.1 Research Sample: Rationale and Criteria for Selection

Two sample populations were recruited for the current study: 30 new African writers and 300 readers of African literature. The researcher initially reached out to 40 writers, but only 30 completed the survey. The researchers similarly reached out to a database of thousands of readers, but only 300 responded to the survey.

3.6.1.1 Sample for Writers

The sample population of 30 new African writers were selected from five countries: Nigeria, Uganda, South Africa, Kenya, and Zimbabwe. Previous research (e.g., Wimmer & Dominick, 2006; Hansen & Machin, 2013) suggests samples should be selected according to rationale. These countries were selected because they are the first five nations to produce winners of the Caine Prize for African Writing (described in Chapter One). Purposive sampling helped the researcher identify writers with certain traits, detailed knowledge, or direct experiences relevant to the study (i.e., African literature). As Suen et al. (2014) suggest, purposive sampling enables a researcher to recruit participants according to the study's purpose, with the anticipation that each of them will offer unique insights and information of value to the study.

The writers chosen for this research were selected based on their publishing history. As a group, these writers have produced more than 100 published works and developed distinguished professional profiles. These published works include short stories, poems, and novels.

Another *criterion* was the selection of writers that have only been writing and publishing since the start of the new millennium, in line with the study's objective of focusing on new African writers. Writers who have been celebrated in the 1980s or 1990s were excluded from the study.

Only writers with some presence online were selected for the study. This online presence included the writer's use of social media platforms like Facebook or Twitter, blogs or even a personal website. As this is a study on new media use, writers who had no presence online were excluded from the interviews. Additional criteria was the writers' visibility within the African literary landscape. Most of these writers selected for this study are well known within the African literary scene, although they do not necessarily live in Africa. For instance, Chika Unigwe, winner of the Nigeria Prize for Literature and a judge of the Man Booker International Prize 2017, is currently the Bonderman Assistant Professor of the Practice of Literary Arts at Emory University. Full details of the writers' biographies are provided in Appendix C.

3.6.1.2 *Sample for Readers*

The second sample population for this research was 300 readers from Nigeria. Nigeria was chosen as the focus because it has the largest population and economy in Africa (Friedman, 2014) and a thriving literary tradition – Chinua Achebe, the writer often referred to the 'father of African literature' was from Nigeria. Mobile novels are fast becoming a popular way of reading fiction in that country. In 2013, Okada Books was founded by software engineer Chike Ofili to make novels available to millions of Nigerians via their mobile phones (Iren, 2016). Okada Books delivers book reading applications by using a very simple SMS payment: once the payment is made, people can transform their phones into reading devices (Iren, 2016). Nigeria was also one of the

countries that took part in the Crossing Borders literary project described in Chapter One.

This study was inspired by the work of Salant and Dillman (1994), which suggests the possibility of narrowing down the target population. As with the writers, the 300 readers were chosen using purposive sampling techniques. The Nigerian readers were chosen from a prominent book club and literary society — the Abuja Literary Society — in 2015. This Society meets every month at the Hilton Hotel in Abuja, Nigeria’s capital city. As this researcher has taken part in several literary events to promote his own book, he has come to realise that book club members generally have a deep interest in literature, so this was the main reason for selecting respondents from the Abuja Literary Society. Just as an online presence was chosen as criteria for writers, readers were also selected from an organisation that had a strong online presence. The Abuja Literary Society fits these criteria, as the Society is active online, with over 3000 members on Facebook.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

According to Berger (2014), when carrying out research that involves human beings, researchers have a responsibility to deal with those being studied in an ethical manner. This view is supported by Schnell and Heinritz, who go on to suggest that research ethics concerns itself with how relevant issues brought about by the “intervention of researchers can be expected” to have an impact on the respondents (2006, p. 17). Schnell and Heinritz (2006) further suggest that it is necessary to take careful steps to safeguard those who participate in any research, which is why associations and universities have ethics committees responsible for assessing

researchers' ethical considerations and approve or reject research projects. Murphy and Dingwall (2001) identify four frameworks for ethical research:

1. Researchers should take reasonable care not to harm their participants
2. Research about people should produce some positive benefits
3. Researchers must respect the values and decisions of research participants
4. Researchers should treat all participants fairly

Similarly, Wiles argues that researchers must ensure the safety and well-being of the participants:

“While much qualitative research may pose only minimal risks to participants, it is important not to disregard the risks that can occur, particularly in research on topics which are in some way sensitive because they focus on personal issues, taboo issues or issues which pose a threat for those participating in it” (2013, p. 7).

Also stressing the need to eliminate threats, Flick (2015) suggests that research should only take place when the people being studied have been informed and are participating voluntarily. Flick further suggests that, in general, research takes “place on the basis of the fullest possible information about the goals and methods of the particular piece of research” (2015, p. 33). Wimmer and Dominick (2006) stress that it is important for researchers to disclose the following: the purpose of their research; its duration and procedures; the right of the respondents to decline participating in the research and withdraw at any time; the limits of confidentiality; and rewards for participation, if any. Wimmer and Dominick (2006) also argue that researchers should

state who the respondents should contact in case any questions about or clarifications of confidentiality issues arise.

Prior to commencement of this study, efforts were made to guarantee the ethical rights of participants. Approval was granted by the Faculty of Humanities Research Ethics Committee at De Montfort University. Each of the study participants was provided with an informed consent form (see Appendix D) before they proceeded to the study's questionnaire. This consent form explained the objectives of the study were, expectations of each participant, and permission to reproduce in audio, print, and online parts of the transcript of the conversation, drawings, or diagrams produced during meetings. Participants were also assured of their rights to privacy and confidentiality regarding any material or practices that arose from the research, and their right to withdraw from the study at any point was also communicated. An email address was also given on the form in case the participants wanted to withdraw from the research, or had any comments or questions about the research project. Once the document had been read, participants were invited to sign and return the completed consent form to the researcher, confirming their willingness to take part in the study.

3.8 Procedure for Data Collection: Writers and Readers

Participants were primarily recruited via purposive sampling. For the first category of participants (writers), 20 writers were initially approached individually at the various meeting points of literary societies of which the researcher is a member. Twenty others were contacted online via their personal websites, email addresses and blogs. In total, 40 writers were approached, and when contact was made, the researcher introduced himself and the purpose of his research. The aims of the study and the purpose of their participation, including ethical provisions, were contained in an

informed consent form that was sent to the research participants (i.e., the writers) via email. Writers were asked to sign and return the form to the researcher in an email reply. Writers were then emailed the 17-item questionnaire and instructed to complete it and return to the researcher.

The readers, were approached through the coordinator of the Abuja Literary Society. The researcher introduced himself and the purpose of his research. The literary society hosts a database of members, including their email addresses, and readers were thus recruited via email. A link to a SurveyMonkey (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/>) online survey containing the consent form and questionnaire for the study was emailed to the participants by the Society's coordinator, who then forwarded it to their members on their database. It must be noted that the software, SurveyMonkey is supported by most Internet browsers, and enables researchers to create links to their surveys (Safko, 2010; Lehman and Dufrene, 2010). This researcher was unable to determine how many names were on the Society's database, but their Facebook page boasts of over 3000 members. Instructions on how to complete the online questionnaire were also provided. Participants completed the questionnaire with no interference from the researcher. The questionnaire first requested demographic information (gender, age, educational level) from the participant to determine the representativeness of the sample. The remaining questions regarded their views and opinions on accessing literary content. Following the completion of the questionnaires, participants were thanked for their participation.

3.9 Data Analysis

Both qualitative and quantitative techniques were used to analyse the data collected in this study. The survey questionnaire given to the writers contained open-

ended questions that provided the flexibility to use a qualitative analytical technique (i.e., Thematic Analysis). The survey questionnaire given to the readers contained closed-ended questions, so a quantitative analytical technique (i.e., SPSS) was used to analyse the data. These two analytical techniques are described below, alongside justifications for their use.

3.9.1 Qualitative Data Analysis

A number of techniques have been developed to analyse qualitative data. These include Thematic Analysis, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, Grounded Theory, Discourse Analysis, Conversation Analysis, and the use of computer software such as Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS), NUD*IST, and NVivo.

3.9.1.1 Thematic Analysis

Thematic Analysis (TA) is a commonly used method for analysing qualitative data (Howitt & Cramer, 2011). It involves organizing key issues in data and arranging them under themes to reflect important relations in the research question (Tanaka, Parkinson, Settel, & Tahiroğlu, 2012). According to Braun and Clarke (2006), the flexible nature of TA helps the researcher to analyse, identify, and present the frequency of themes with the data. In thematic analysis, “the task of the researcher is to identify a limited number of themes which adequately reflect their textual data” (Howitt & Cramer, 2011, p. 328); “A theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 82). TA is a useful technique, particularly for studies that seek to explore a phenomenon through interpretations (Alhojailan, 2012). TA serves to frame key topics that involve specific descriptions in

line with the research question, instead of conceptualizing themes as answers *to* the question (Braun & Clarke, 2006). TA can also be used to highlight essential components of a large data set, which helps to ensure this set is adequately described (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Howitt and Cramer (2011) state that TA does not require the researcher to be firmly rooted in the underlying theory, compared with other types of analysis such as discourse analysis or conversation analysis. As a result, no specific theoretical orientation is associated with TA, allowing for flexibility in terms of its usage. However, TA is not without its criticisms. According to Howitt and Cramer (2011), TA is subjective due to the lack of an accepted, standardised approach to conducting TA.

3.9.1.2 *Grounded Theory*

According to Charmaz, “grounded theory methods consist of systematic inductive guidelines for collecting and analyzing data to build middle-range theoretical frameworks that explain the collected data” (2000, p. 509). Grounded Theory makes use of several techniques that enable researchers to analyse detailed qualitative data (Charmaz, 2000). Specifically, it aims at producing a set of categories that closely align with the data, thus allowing it to be described theoretically (Charmaz, 2000). However, concerns about the use of grounded theory have been raised. Grounded theory can be a time-consuming process because the researcher needs to be more familiar with the data: “Despite being the mirror image of mainstream research, grounded theory analysis does not share all of the features of other qualitative methods such as discourse analysis and conversation analysis” (Howitt & Cramer, 2011, p. 346).

3.9.1.3 *Discourse Analysis*

Discourse Analysis (DA) is a method of qualitative data analysis that deals with speech, text, and conversation analysis beyond the level of the sentence (Howitt & Cramer, 2011; Smith & Osborn, 2007). Stubbs defines DA as “being about the way in which language is used at the broader level than the sentence and other immediate utterances” (1983, p. 1). According to Edley, “there is no simple way of defining discourse analysis. It has become an ever-broadening church, an umbrella term for a wide variety of different analytic principles and practices” (2001, p. 189). As a result, the definition and practice of DA has become problematic. DA consists of a variety of observations, ideas, and concepts that largely describe the means whereby language and text can be analysed. Its practice contains several procedures that inspire researchers to thoroughly examine their data (Howitt & Cramer, 2011). Taylor (2001) therefore adds that DA is an open-ended and iterative process. Thus, the researcher is charged with finding patterns despite lacking a clear indication of the nature of the patterns.

3.9.1.4 *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)*

IPA as a qualitative research methodology offers the researcher an opportunity to describe people’s individual life experiences (Conroy & de Visser, 2014). It is rooted in phenomenology and primarily aims to describe people’s experiences while at the same time discovering the causes of those experiences (Howitt & Cramer, 2011) and the social world in which they arise (Skinta, et al., 2014). Using IPA allows researchers to gather insights (Reid, Flowers, & Larkin, 2005). Generally, data from IPA come mostly from semi-structured interviews (Skinta et al., 2014) that allow participants to freely narrate their experiences, although other data sources can be used (Howitt & Cramer, 2011). According to Pringle et al., IPA “offers an adaptable and accessible approach to

phenomenological research intended to give a complete and in-depth account that privileges the individual” (2011, p. 3). Despite these merits, IPA, like other qualitative analysis methods, has been criticised for being subjective since different researchers are likely to come up with different interpretations of the same data (Brocki & Wearden, 2006), which calls into question the validity and reliability of the method (Golsworthy & Coyle, 2001).

3.9.1.5 Chosen Qualitative Research Methods

The qualitative data obtained in this study was analysed using Thematic Analysis, which was chosen for a number of reasons. TA’s “rigorous thematic approach can produce an insightful analysis that answers particular research questions” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 97). TA also allows researchers to identify various themes from their data (Howitt & Cramer, 2011), which offers greater insight and more complete understanding of the opportunities created by new media for new African writers. The theoretical framework underpinning this research, which thus informs its Thematic Analysis, hinges on the essentialist/realist method (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Previous research with some similarity to the current research (e.g., Mae Boag & Wilson, 2013; Tanaka et al., 2012) has used TA, thus indicating it is a reliable method for analysing the open-ended questions in this study.

Despite the growing interest in the subject of new media, little study has empirically examined its influence on the literary community, particularly on the reception of African literature. In order to address this gap in the literature, the current study focuses on identifying themes from the perspective of the writers. This method enables the researcher to distil data and identify broad patterns that will allow enable him to analyse the findings in relation to the selected theories. As TA is an inductive

process, the themes that are produced are not predetermined by the researcher. Thematic Analysis, as employed in this study, is based on a set of guidelines prescribed by Braun and Clarke (2006). According to Fielden, Sillence, and Little, this guideline “allows a clear demarcation of thematic analysis, providing researchers with a well-defined explanation of what it is and how it is carried out whilst maintaining the ‘flexibility’ tied to its epistemological position” (2011, p. 3). The guideline involves a six-phase process:

1. Data familiarisation
2. Initial code generation
3. Themes search
4. Themes review
5. Themes definition and naming
6. Writing the report

A detailed description of how each of these phases was implemented in the current study, including how themes were identified, is presented in Chapter Four of this study.

3.9.2 Quantitative Data Analysis

Quantitative data are usually analysed using statistics and oftentimes this can be done by measuring a number of variables across a sample (Punch, 2005; Flick, 2015; Hansen & Machin, 2013). Two types of statistics are used to analyse quantitative data: descriptive and inferential statistics.

3.9.2.1 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics are “methods used to obtain, from raw data, information that characterizes or summarizes the whole set of data” (Berger, 2014, p. 289).

Descriptive statistics allow researchers to provide a concise summary of data and easily

make sense of data. Descriptive statistics can use frequency distribution and measures of central tendency (Punch, 2005). Frequency is one of the descriptive statistics used for categorical data and usually the initial approach taken by most researchers, especially when they obtain data through questionnaires (Greasley, 2008). Simple frequency distributions are useful in summarising and understanding data, as Punch states: “calculating frequency is straightforward because the responses are tabulated using absolute numbers or percentages” (2005, p. 111). They are usually presented in the form of graphs, tables, and charts. Measures of central tendency refer to “the statistical measure that identifies a single value as representative of an entire distribution” (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2000, p. 25). The main purpose of this measure is to provide a true description of the complete data set (Manikandan, 2011). The three frequently used measures of central tendency include the mean, mode, and median (Field, 2005; Manikandan, 2011). Measures of central tendency have been criticised for their inadequacy when describing data because two data sets with similar means may in fact be quite different. As a result, a researcher needs the extent of variability in order to accurately describe the data (Manikandan, 2011). Measures of dispersion refers to how widespread the data set is and include range, variance, and standard deviation.

3.9.2.2 Inferential Statistics

Inferential statistics allow researchers to draw conclusions or generalise from the data collected to the general population. It is used to draw inferences and make predictions about a population on the basis of the data collected from that population. Several types of inferential statistics exist for analysing quantitative data. These include: statistical tests (e.g., student t-tests); correlational tests (e.g., Pearson r, Spearman rho); regression tests (e.g., linear, multiple, and logistic regression); analysis of variance tests

(e.g., one-way, two-way, MANOVA); chi-square tests; and others (Field, 2005). The use of any of these tests is determined by whether or not they belong to a family of statistics known as parametric or non-parametric statistics, the level of measurement, participant design (e.g., between-group, repeated measures, match-pairs), and the goal of the study, i.e., whether or not the researcher is interested in tests of difference or relationship (Field, 2005).

3.9.2.3 Tools Used for Quantitative Analysis

A number of quantitative data analysis tools have been developed. These tools come in the form of statistical packages and are widely used by researchers across disciplines to analyse quantitative data. Popular statistical packages in use include: R (Hothorn & Everitt, 2014), PASW (formerly known as SPSS-IBM., 2013), and Excel (Microsoft Inc., 2009). Use of each statistical package has its strengths and weaknesses.

3.9.2.3.1 The Use of R

R is freely available software that can be used at no cost (Hothorn & Everitt, 2014). R packages are broad and contain a range of quantitative applications (Knott & Stuebe, 2010). Compared to other statistical packages, such as SPSS and Excel, R does not have a spreadsheet that allows the researcher to conveniently view the data set. Also, its use is limited when data sets become available (Knott & Stuebe, 2010).

3.9.2.3.2 The Use of SPSS

SPSS is very user-friendly, and a variety of its statistical functions are easy to use and access due to a graphical user interface (Knott & Stuebe, 2010). SPSS contains a wide variety of statistical routines, making it convenient for researchers to analyse their data depending on the nature of the data set and research question. Nevertheless,

SPSS is available at a high cost because the software is commercialised (Knott & Stuebe, 2010).

3.9.2.3.3 The Use of Excel

Excel is user-friendly and intuitive (Anderson, 2009; Yalta, 2008). One can easily access features using dropdown menus located on the top of the screen window. However, concerns have been raised regarding calculation problems in Excel (Anderson, 2009; Yalta, 2008). One criticism is that the package is limited in terms of coverage, as some statistical functions are not contained in the package (Knott & Stuebe, 2010).

3.9.2.4 Chosen Quantitative Data Analysis Method

Despite the strengths and weaknesses of each of the packages above, the three packages all offer researchers the ability to carry out statistical computations and present numerical data in graphs and charts. In light of the foregoing, all raw data from participants in this study (i.e., readers) were analysed using descriptive statistics, which were used to provide a clearer picture of the data. Since the questionnaire responses for readers were measured on nominal scale (i.e., categorical), descriptive statistics for categorical data (i.e., frequencies) was used. SPSS was chosen for use due to its graphical interface, which allows researchers and students with quick access to the statistical routines needed to analyse their data (Arkkelin, 2014). SPSS is “also a versatile package that allows many different types of analyses, data transformations, and forms of output” (Arkkelin, 2014, p. 2–3). SPSS also gives researchers the ability to customise results for presentation as graphic output (Knott & Stuebe, 2010). For this study, data was entered into a SPSS v22 (IBM SPSS Statistics, 2013) data file for use in the analyses. The frequency distribution of responses was presented as percentages and

displayed in graphs. This was conducted in SPSS using the frequency sub-command on the “Analyze/Descriptive Statistics” menu.

3.10 Pilot Study

This section provides a description of the pilot study conducted prior to commencement of data collection. Porta (2008) describes a pilot study as a limited test of the methods and measures that will later be adopted on a larger scale. It is a short preliminary survey that usually requires a small convenient sample (Alreck & Settle, 1995). The rationale for conducting a pilot study is to scrutinise the feasibility of the method (including the research design, sample, and materials) that is proposed for use in a large-scale study (Leon, Davis, & Kraemer, 2011). As Polit, Beck, and Hungler point out, a pilot study is “done in preparation for the major study” (2001, p. 467) and can be conducted in both quantitative and qualitative studies (Thabane et al., 2010). Results from pilot studies can help researchers design and execute larger studies (Leon et al., 2011). Prior to commencement of the data collection process for this study, two pilot studies were conducted; the first one was with writers in 2010 and the second was with readers in 2015. Each was a one-week experience which took place in Lagos, Nigeria.

3.10.1 Pilot Study Sample

According to Thabane et al. (2010), calculating for sample size prior to commencement of a pilot may not be necessary for some studies. Nevertheless, Thabane et al. (2010) recommend using a representative target sample, even though the size of the sample may not be large enough, and suggest that inclusion/exclusion criteria should be analogous to that of the main study. A small sample of five authors and five readers was recruited using purposive sampling techniques. The rationale for this sampling technique was based on the premise that the sample and settings were likely to reflect

the processes and/or phenomenon being studied (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Purposive sampling also creates in-depth and detailed information (Zmijewska & Lawrence, 2005) and provides great insight into the phenomenon being studied. All five authors contacted for the pilot study had published at least one short story in a notable publication. They were also of African origin, which fulfilled the inclusion criteria for the main study. The five readers were active members of literary communities in Nigeria.

3.10.2 Pilot Study Procedure

The researcher approached writers at the Lagos International Book Fair, and explained the purpose of his research and provided instructions on how to complete the questionnaire. Each participant was given ample time — about one hour — to provide answers to the questions. The writers had fifteen questions to answer, and due to the fact that the pilot study was done face-to-face, the researcher was able to clarify any questions that the respondents had. Everything took place in one day, and the researcher was able to collect responses immediately. A similar procedure was used for the readers. The researcher contacted them at an open mic event at Afriville in Lagos while also giving them instructions on how to complete the ten questions in the questionnaire. Average time spent on the questionnaires was twenty minutes, and the researcher was able to collect all responses on the day.

3.10.3 Pilot Study Data Analysis

In line with the methodology for this research, Thematic Analysis and descriptive statistics were used for data analysis. Analysis of the pilot study data followed the same procedure described in 3.7 above. As discussed earlier, TA provides a thorough thematic approach that helps to produce insightful analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). TA also enabled the researcher to identify some common themes in the

data (Howitt & Cramer, 2011). For data from readers, descriptive statistics were used to analyse the data through frequency distribution, as suggested by Punch (2005).

3.10.4 Findings and Discussion

Initial findings of the pilot study showed that new media, in particular the Internet, played a huge role in the careers of writers. The five writers who took part in the study revealed that the Internet has helped them network with fellow African writers irrespective of where they lived. They also stated that social media has helped them to stay in touch with fellow writers while also publicising their own work.

All readers said they used their phones for reading several times a day. They also said that, compared to paper books, e-readers are easy to carry. 90% of the readers said they mostly read short stories on their devices, while 80% said they typically read literary works in the evenings.

3.10.5 Contribution of Pilot Study to the Main Study

The pilot study helped to determine some of the key respondents for the main data collection. For instance, the Abuja Literary Society was pointed out as a literary group/book club through which the researcher could get a large number of respondents. One of the respondents in the pilot study helped in facilitating a meeting with a member of the society. Similarly, one of the writers in the pilot study provided contact information for some writers from South Africa and Kenya. Although the researcher knew about these writers, he had no previous means of contacting them. This was very useful for the main study, as it opened up a genuine channel of communication between the researcher and writers in these countries.

During the pilot study, respondents raised vital questions that enabled the researcher to fine-tune the questions. For instance, during the face-to-face interviews with the writers, there was a lot of discussions about online writing. These discussions and related feedback enabled the researcher to include a new question in the main study: *How would you rate online writing? To what extent do you think online writing differs from print?* Similarly, discussions with the writers around social media prompted the researcher to include a new question on this area in the main study: *Do you think that the internet or social media has made it easier for you to gain access to other writers and/or publishers and/or readers?*

The initial responses from the five readers who took part in the pilot study also helped the researcher to adjust questions. For instance, the age range in Question 3 had to be expanded to include age groups up to 44. Interactions with readers made it clear that one of the quickest ways to find out about any new work was through an SMS alert, which prompted the researcher to include another option for question 9: *Receiving an alert via SMS or through an app on my mobile phone.*

3.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the philosophical assumptions that underpin the research methodologies used in this study. It also described the research methodologies employed in this study. Various research processes (e.g., research design, instrument, procedure, ethical consideration, data analysis) were provided, alongside explanations and justifications. Both open-ended (for writers) and close-ended (for readers) questions were contained in the survey method used in this study. The study sample included 30 new writers, drawn from five African countries. The sample also involved a survey of

300 readers from Nigeria. A description of the pilot study conducted prior to the main study was also provided.

Chapter 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION: WRITERS’ PERSPECTIVES

4.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses survey responses from 30 new African writers who formed the sample of the population under study. These responses were based on a 17-item questionnaire, the details of which are included in the appendices. These questions cover various areas (e.g., how new media has influenced creative writing careers), and these areas provide themes to guide analysis. Only questions that received a substantial amount of responses were analysed. For instance, the question: ‘Would you support an exclusive award for online writing?’, was designed as an open-ended question, but the writers treated it as a close-ended question, and for this reason could not be analysed using Thematic Analysis. The process of using Thematic Analysis, and how the themes were identified from the writers’ responses, is explained in the section below.

4.1.1.1 Process of Implementing Thematic Analysis in this Study

As discussed in Chapter 3, Thematic Analysis involves a six-phase approach. In the data familiarisation phase (Phase One, Appendix E), the researcher familiarised himself with the data. This study makes use of the inductive approach, meaning that themes identified in the responses are closely linked with the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The inductive process involved reading the data several times so as to become familiar with the data set. This repeated-reading exercise led to data immersion, which

is taken to reflect the researcher's familiarity with the data (Fielden et al., 2011). Phase Two (Appendix F) involved initial code generation, whereby interesting elements of the data set (the responses of the writers) were coded in a systematic manner. Central to the method, the researcher had to ensure that all data considered relevant to the code was collated. An example of coding is given below.

Data extract	Code
<p>“It makes writing more accessible because of the people connected to social media spaces” (Respondent 1, lines 12-13). “it has made communication easier and faster” (Respondent 4, line 206-207). “Access to literary events around the world” (Respondent 12, line 755). “The new social media bring you into contact with your readers” (Respondent 17, lines 1020-1021).</p>	<p>Accessibility</p>

Table 4.1 An example of coding

Phase Three involved searching for themes (see Figure 4.1) and described larger sections of the data. This phase specifically involved analysis of the code generated in Phase Two, to see how different (though perhaps analogous) codes could be combined to form overarching themes. All of the initial codes pertinent to the research questions

were merged into a theme. In line with the suggestions of Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic maps were developed to help generate the themes. These maps allow the researcher to visualise and reflect the associations and interactions among the themes (Fielden et al., 2011).



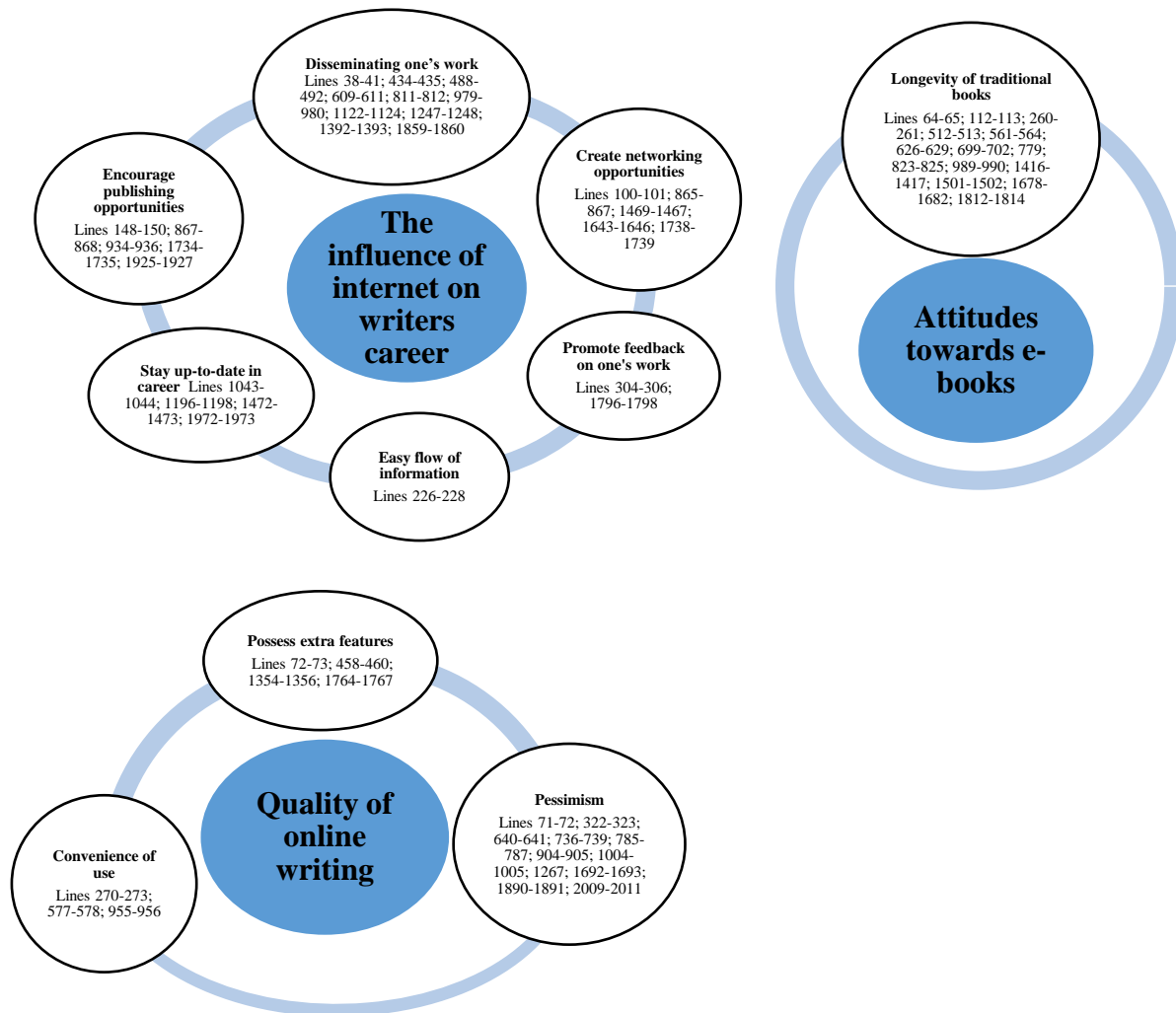
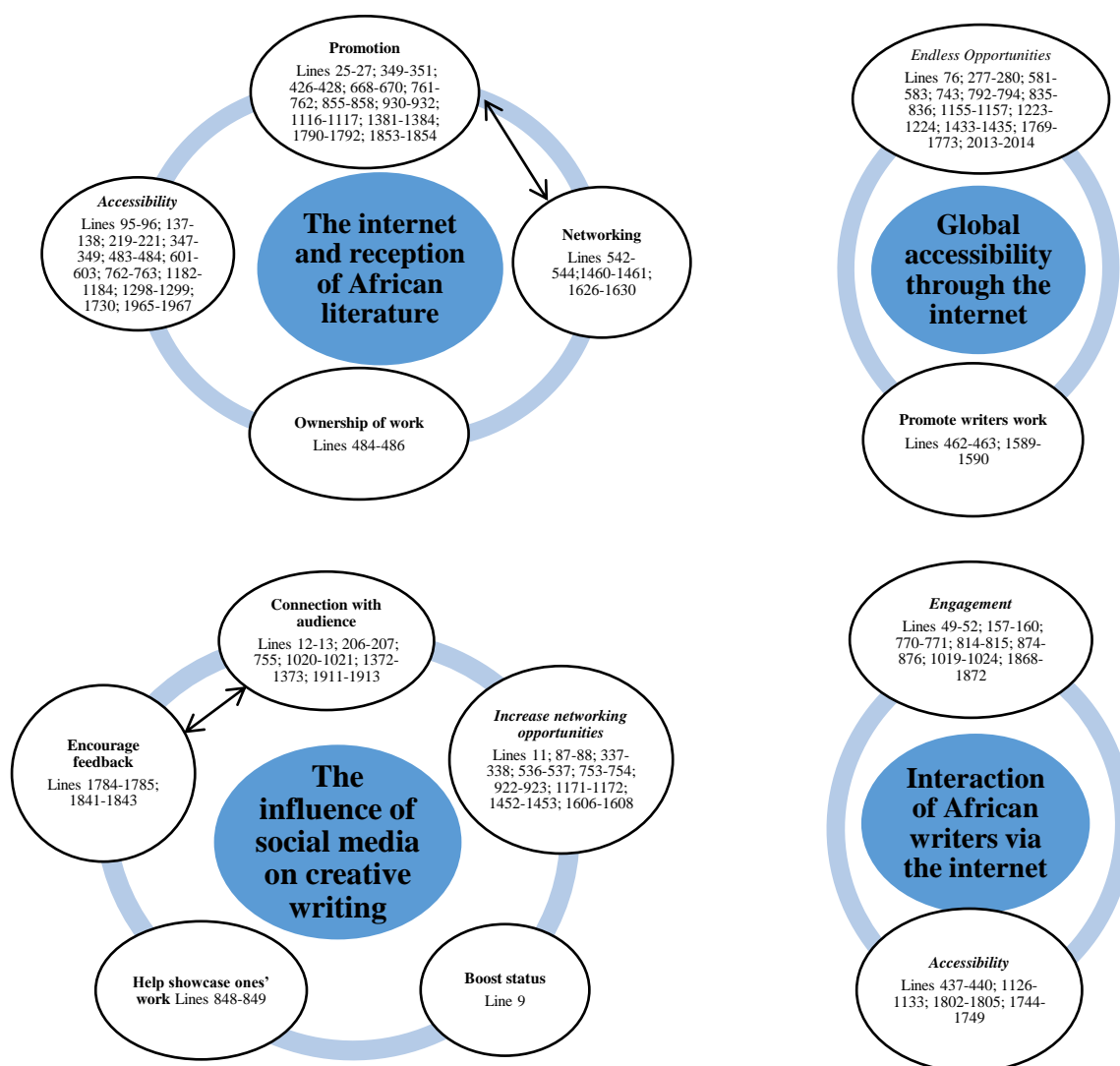


Figure 4.1 Phase Three (Braun & Clarke, 2006) - Initial thematic map showing seven overarching themes and several subthemes.

The figure 4.1 above displays the overarching themes (in dark background) as well as subthemes (in white background). These themes have been derived from coding of the data. For instance, responses to the question (number 17) on whether the Internet

or social media has made it easier for writers to gain access to other writers and/or publishers and/or readers, were coded and the major themed that emerged, was global accessibility through the internet, while promoting writers' works and endless opportunities were the sub themes.

In Phase Four (see Figure 4.2), the researcher looked at the themes that emerged from Phase Three, so as to ensure that these were consistent with both the coded extracts and the complete data set. Phase Four also involved some refinement and thus, themes with limited/no supporting data were noted for discarding.



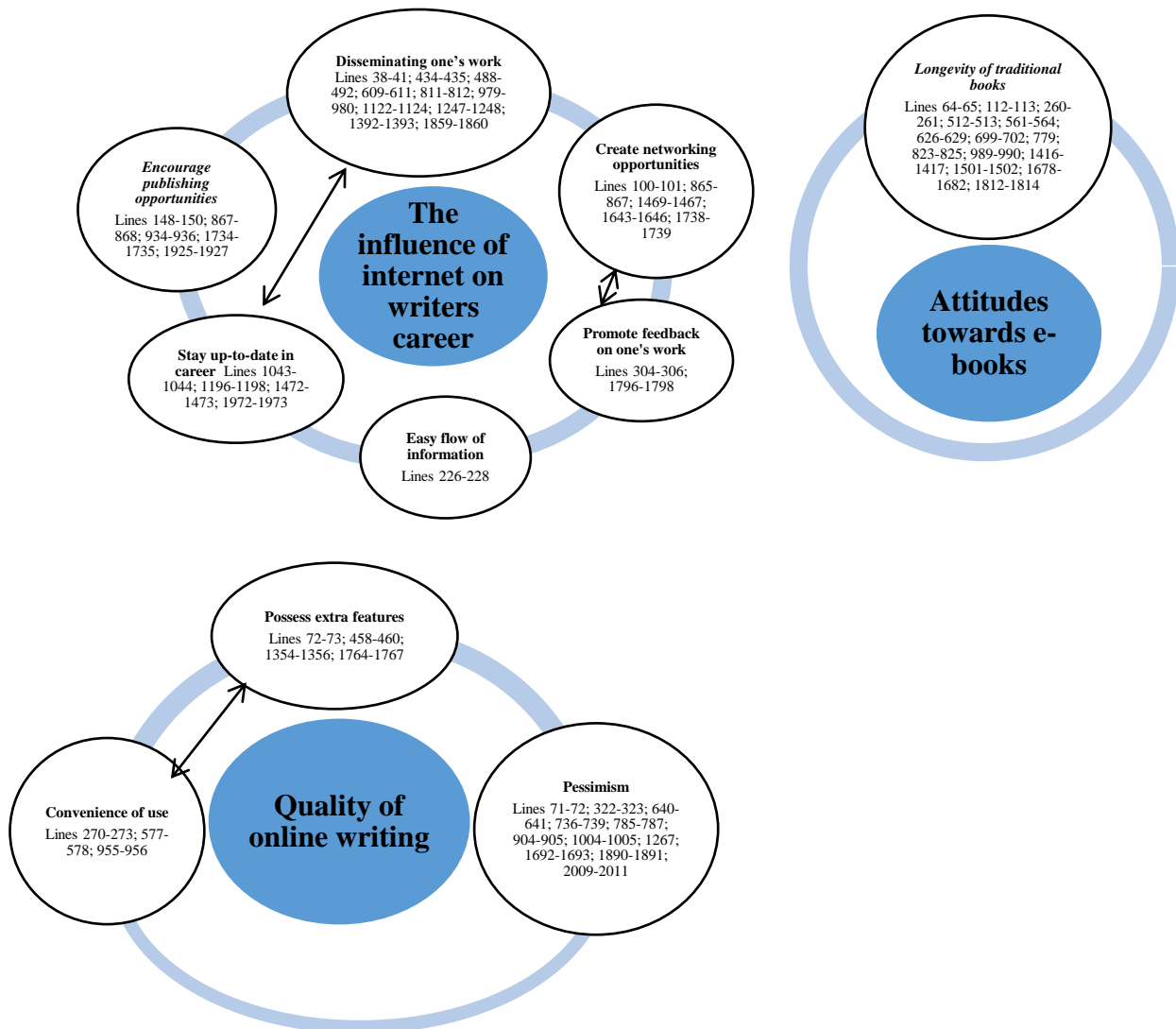
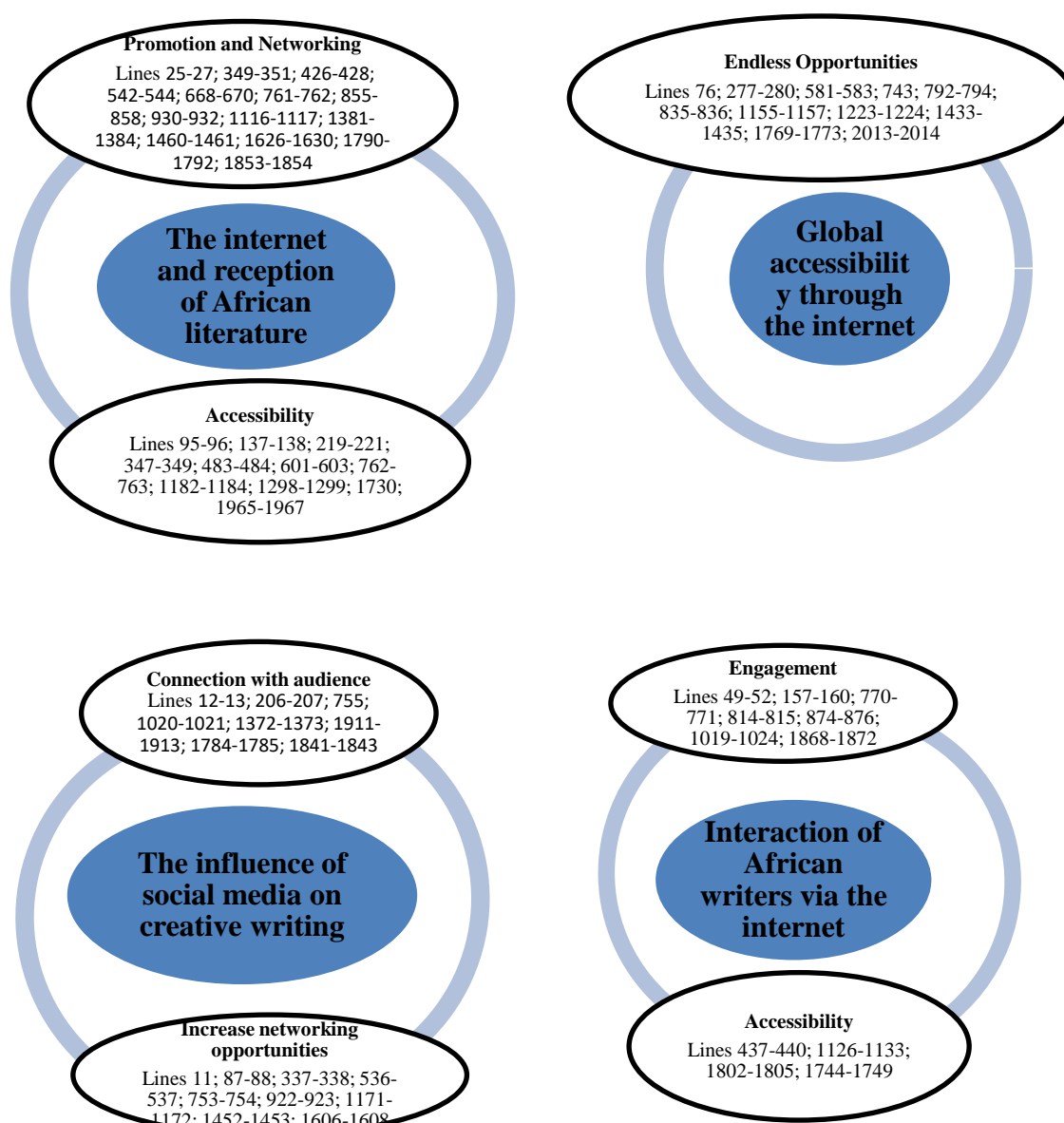


Figure 4.2 Phase Four (Braun & Clarke, 2006) - Developed thematic map showing seven overarching themes and several sub-themes linked together.

Figure 4.2 reveals the process of reviewing the overarching themes and determining if some sub themes should be discarded or merged with others. Those with arrows are those sub-themes that are linked, while those in *Italics* are standalone sub-

themes, and are not related to other sub-themes. The rest are those that are standalone sub-themes with less supporting data. As an example, the sub-theme “ownership of work” in regard to the overarching theme “The internet and reception of African literature” has less supporting data and does not link to other sub-themes. Therefore, this sub-theme was marked for removal from further stages of the analysis.

Phase Five (Figure 4.3) involved defining and naming the sub themes. That is, themes were further defined and refined so as to clarify the core of each theme.



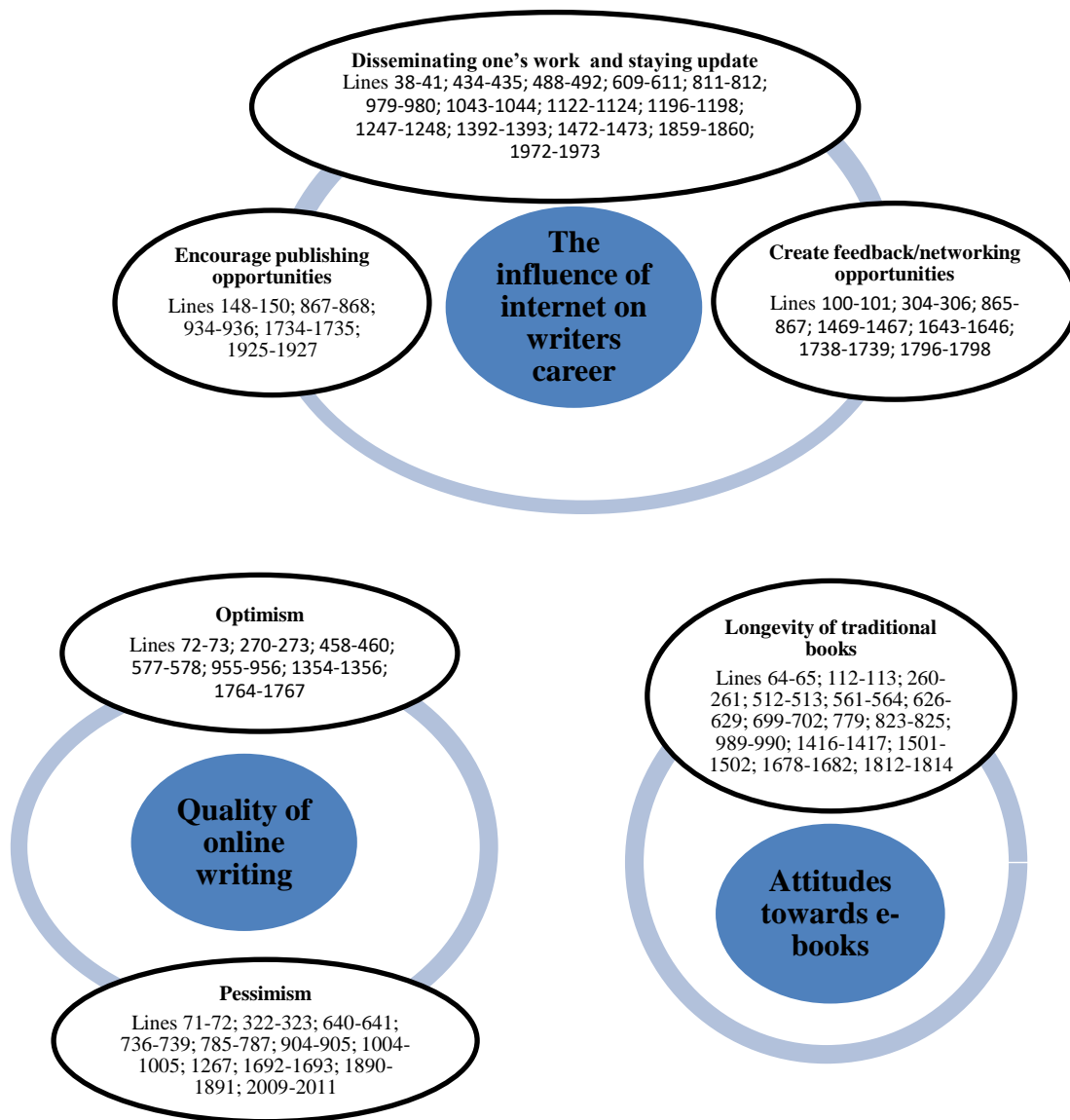


Figure 4.3 Phase Five (Braun & Clarke, 2006) - Final thematic map showing seven overarching themes with thirteen sub-themes.

To explain the diagram above, some of the sub themes were merged or discarded in Phase Five. For instance, in regard to the theme of “quality of online writing” the sub themes selected following the refining are “optimism” and

“pessimism”. In regard to the theme, “the influence of the internet on writer’s career”, the sub themes that emerged were “Disseminating one’s work and staying update”, “Create feedback/networking opportunities” and “encourage publishing opportunities”.

Following Phase Five is the report production phase (Phase Six). In this final phase, the analysis and write-up of the report was completed – this is provided in this chapter, from section 4.2 to 4.8. In summary, using Thematic Analysis, the data revealed seven overarching themes and several sub-themes:

1. The Internet and reception of African literature
 - a. Sub-themes: promotion/networking and accessibility
2. The influence of social media on creative writing
 - a. Sub-themes: connection with the audience and increased networking opportunities
3. Global accessibility through the Internet
 - a. Sub-themes: endless opportunities
4. The influence of the Internet on writers’ careers
 - a. Sub-themes: disseminating work and staying up-to-date, creating feedback/networking opportunities, and encouraging publishing opportunities
5. Interaction of African writers via the Internet
 - a. Sub-themes: engagement and accessibility
6. Quality of online writing
 - a. Sub-themes: optimism and pessimism
7. Attitude towards e-books
 - a. Longevity of traditional books

These themes are discussed in detail, in the sections below. It should also be pointed out that these themes, which are derived from the responses of the writers, are also discussed in relation to uses and gratification theory and other previous studies on new media.

4.2 The Internet and Reception of African literature

In this section, two sub-themes are identified from the respondents' views on the Internet and reception of African literature. These are: promotion/networking and accessibility. Other aspects of the participants' responses also intersect with these categories.

4.2.1 *Promotion/Networking*

This sub-theme concerns how the Internet has helped raise awareness of African literature through promotion and by fostering networking opportunities among African writers. This sub-theme encapsulates the participants' belief that the Internet has helped promote African writing. Participants believe that as African works receive global exposure, people worldwide begin to realise that Africa has more writers besides the celebrated few (such as Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka). One participant states that "as people around the world get to see more African works, they are beginning to appreciate that there are more writers in Africa than the few old faces they used to know, and they also get to see the diversity new authors are bringing making their appreciation of African literature somehow different" (Respondent 22, lines 1381–1384). As another participant states, "it's helping those in more developed countries to see the talent in Africa, rather than for interactive purposes" (Respondent 11, lines 669–670). Another commented, "I think African writing needs more exposure, and the internet is providing that. There are many stories that are not being appreciated by a

wider audience, but the internet provides that opportunity to reach out to more people and grow an interest in African writing” (Respondent 14, lines 855–858).

These views are consistent with previous research that suggests new media has made it possible for Africans to connect with the rest of the world by overcoming some of the constraints that had previously made such connection impossible for particular less-developed nations (Hilliard, 2002). These responses also confirm that new media presents new ways of consuming media (Lister et al., 2009; Aarseth, 1997; Pressman, 2014) and allows the works of African writers to receive global attention (Mort, 2006). The findings also reveal that the Internet helps promote networking opportunities amongst African writers. One participant stated that the Internet “increases opportunities for African writers to collaborate, find places to submit work to and build networks where there were none before” (Respondent 9, lines 542–544). Another participant notes that “I was also one of the young writers from Africa to participate in the Crossing Borders Creative Writing Project, an interactive initiative that linked young writers from Africa with experienced and published writers in Britain over a period of nine months to encourage the cross-pollination of ideas and broaden our mindsets” (Respondent 25, lines 1626–1630). As Harper (2011) suggests, we are living in an age that promotes both local and international collaboration, and enables writers to publish works through various new media formats that retransmit and redistribute these works to wider audiences (Couldry, 2008).

4.2.2 Accessibility

The accessibility sub-theme focuses on how the Internet has made it possible for audience (i.e., readers) to access literary works produced by writers of African origin. Data gathered from the 30 writer-participants suggests that new media has made African

works easily accessible to a diverse audience. One participant states that “internet has made African writing accessible to the world, to different audiences. The more the world accesses African writing the more they appreciate it” (Respondent 4, Lines 220–221). Another participant states that “I think the internet has allowed multiple narratives on the African life to be seen and accessed by the wider world” (Respondent 8, lines 483–484), while another adds that “To some extent, because it’s generally easier to find and read content from anywhere in the world, so African writing (and writing from anywhere) benefits from this” (Respondent 10, lines 601–603).

One participant argues that, “To some extent, however, it’s difficult to measure whether ‘African literature’ is being appreciated differently” (Respondent 21, lines 1299–1301). According to this participant, there are two reasons for this:

“First, a huge number of those writing “literary” works live abroad and have often been educated abroad. As such the “African”-ness of their work is mediated by the immigration status (whether temporary or permanent). In fact, it might be more appropriate to write of African immigrant literature rather than simply African literature. Second, tropes of “authenticity” and patterns of exoticism continue to mark the reception of African writers. They are praised for sounding “authentic” and “telling it like it is.” The ideological rationales behind such appraisals suggest that the medium of expression, the internet, might not be significant enough to affect their reception, especially by non-African readers” (Lines 1302–1310).

For readers to have easy access to works produced by Africans, publishers from the continent have to offer content for free (Mort, 2006). Today, as this researcher

observes, online magazines published by Africans (e.g., *Saraba*, *African Writing*, *African Writer*) do not charge for subscriptions but boost readership by offering their content for free. This way, anyone, anywhere can have access to the diverse collection of writings online, in line with the Internet's broad possibility for empowering people and promoting previously unheard voices (Allan, 2008; Zimmer, 2008; Cormode & Krishnamurthy, 2008). Some African literary magazines that once attempted to charge readers have since changed their minds. An example is *Sentinel Literary Quarterly*, (<http://sentinelquarterly.com/>) established by the Nigerian Nnorum Azuronye in 2002. *Sentinel* publishes poems, short stories, essays, and reviews, and also runs monthly writing contests. In 2007, this researcher observed that *Sentinel* attempted to establish a print magazine, so they could charge for subscriptions, but failed, and a year later the magazine returned to being an online-only publication. Free access to writing may have prompted one of the participants in this study to suggest that the "Internet has made a significant revolution in the way African writing can be read and appreciated" (Respondent 25, lines 1623–1624). This participant further validated his claim by citing an entry by Binyavanga Wainaina — the winner of the 2002 Caine Prize for Writing in Africa — that was originally published in an easily accessed online magazine in the United States of America. The participant described his participation in the Crossing Borders project:

"I was also one of the young writers from Africa to participate in the Crossing Borders project. And where most African publishers are reluctant to take risks with young and unknown writers, they have found opportunities on the internet — crossing borders and becoming easily

accessible to wider and diverse audiences” (Respondent 25, lines 1626–1633).

These findings suggest that the Internet has had a massive impact on the reception of African literature. This influence is seen in how African works are made easily accessible to a diverse audience through several online channels. This reflects previous studies that conclude new media is an emerging field of communication that can promote people’s cultures while also becoming part of people’s lives (Backlund & Sandberg, 2002; Lister et al., 2009; Slevin, 2001). Internet communication is not an ordered relationship whereby we inform others (e.g., radio transmission), but a sort of give-and-take communication that can be viewed as an equal relationship where anyone anywhere can take part (Rumpf, 2003).

4.3 The Influence of Social Media on Creative Writing

In this section, two sub-themes were identified concerning the influence of social media on creative writing: connection with the audience and increased networking opportunities.

4.3.1 *Connection with the Audience*

This sub-theme of connection with the audience highlights how, through social media, African writers connect with readers from across the world, use social media to let the world know of their works, and receive feedback. One participant states that using social media “makes writing more accessible because of the people connected to social media spaces” (Respondent 1, lines 12–13). Others share similar views. One participant states that “social media make it easier to find a global audience for your work” (Respondent 22, line 1373). “I host a web site and have work published on various websites which affords me the opportunity to reach a wide range of people” (Respondent 29, lines 1911–1913). Some also maintain that apart from helping them to

connect with their audience, social media also enables them to post work and receive instant feedback from multiple sources. This view is echoed by one participant, who states that social media: “Offers room for posting works and critique, Feedback from fellow creative writers” (Respondent 27, lines 1784–1785). That respondent also felt that having an audience (no matter how small) encouraged creative writing.

The above views are in line with studies on social media and online publishing opportunities. Kumar (2014) argues that social media is a platform for networking and building friendship, and a tool for self-development and connecting with audiences. African writers and their audiences have been the subject of intense debate. In the 1950s, African literature was avoided by many English literature students at the University of Ibadan (Jeyifo, 2006) because it was thought that African writers had no audience. Similarly, in the mid-1970s, when Wole Soyinka, a Nigerian poet and playwright, was appointed as a fellow at the Churchill College at Cambridge University, he was assigned to teach in the social anthropology department instead of the English department (Jeyifo, 2006). However, with the arrival of the Internet, and particularly with the rise of social media, works by African writers are published and promoted to international audiences alongside those of writers from other parts of the world. In this sense, social media is a great way to engage with the audience, and reflects practices in other media industries where social media is both a way of spreading news to a large audience and a tool that takes people to websites, thus enabling organisations to engage different and younger audiences (Bakhurst, 2011). The fact that writers are able to get feedback from their audiences confirms that today’s audiences are not passive but active consumers of creative works (Meyers, 2012; Looy & Baetens, 2003; Jenkins, 2006).

One of the writers in this study offered a thought-provoking response, stating that social media has enabled new genre forms to emerge:

“One issue of the Kenyan journal Kwani? for instance, transcribes online conversations and presents them as a piece of creative writing.

Additionally, social media has presented emerging writers with new forms of supportive communities of readers, fellow writers, editors, and audiences. It is also clear that some forms of social media (abbreviated modes of writing, for example) are now shaping syntax and semantics”

(Respondent 21, lines 1286–1291).

It is not surprising that Africans are using social media to produce new forms of writing, because Africans have always explored new ways of using the English language. In the 1950s, most Western critics loved Tutuola’s playful inventiveness with language in his novel, *The Palmwine Drinkard* (Larson, 2001). Tutuola’s writing in this novel resembled that of a learner who was making basic errors (Larson, 2001). Despite this, Tutuola was able to tell his story effectively.

In African oral cultures, storytelling often took place in the circle of the family at home around the fireplace (Ong, 1995). In the era of new media, a story is told differently and delivered in a more engaging way to vast audiences, and an exciting aspect of this new media storytelling is the way it engages its audience (Thomas et al., 2007); every reader or listener has a chance to add a comment to the narrative. A good story can be promoted on social media and shared for discussion to a larger audience; as Jenkins (2006) asserts, such interactivity involves a process whereby new technology are able to encourage audience feedback.

4.3.2 Increased Networking Opportunities

The sub-theme of increased networking opportunities focuses on how social media helps writers stay connected with their peers and collaborate. One participant states, “It is important to connect to writers of influence, publishers, festival organisers” (Respondent 1, line 11) and as another echo “it is handy for keeping in touch with other writers and for submission opportunities” (Respondent 2, lines 87–88). Other participants share similar views: “it is a very useful tool for research and sharing work among colleagues” (Respondent 9, lines 536–537); “I stay in touch with other writers who are interested in writing” (Respondent 12, lines 753–754).

These findings are consistent with previous research that shows new media technologies, including social media, have enabled people to share information and express themselves and their creativity (Shukor & Noordin, 2014; Vlieghe et al., 2016; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). The findings suggest that new media has greatly influenced interactions between African writers and how they stay connected with readers, while facilitating collaboration and idea exchange among peers.

4.4 Global Accessibility through the Internet

The sub-theme here concerns how the Internet has enabled writers to receive various opportunities from different parts of the world, reach out to others more easily, and foster collaboration. A number of participants stress the Internet’s creation of new opportunities in a variety of ways. One participant states that “With as little as five hundred Uganda shillings I can load 20 mbs of data and use it to reach on line information, send on line information, look up publishers, communicate with readers who have appreciated my work, keep in touch with all writers I meet” (Respondent 4, lines 277–280). The opportunity to foster collaboration amongst peers is noted by some

of the respondents, reflecting how the Internet enables writers to gain access to global environments. As one participant states, “It’s allowed me to connect with colleagues and be able to create networks. I don’t think I’d have a career in writing without the influence of the internet” (Respondent 9, lines 581–583); another states that it has “tremendously helped me in accessing other writers and publishers” (Respondent 11, lines 742–743). One participant shares his own personal experience to illustrate this point:

“In 2005, I was sitting in our University library when I started chatting to a Welsh poet whom I had met during a British Council writing workshop in Harare. I told her of my childhood desire to study overseas, of getting access to more books, of studying creative writing (as no institution in Zimbabwe teaches the subject). She encouraged me to apply at a Welsh university and two years later I was to graduate with an MA in Creative Writing ... Thanks to the internet” (Respondent 25, lines 1698–1705).

Since Respondent 25 was able to apply for his degree programme due to an online connection with a Welsh author, it is almost certain that a series of emails were exchanged before he eventually moved to Wales. Interactions through the Internet made it possible for the young African writer to pursue his dreams, which is consistent with previous research that the Internet offers new opportunities to people from all walks of life (Jenkin, 2006; Singer et al., 2012; Burell, 2012). According to one of the participants in the study, although the Internet offers opportunities for more writers, it has not offered them the opportunity to make a living from writing, which is what he believes will save African literature: “It has

not made it possible for more writers to make a living from writing. That is the bottom line. That is what will save African writing” (Respondent 24, lines 1589–1590). His responses reflect differences in people’s online experiences, thus replicating previous findings that show that people’s online experiences differ and no two individuals have had the same Internet experience (Light, 1999; Burell, 2012). By contrast, Respondent 23 is passionate about the Internet and the many opportunities it offers her as a writer: “You want to know what’s happening in the writing industry? Google it! Want to know more about writers and their work? Google them! Want to know about writing competitions? Google them!” (Lines 1670–1672). Why Google? According to Shaker (2006), among search engines, Google is ranked highly; Google’s increasing traffic, its introduction of new features, and its increasing accuracy levels have greatly influenced how the search engine is used. Marshall (2004) notes Google is the most popular search engine and the word is now used as a verb (“Google/googling”) to refer to the art of doing a web search (e.g., people Google other people to find out more about them on the Internet).

This African writer’s citation of Google might be considered within the context of globalisation and new media technologies. While globalisation has a strong tendency to encourage the display of differences in global cultures, it can also result in culture clash (Featherstone, 1995). Previous research (Keats et al., 2003; Rajagopal & Bojin, 2004) has described how globalisation promotes its ideals concerning the Internet, especially in developing countries. Keats et al. describes two partnerships, NetTel@Africa and the International Ocean Institute Virtual University (IOIVU), to reveal how technology works hand-in-hand with

globalisation and how higher institutions in developing countries can make a great deal of progress when working with other institutions in the West.

The responses in this section indicate that new African writers are discovering through search engines, peers, and information sharing that a growing range of opportunities can be found online. These opportunities enable them to build their own profiles and share information with peers. Writers can also access educational resources that facilitate discussion and collaboration. The findings suggest that the Internet provides numerous new opportunities for African writers to showcase their work and network with peers and a global audience. Although these opportunities are not without limitation, as one respondent argues that more writers are still unable to enjoy financial stability through use of the Internet.

4.5 The Influence of the Internet on Writers' Careers

Three sub-themes were identified regarding the influence of the Internet on writers' careers: disseminating work and staying up-to-date, eliciting feedback/networking opportunities, and encouraging publishing opportunities. Each is discussed below.

4.5.1 Disseminating Work and Staying Up-to-Date

This sub-theme concerns how the Internet has helped African writers make their works known to diverse audiences across the world and stay up-to-date with developments in their careers. One participant states that "It has enabled me to share widely about the Babishai Niwe Poetry Foundation, the Kampala based organisation which coordinates annual poetry competitions for Africans, publishes poetry and coordinates training for children" (Respondent 1, lines 38–41). Others present similar views: "My writing became more accessible to a wider audience not just in my country

but also from Africa and the wider world. To some extent, interest in my books in foreign countries was spurred by the impact of the internet and what readers were saying and posting online about my work” (Respondent 8, lines 488–492). These responses suggest that new African writers appreciate the role the Internet is playing in their careers. Amongst other reasons, it helps them to submit their work widely and garner more publicity, which supports the view that new media promotes new relationships between users and producers, changing how people read and use communications media (Lister et al., 2009; Rapatzikou & Leonard, 2016; Looy & Baetens, 2003).

4.5.2 Eliciting Feedback/Networking Opportunities

This sub-theme captures participants’ intense feelings of excitement when they come across writing contests or collaborate with other writers on particular projects. The theme also highlights that the Internet has enabled new African writers to interact with their contemporaries across the world. One participant states that the Internet played a significant role in her writing career: “Starting from my first online published story, ‘Radio Africa,’ in 2001 to date, I have relied heavily on it” (Respondent 19, lines 1189–1190). She further asserts that:

“In the early 2000s, I was part of a virtual African writers group that met each week to critique each other’s work. Members included Helon Habila, Chika Unigwe, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, all of whom have later on gone to publish books. We communicated through email. To date, a number of writing gigs and resources have been possible through the availability of the internet” (Respondent 19, lines 1191–1196).

The views of Respondent 19 show that the Internet promotes creativity by enabling participation in a creative production process (Zimmer, 2008; Meyers, 2012). This respondent is a member of FEMRITE, a Uganda Women Writers' Association (an organisation that seeks to inspire and bring together women writers from across the country). Use of technology enables her to regularly share information with other writers in this group. Internet growth, besides giving established and aspiring writers a medium with which to share their stories, also opens up the possibility of getting book deals through online contacts.

Regarding the role of the Internet in promoting networking opportunities, one participant states that "It has helped me to connect with fellow writers, local and international publishers, journalists, as well as a global literary audience" (Respondent 14, lines 865–867). Similarly, "Via blogging, you get to meet and interact with writers from all over and you find that friendships are born in the process" (Respondent 23, lines 1469–1471). These views echo Zimmer (2008)'s assertion that Internet technologies help people share information and interact with one another, and also support how blogging enables Africans to express themselves in previously impossible ways (Somolu, 2007). As an example, in 2013, Aaron Bady, a researcher at the University of California, posted online that he and a group of other writers would blog about the Caine Prize. He urged people to join his "blog carnival," by reading the shortlisted stories and blogging about them in some capacity (Bady, 2013). This Caine Prize blog carnival encouraged and fostered online discussions of the shortlisted stories. These online discussions, in the form of blogging, were quite inclusive. Not only Africans blogged about the prize, but many other persons interested in African literature

took part in the “blog carnival” forum. Page and Thomas (2011) note that software such as blogs have enabled people with little IT knowledge to upload and edit text easily.

Other respondents share personal experiences of how the Internet has helped them stay connected with writers across the world and engage in collaborations. One participant said that the Internet enabled him to keep in touch with writers from all over the world. As a result, he was invited to participate at festivals and commissioned to write pieces for magazines; he also received publishing opportunities. He describes how he was almost swindled by an Internet scam:

“In 2004, I posted a poem on an American-based poetry website and within days they sent me an email saying I had been chosen as “Poet of the World” and they were inviting me to the awards ceremony but I had to pay my way there. I forwarded the good news to a few writer friends and one of them, an award-winning author from Uganda, warned me to ignore the message as it was a scam. And that put me off carelessly publishing my work anywhere” (Respondent 25, lines 1649–1655).

Such poetry scams do not necessarily originate from Africa but are part of the growing landscape of online threats all over the world. Through networking, this writer was able to avoid being duped. Another respondent confirms she discovered writing and networked with other writers through the Internet:

“Twitter and Facebook help me share my content. The internet helps me to submit my work very widely to contests and also publications. My first ever writing prize was internet based. The internet exposes me to inspiration and material that helps with my writing” (Respondent 10, lines 609–613).

The above response reflects the fact that new media forms have a high level of interactivity, with two-way communications similar to face-to-face interaction (Jenkins, 2006). Interactive communication methods make it possible for any user to play an active role, unlike old media where users rarely had a say (Jenkins, 2006). As a result, people (including writers) are able to network with others, create profiles and make them public or private, and allow “friends” to write on their “walls” (Livingstone, 2008).

While some of the comments respondents make may sound overtly optimistic, such views were nevertheless anticipated by Kenyan writer Binyavanga Wainaina, who in 2007 said that new African writers would establish an online community that would collaborate on literary works in a productive and purposeful manner (Wainaina, 2007). Since the emergence of modern African literature, African writers have always felt the urge to tell stories, as Achebe (2003) asserts, and the whole process can be very fulfilling. Taken together, the responses in this sub-theme of eliciting feedback/networking opportunities suggest that African writers have benefitted a great deal from the Internet, since it enables them to stay connected and network with peers across the globe, in line with observations that the Internet has created a brand new social space (Tai, 2006).

4.5.3 Promoting Publishing Opportunities

This sub-theme captures the opportunities the Internet provides to African writers when it comes to publishing their works via new media. One participant shares her view: “It made it much easier for me to learn about how publishing works, how to write a query letter, how to get an agent etc.” (Respondent 3, lines 148–150). She learned these things by becoming involved with online writers’ forums like *Absolute*

Write. When she first began looking for an agent, quite a few still only accepted snail-mail queries, and since the cost of postage on a manuscript or partial manuscript was prohibitive, her choices were limited to agents actively accepting email submissions. One participant states that he learnt almost everything about writing fiction from the Internet:

*“I started my first novel in 2005. I knew nothing and was always flummoxed by why my sentences didn’t ring true, didn’t have bite, like what I read in novels. So I searched: online; in second-hand bookshops; everywhere. The online search paid off. I stumbled upon the website, www.sfw.org. It is run by the Science Fiction Writers of America. They have a vast writers’ resource page; with tips, advice, comments on writing, editing, agents, manuscript prep. The information there was most helpful, and free. And I was first published online. I met the publisher of my novel, *Kachifo*, online”* (Respondent 17, lines 1044–1051).

This writer’s story corroborates previous research that the Internet is witnessing increased participation by people from all over the world who use new media technologies to create and exchange ideas (OECD, 2007; Lister et al., 2009; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). New media has therefore enabled an increasing number of Africans to network with others both online and offline (Burrell & Anderson, 2008). Importantly, the online/offline relationship greatly influences many writers, as one respondent notes; he began to present his writings on his blog and on Facebook in 2007, and the first opportunity this writer had to present his work in public came through a Facebook connection. New media helped him network with fellow writers, local and international

publishers, journalists, and a global literary audience. He used the Internet to publish his first poetry collection and organise a charity fund-raising drive.

For another writer, the turning point in her career came due to publication in the online journal *Open Wide*: “One of the turning points of my career was being shortlisted for the Caine prize. The short story for which I was shortlisted was published on an online journal” (Respondent 15, lines 934–936). At that time, *Open Wide* was an online magazine that published latest fiction from all over the world. Another Caine Prize winner, Respondent 13, states that new media “has helped with getting publicity further distance than would have been without it” (lines 811–812). This statement also corroborates that of another writer, Respondent 27, who states that “My earliest short stories were first published on the internet before appearing in book form” (Lines 1795–1796). This writer, and other writers (i.e., Respondents 15 and 13), suddenly became well-known after their short stories appeared in online magazines. Oftentimes, the editors of these online magazines encourage emerging African writers to consider writing longer pieces that might become novels. Respondent 27 received his first-ever feedback, critique, and edit from online writing sites such as *Author-Me* and *Edit Red*; these greatly boosted his confidence and resolve to practice creative writing seriously. Another writer says that without the Internet he would not have been able to publish certain works: “Some of my work is experimental, and without the internet i would not have been able to have published my work on Pidgin English” (Respondent 29, lines 1925–1927). The pieces that eventually made up his work appeared first on blogs and in email conversations.

In general, the sub-theme of this section — promoting publishing opportunities — shows how writers may use new media to showcase their work, network with

colleagues, and create publishing opportunities. Specifically, it offers them opportunities to express themselves freely. Foucault (1997) further buttresses this point, stressing that writing is a tool of self-expression and a way for people to talk about and reveal themselves to an audience. Expressions might involve posting work online, participating in online debates, or posting on social media. The Internet offers writers the opportunity to come together to form an online community, which acts like a forum where “passions are inflamed, problems solved, social bonds are formed . . . It is a rich arena for studies by scholars, cyber-communitarians and the curious” (Fernback, 1999, p. 217).

4.6 Interactions of African Writers via the Internet

The sub-theme here - accessibility/engagement - focuses on how the Internet has hastened the connection of African writers to one another and how these writers have been “discovered” through their online writings. One writer states that the Internet has enabled readers to access magazines and journals from all over the world: “African readers can access magazines and journals from all over the world. For example I read the *New Yorker*, *New York Times* and *UK Guardian* online, from Nigeria. There is a wealth of downloadable material available also on the internet — writing resources, classic literature” (Respondent 26, lines 1744–1749). Easy access to Internet resources has made it possible for African writers like this respondent to interact with European and American writers on equal terms. This writer has become an international journalist; he has contributed pieces to *the Guardian*, CNN, and other international media, from Nigeria, all because of the Internet. These findings support previous research on the creative industries and Internet use (Madden, 2004; Doloughan, 2011; Thomas et al., 2007). As described in Chapter One, in 2003 the Pew Research Centre

carried out a survey on how musicians use the Internet. According to the Centre, singers (whether new or established) believe in the power of the Internet as a tool to improve their trade. These musicians use the Internet for inspiration, engage with fans and fellow artists, and pursue new commercial activities (Madden, 2004).

In this study, a respondent from Nigeria is deeply convinced that many African writers have benefited tremendously from the Internet. He gives the example of the novel *One Day For The Thief*, written by the Nigerian writer Teju Cole, which started off as a personal blog. A publisher saw it and decided to publish it as a memoir, although when Teju started blogging his major intention was not to publish it in a traditional book format. Over time, many people enjoyed his experimental pieces, and he later received a publishing contract. Making a specific reference to himself, the respondent said:

“The most expensive short story I have sold so far was to an online magazine. The internet is becoming my only way of interacting with my fellow writers, in every sense of the word. The traditional letter writing is dead; therefore one has to rely on emails and text messages. I have also sent drafts to fellow writers to help edit before sending to publishers”

(Respondent 28, lines 1868–1872).

Another respondent from Nigeria also explains that her readers find her contact information on the Internet and send her emails. Students, who use her book in school, contact her online when they need more information for their projects. The works of new African writers are assigned as literature textbooks in Nigerian secondary schools. They are studied alongside the works of older writers like Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka. As discussed in Chapter Two, Meyers (2012) and Jenkins (2006) note that

new media technologies have given power to audiences, enabling them to play active roles in the consumption of culture. In the case of those studying literary works, new media has empowered them to seek out and interact with authors.

Websites and blogs connect readers and writers (Jenkins, 2006). One South African writer states that “Being able to connect with a writer in Kenya when you’re in South Africa is just as vital as being able to connect with a writer in the UK. Africa is huge, and the internet enables us to begin making webs across our own cultural divides” (Respondent 3, lines 157–160). In the words of a Kenyan writer, “African readers have benefited as well, because of the ubiquity and accessibility of on-line prose and poetry. Just a click of the mouse and you can readily access writings of classical and modernist eras” (Respondent 27, lines 1802–1805). While this Kenyan writer uses social media to chat with readers and writers, a Nigerian writer (Respondent 26), said his interactions with other writers are mostly by email. He adds that new African writers have greater choices of affordable reading material and more opportunity to broaden their reading tastes. A Ugandan writer (Respondent 1) believes that “African readers spend a lot of time on social media, discussing, sharing work, creating new groups, literary forums and so on. I also engage quite extensively it’s so important to promote my business, my brand and to promote the works of other writers” (Respondent 1, lines 49–52). Her views are consistent with studies that suggest collaborative work has many advantages over independent efforts (Thornton, 2013). In 2015, writers from across Africa came together to mark Valentine’s Day by producing an anthology of romantic short stories that could be downloaded for free on the Internet. The anthology was published by Nigerian publisher, Cassava Republic, under its Ankara Press imprint. Emma Shercliff of Cassava Republic said that the project was indeed a collaborative effort that “brought

together writers, publishers, translator and readers from across Africa, all of whom have shown an incredible amount of goodwill by donating their time and talents for free” (Page, 2015, p9).

Writers from Zimbabwe present a different view of the Internet, due likely to the political turmoil and socio-economic instability in the country at the time when the study was conducted. One Zimbabwean writer maintains that the Internet is a luxury in Zimbabwe: “Unfortunately, internet in Zimbabwe where I come from is a ‘luxury.’ Most times, people go to public internet cafes to check emails and never to read as it is almost always for very limited times. Every second is a penny dropping into the cash till” (Respondent 25, lines 1659–1662). However, he notes that most of his writer friends are on Facebook and have email accounts. The Internet is their preferred mode of communication because it is more effective and less expensive than telephoning. This writer expresses the view that Africans who have benefitted from the Internet are largely those in the diaspora; these have easy access to the Internet and are aware of its multiple benefits. He asserts that readers could appreciate online work only if the Internet is easily accessible, efficient, and cheap. This view is shared by another Zimbabwean writer:

“As you might be aware, previous challenges in Zimbabwe resulted in many of its people emigrating all over the world, but the increasing use of the internet has brought those people closer together. Thus Zimbabwean authors have been linking each other up on personal blogs, informing each other of publishing opportunities and reading each other’s works. Everyone is getting an opportunity through others. I however feel that in Zimbabwe readers have not really embraced the

internet as a place where they can read fiction literature mostly because it is very expensive to access the internet and most people are on the internet, lets say on average 2 hours per week, and they have more pressing issues than read fiction” (Respondent 22, lines 1397–1406).

These comments are consistent with studies on the digital divide, as discussed in Chapter Two, a concept that assumes the world can be divided into two societies — one benefiting from new media and one unable to benefit (Mansell & When, 1998; van Deursen & van Dijk, 2011). As Chapter Two also notes, several developing countries are tackling issues of access while others are not, the latter thus denying their citizens the opportunity to fully take part in the information society (Luyt, 2004). Awotwi (2015) advises stakeholders to identify and make available the particular information technology that would work best for their citizens.

4.7 Quality of Online Writing

In this section, two sub-themes (optimism and pessimism) emerge regarding respondent views on the quality of online writing. Opinions are divided among writers as to whether or not online writing is preferable to print.

4.7.1 Optimism

Some of participants are optimistic, claiming that creative writing published online is literature by writers taking advantage of the opportunities offered by technology. One writer states that “While a few years ago the copy being put out online left a lot to be desired today the quality is just as goods and some instances even better than the printed” (Respondent 7, lines 458–460). Another writer notes that “online writing offers new experiments in hypertext and so on, and can be a multimedia experience in ways that print texts cannot” (Respondent 21, lines 1354–1356). This

response is in sync with the views of Hudson (2007), who states that new media technologies have enabled writers to express themselves in new ways and that “e-writing” is changing written communications, much as the alphabet, paper, and printing press once did. A Zimbabwean writer states that online writing is “like music, does it stop being music because it is now in digital form on you Ipod and not on cassette or Vynil disc or CD. I think what constitutes anything is the content and not the medium on which comes to the market” (Respondent 22, lines 1409–1412).

A Nigerian writer says, “In a way, I think, as most contemporary African, and probably, world writers were first published online before being discovered by literary agents and publishing houses” (Respondent 27, lines 1815–1817). This view recalls the example of award-winning writer Teju Cole, mentioned in the previous section, whose first novel started as a blog. Asserting her optimism about online works, another Nigerian writer says, “Granted, some online journals publish poorly edited work, but we get that too with traditional publishing” (Respondent 15, lines 943–945). A Ugandan writer (Respondent 16) maintains that one can certainly find good writing on the Internet. She says that the chances of finding good writing are better when the website has an editor, but one also encounters great writing in unexpected places, such as magazines that are published and managed outside of Africa: “publication at quality websites require that one’s work be considered worthy of being published by independent editors who more often than not are propelled purely by the love of literature. Moreover, once a story, for instance, is published on a website that has a standard editorial process, the reading public have access to it as do publishers who may want to republish such works in hard copy” (Respondent 16, lines 992–997).

Also expressing optimism about online works compared to printed works, a Zimbabwean writer says, “We write for the audience, so if those who must consume it can’t access it, then it’s a farce. So since it’s an art not appreciated for the intended consumers, then overall my rating is low” (Respondent 11, lines 734–736). This response might trigger a debate about who constitutes the audience for the African writer, especially when work is published online. In the past, when the Heinemann African Writers’ Series (described in Chapter One) was still in the process of publication, it was clear that the audience for these books was African readers. However, when a work is published online in a journal not focused solely on African writing, the intended audience is not clear. Many in the West have discovered fresh writing from Africa unexpectedly in online journals. Mort (2006) notes that an Argentinean teacher stated during a British Council Oxford Conference that discovering the Crossing Borders website gave her important access to materials on contemporary African literature. Crossing Borders (as described in Chapter One) made it possible for writers across Africa to publish their works online for a global audience.

A South African writer states that “The differences of style lie in the genres, rather than in the medium” (Respondent 3, lines 212–213), although she suspects that “there are a far higher number of erotica novels available online than in the brick and mortar stores” (lines 188–190). In the words of a Kenyan writer, “Online writing can be as potent as print” (Respondent 7, line 458). He also opines that a few years ago the copy being put online was not of good quality, but today the quality is just as good and some instances even better than that of printed works. Likewise, a Zimbabwean writer states that he would “rate online on the same level with print and so no difference whatsoever in both formats, except the fact that one is online and the other is print”

(Respondent 30, lines 2009–2011). A similar view is held by another writer: “I judge writing by the same criteria whether in print or online” (Respondent 18, lines 1150–1151). A Nigerian writer argues that “the power of a well-written story or poem remains the same whether read in print or online” (Respondent 5, lines 322–323). According to another writer, “In some instances there is no difference — the same material that appears in the tabloids is also published online” (Respondent 25, lines 1692–1693).

As noted above, most African writers started off publishing their works (especially short stories) online. As their writing evolves, these works often eventually form part of an anthology of short stories. Often, little is changed in these stories, other than titles. The online versions are anthologised, as can be seen in the works of Chimamanda Adichie, whose first short story collection, *The Thing Around Your Neck* (2009), included short stories that had appeared online. Therefore, when Respondent 18 gives online works the same rating as print, she also assumes that this online writing will someday become part of a print anthology, as in the case of Adichie. Optimism about online publications by writers in this study corroborate other studies that show that growing percentages of Internet users are now comfortable with works presented online (Warren et al., 2011). This optimism is further evidence that new media technologies have indeed promoted literature (Pressman, 2014).

4.7.2 Pessimism

Other writers in this study are sceptical about online writing. One Nigerian writer says that “Online writing is no better or worse than print. There’s good and bad online writing just like there’s good and bad writing in print” (Respondent 16, lines 1004–1005). Another writer believes that the major difference between online and print publications is the relatively free nature of most online writing websites and the

immediacy of access to new works posted online. As a result, “Online writing lacks the rigorous editing that traditional publishing requires” (Respondent 28, lines 1890–1891). Since differing/non-standard spellings are used online, this has caused people to worry that the Internet will be bad for the future of language. One writer argued that “It makes your spelling terrible” (Respondent 20, line 1267). However, Crystal (2001) disagrees with this view. He argues instead that the Internet is enabling growth of a range and variety of languages and thus encourages personal creativity. This debate about online writing and language has been going on for some years now, and Ong (1995) points out that language in general is so “oral” that of all the different languages spoken across the world, only a little over 100 have ever been used to produce writing. In fact, since many languages have never been written at all, it is difficult to determine how many languages of the world have gone into extinction or been assimilated into other languages prior to the development of writing (Ong, 1995). Even now, several languages have never entered written form and lack a script (Ong, 1995).

4.8 Attitude towards e-books

The sub-theme that emerges in this section concerns the longevity of traditional books. Writers in this study favour traditional books, but acknowledge the potential of e-books. Participants accept that printed books will continue to be produced, but believe they will increasingly exist alongside online and digital formats. A Nigerian writer believes that both have a place in the publishing world:

“I think one has to look at it demographically. The young reader might want to have his/her text delivered as e-book, while the older reader/editor/reviewer would still like to hold a hard copy where he can

pencil things down. First Editions and Hardbacks are still very much cherished by a lot of people. The end of traditional publishing as we know it now is not anywhere near yet” (Respondent 28, lines 1878–1883).

Similar views are held by a Zimbabwean writer (Respondent 25) who said that it would be a shame to lose the printed book forever since he loves the smell of new books:

“CDs do not smell at all. I still love to walk into the Oxfam Bookshop in our High Street because I find the sight and smell of books alluring. I still want to tuck in bed and read a book to sleep. Reading on the computer does not give the same experience. Books are the best companions”
(Respondent 25, lines 1679–1682).

Another Zimbabwean writer says that writers must take advantage of technology and its benefits:

“At the end of the day I believe it becomes a matter of viability — ebook publishing is still at its young stages, but as it is being refined, with time its viability will become apparent- cheaper method of production, mass production, wider reach, easier access to the readers (mostly in the developed world), cheaper for the consumer, use of audio and visual media along with the written word, less cutting down of trees” (Respondent 23, lines 1493–1498).

This respondent also notes that, with e-books, a writer can present both audio and visual media alongside the written word — a view consistent with studies (e.g.: Bradley et al., 2011; Ballatore & Natale, 2015) that show e-books are coming of age, successfully moving beyond just being electronic copies of printed book, and now incorporate multimedia and interactivity. A South African writer opines that both formats will survive and work together side-by-side:

“Although ebooks are revolutionising literature worldwide, print is still a format that is taken more seriously than others. The very act of producing and printing a book taps into a primal, prejudiced part of us that prefers to hold and behold something that is a physically interactive object. Print implies emotional and professional investment. It requires financial investment. Print implies quality. We’re beginning to overcome this prejudice with things like news media, but with most books we are more likely to take the physical form or implied physical form of a text than a digital version” (Respondent 9, lines 561–568).

One Nigerian writer notes that at one time that “the advent of television did not spell the end of the radio. I doubt if the ebook will kill paper back or hard cover” (Respondent 16, lines 989–990); the respondent also noted that, on the contrary, the advent of television made movie-going a special occasion, and he was convinced that e-books would not kill publishing but simply modify it. According to this respondent, there will always be a place for books, especially since power shortages are inevitable in developing economies such as Africa. His views support the position of Ballatore and Natale (2015), who argue that people have predicted the fading away of books since e-readers became widespread and successful. Such forecasts, Ballatore and Natale (2015) say, are a common theme in the study of media technologies; whenever a new medium is introduced, people praise its uniqueness and tout the slow or rapid disappearance of older media. However, Ballatore and Natale (2015) argue, it is impossible to determine the future of e-readers and e-books, although one can certainly talk about possibilities: e.g., the

book could merge with other media and become part of digital storytelling. Such predictions reveal that societies see media as vehicles for change.

The debate on the future of the book indicates that media changes are represented in the public sphere and in how these media affect people's lives. These arguments are similar to those on writing and technology. Ong (1995) argues that without writing people would not be able to reason the way they do; writing has therefore changed human perception. Ong (1995) disagrees with Plato's assertion that writing is not good for humans, in that it destroys the mind's capacities for memory and knowledge. Ong (1995) believes that Plato views writing as a foreign technology, as some today might still view emerging information and communication technologies. Ong (1995) points out that when people write or use their personal computers, they are helping to "technologise the word." Ong urges people to consider writing as a technology, whether produced by brushes or a keyboard, and infers that "writing started what print and computers only continue, the reduction of dynamic sound to quiescent space" (Ong 1995, p. 82).

According to a Zimbabwean writer, "Books in print are just special, nothing can take their place" (Respondent 2, lines 112–113), although this writer also notes that Internet writing and e-books have their place, especially while travelling (due to compactness). Similarly, a Ugandan writer explains that she believes printed book will always thrive:

"As a writer and publisher living in Uganda, I have visited many parts of Africa and for them, the e-book is far from their reality. We often share and distribute books in remote schools because they don't even have libraries and the little print literature they access, they are most grateful

for. The print book isn't going anywhere but further upwards"

(Respondent 1, lines 60–65).

Further support for the longevity of the traditional, printed book comes from a Zimbabwean writer, who states that, "The hard copy is portable, very convenient. You read it on the subway, on the commuter omnibus. You read it in the park, you can read it over and over again. You can show others, hey, I read it in the book, here it is, you are so confident" (Respondent 11, lines 699–702).

Since reading is an active process during which the reader must reflect on the content of a text, (as described in Chapter Two), every sentence has a way of interacting and representing the writer and the cultural context in which the subject speaks (Nunan, 1991; Dubin & Bycina, 1991). As the respondents in this study reveal, readers in Africa still prefer to read printed books. The availability and affordability of e-readers are contributing factors for this, as Harper (2011) observes that new technologies have not benefitted people in all parts of the world. Harper (2011) also suggests that much needs to be done in order to ensure that everyone has access to new technologies. Kunda and Brooks (2000) note that finance, infrastructure, and culture have prevented the development of information technology in many developing countries, and call for long-term solutions to these problems. In some countries, as e-readers gain wider acceptance, their existence is seen to complement rather than take the place of printed books:

"The debate on the future of the book has been increasingly shifting from the logic of supersession towards a more nuanced approach that interrogates how writers, readers and the publishing industry react to the ongoing transformations, and how these agents are contributing to

reshape both print and digital forms of publications” (Ballatore and Natale, 2015, p. 5).

4.9 Placing the Findings within the Context of Applicable Theories

This section explains the application of the relevant theory underpinning this study, which is discussed in detail in Chapter 2, from the perspective of new media usage. Two theories supply the core theoretical underpinnings for this study: Uses and Gratification theory (U & G) and Diffusion of Innovation theory (DOI). This section applies U & G theory to analyse the study’s findings regarding the survey responses from African writers.

U &G theory was applied to this study’s findings to determine how and why writers use new media. Proponents of U & G theory seek to determine how people use new media and what gratification they receive from using new media. Fourie (2007) posits that a user’s intention to use media is determined by the following factors: diversion, personal relations, personal identity, and surveillance. However, only three of these factors relate directly with the findings, and they are discussed below. Personal identity was not thought to be directly related to the findings because this gratification involves using media to shape one’s sense of self. In personal identity, one chooses to use media that have similar beliefs to those held by the user – however, this type of information was not provided by the writers, hence not possible to use this sort of gratification in the analyses.

4.9.1 Diversion

Fourie (2007) states that people use media to escape from boring or routine tasks, or from other issues that prevent them from achieving their true potential. The

gratification they gain from such use is emotional release, even if only temporarily.

Several of the sub-themes that emerge in the findings described in the previous section also fit within this node of diversion, although they may overlap with other nodes.

These sub-themes include: networking, connecting with the audience, and disseminating work while staying up-to-date.

Regarding networking, the study findings reveal that the Internet enables writers to collaborate with others, and construct new, previously non-existing networks. New media therefore allows an escape from the sense of isolation associated with working alone, links writers from Africa with other writers from around the world, and encourages the cross-pollination of ideas. The findings suggest that new African writers can exploit opportunities offered by the Internet to promote their writing and establish relationships with others, while at the same time overcoming some of the constraints that previously made such connection impossible.

Regarding one's connection with the audience, the study findings reveal that writers use new media to discover and reach a global audience for their work. Writers also see new media as a useful tool for research and for sharing work with their colleagues. Writers derive gratification through instant feedback they receive from multiple sources across the world. The study also shows that writers use new media to realize their true potential by connecting with audiences across the world.

Regarding disseminating work and staying up-to-date, the study findings reveal that writers use new media to break away from writing for a local audience by disseminating their works internationally. This distribution of work to a global audience provides a sense of satisfaction to the writers by allowing them a sense of recognition that they desire.

4.9.2 *Personal relations*

Fourie (2007) suggests that people use media to socialise. People derive gratification from interacting with others and learning from them. Several sub-themes from the analysis of the writers fall within this node of personal relations, although they also overlap with other nodes. These sub-themes are: increased networking opportunities, connection with the audience, and accessibility and engagement.

Regarding increased networking opportunities, this study reveals that writers use new media to stay connected with peers and collaborate on projects. Writers also use new media to connect with other influential authors, publishers, and literary festivals. New media is useful for networking but also for discovering and taking advantage of submissions opportunities. The study reveals that new media allows writers to research and share work among colleagues, which results in the writers deriving gratification through staying in touch with others who are interested in writing.

Regarding connection with the audience, the findings reveal that African writers use new media to connect with readers from across the world, let the world know of their works, and receive feedback from across the world. New media publishing platforms make their writings more accessible due to the number and variety of the people connected through these new technologies. New media makes it easier to find a global audience for literary works, and African writers derive gratification from engagement with people from around the world.

Regarding accessibility and engagement, the study shows that writers use new media to access magazines and journals from around the world. The study also shows that the Internet easily links African writers to one another, and these writers have in some instances risen to prominence or become noticed by influential figures in the

publishing world through discovery of their online writings. Easy access to Internet resources has made it possible for African writers to forge direct connections to other writers in Europe and America, on equal terms. Writers also use new media not only to engage with fans but with students of literature.

4.9.3 *Surveillance*

According to Fourie (2007), people use media to gather information about what affects them — e.g., news, activities, calls to action — monitoring world events and using the information they gather to plan their lives. A major sub-theme — endless opportunities — identified in the responses from the writers falls within this node of surveillance.

Regarding the sub-theme of endless opportunities, the findings reveal that new writers use new media to gather information that helps them advance their careers. The Internet has allowed writers to connect with colleagues, creating and expanding their networks. Writers use the Internet to send online submissions and research publishers and festivals, gaining access to global environments in this way. This researcher has observed that African writers are viewed as successful after winning major awards. The less famous a writer is, the more he or she might use new media to research and enter literary awards and contests. Many writers in the study mention that new media projects like *Crossing Borders* helped nurture their writings and propelled them forward in their careers through offering exposure for themselves and their works. Writers in the diaspora, while living abroad, typically remain interested in the affairs of their homeland, and turn to the Internet for information and to tell their stories. Africans have long histories of migration, and new media provide meeting points for writers and readers from across the continent and diaspora.

To sum up these findings, new media provides writers with convenient ways to communicate with fellow writers and with fans. The needs of these writers can be fulfilled instantly through new media. In the past, a combination of face-to-face interactions and traditional media were used by writers to fulfil these needs. Gratifications were sometimes delayed because of inadequate accessibility, but now new media offers writers instant gratification through mediated social contact. In short, people use media because of the personal benefits it confers. People have different reasons and needs for using various types of media, and new African writers both know their needs and how those needs can be met through the use of new media.

4.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter analysed the responses given by 30 writers who formed the sample of the qualitative study for this research. Using thematic analysis, seven themes and several sub-themes emerged. These themes were analysed in relation to previous research on new media. The responses display that the Internet is favoured by African writers. Their responses corroborate previous studies on Internet use, mostly in terms of interaction, networking, information seeking/sharing, and online/offline relationships. To these writers, the Internet is, as Gunter (2003) argues, a fusion medium that changes from time to time, depending on whether or not it is acting as a one-to-one, or many-to-many medium. The responses reflect an increasing acknowledgement that the Internet is a medium used differently by each writer. The analyses also reveal that writers are divided regarding the quality of print and online writing. While some emphasize that online publication is quick, easy, and convenient, others remain sceptical and argue there is little difference between the publication methods. These findings also reveal an

overwhelmingly preference for printed books relative to e-books. Few believe that over time e-books will replace printed books due to the proliferation of the Internet and other technological devices across the African continent.

Chapter 5

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION: READERS’ PERSPECTIVES

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented an analysis of how new media has influenced the creative work of African writers. This chapter focuses on readers and offers an analysis of the responses of 300 Nigerian readers in order to examine how new media has influenced the way they access, share, and discuss African literature. Reader responses were gathered using a 10-item questionnaire, the details of which are included in the appendices. Its questions covered various areas, such as demographic details and the use of Internet and social media platforms to access literary content. As previously described in the data analysis section (Chapter 3), data from the 300 readers was analysed using descriptive statistics and implemented in SPSS.

5.2 Demographic Details of Respondents

The demographic details of the 300 respondents are presented in this section and covered their educational level, sex and age range.

5.2.1 Respondents’ Levels of Education

The level of education of the respondents is presented in Figure 5.2.1. As the figure reveals, all of the people who took part in this survey are educated and the majority have university degrees: 55% ($N=165$) have Bachelor’s degrees and 35% ($N=107$) have Master’s degrees. Only a minority of the respondents have a high school diploma ($N=10$, 3.3%) or professional qualifications ($N=16$, 5.37%) as their highest

degree of education. The uniformity of these education levels is likely accounted for by the fact that this was a targeted audience. The population sample was made up of members of the Abuja Literary Society, a vibrant group of literary writers and readers in Nigeria's capital, Abuja. Group members are mostly professionals.

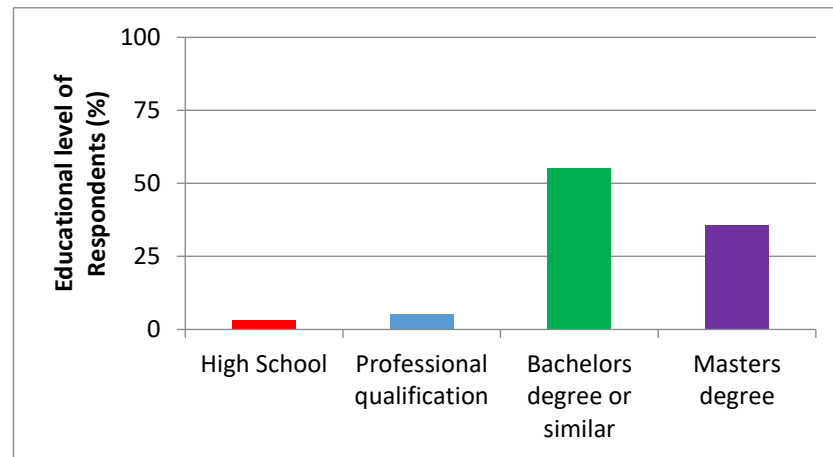


Figure 5.2.1 Percentage Distribution of Respondent's Level of Education

5.2.2 *Sex Distribution of Respondents*

In this survey, 58% (N=177) of the sample population were females and 42% (N=123) were males. This was not an intentional distribution, although (as discussed earlier) this was a targeted audience.

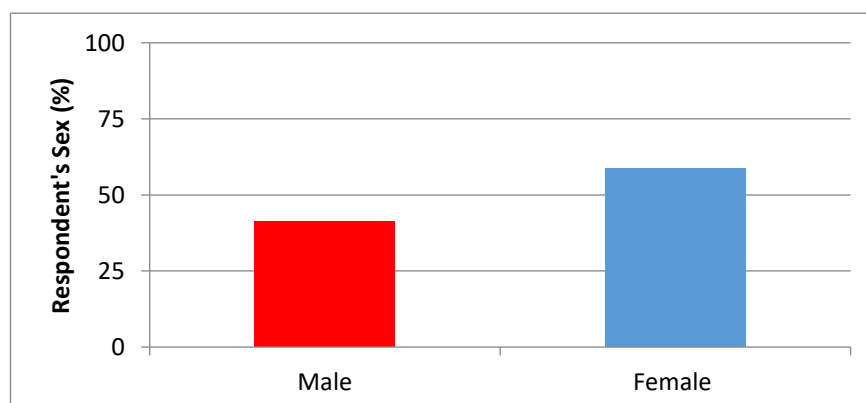


Figure 5.2.2 Percentage Distribution of Respondents Sex

5.2.3 Age Distribution of Respondents

Figure 5.2.3 shows the age distribution of respondents. As the figure reveals, approximately 40% (N=116) of those participating in the survey fell between the age bracket of 32–38 years. Those aged 25–31 represented N=25% of the sample. Those aged 18–24 represented 16% (N=48). Those aged 39–44 represented 20% (N=58). Interestingly, the highest percentage of this age distribution (ages 32–38) is similar to the age group of new writers from Africa interviewed in the previous chapter.

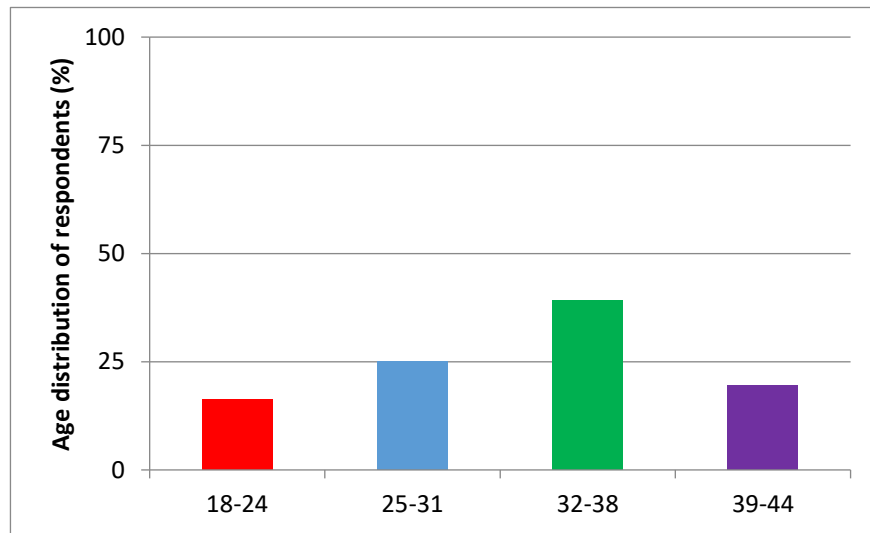


Figure 5.2.3 Percentage Distribution of Respondents Age

5.3 Using Mobile Phone for Reading

Figure 5.3 presents the distribution of respondents' views on the frequency of mobile phone usage for reading. As the figure reveals, the majority of the respondents (73.4%) were frequent users of mobile phone devices for reading. They admitted to using mobile devices to read several times per day. A total of 31 (10.3%) of the

respondents admitted to using mobile devices less than once per week to read. Nine (2.9%) of the respondents admitted to using the mobile device once per day whilst seventeen respondents (5.6%) admitted to using it 4–6 days per week. Eleven (3.6%) of the respondents admitted to using mobile phone devices to read once per week and twelve (3.9%) of the respondents admitted to using mobile phone devices to read 2–3 days per week.

The data suggests that respondents have indeed adopted mobile phones as a tool for reading, thus replicating previous findings on the varied use of the devices (Castells et al., 2007; Ingenta, 2015; Baron and Segerstad, 2010). Castells et al. show that mobile devices serve many purposes useful to professionals, particularly in maintaining social networks and in gathering and sharing information. As described in Chapter Two, the not-for-profit organisation Publishing Technologies carried out a study on how people use mobile phones to read (Ingenta, 2015), and almost half of the people that took part in their study had read an eBook on their mobile phones. Similarly, a study by Baron and Segerstad (2010) on mobile phone use revealed that students use their devices both for communications and other purposes, such as reading.

As noted in Chapter Two, reading is a “psycholinguistic guessing game” (Goodman, 1967), and the meaning of reading over time has not remained the same. Changes in individual or social practice (for instance, the move from reading aloud to reading noiselessly, or from reading to others to reading by oneself) have led to redefinitions of reading (Baron, 2013). Digital reading platforms therefore encourage certain aspects of reading more than others (Page & Thomas, 2011; Baron, 2013).

Recent data shows that mobile phone subscriptions in Nigeria have reached 150 million, while the number of Internet users in the country stands at 97.2 million (Smith

& Tran, 2017). There are various reasons for this; chief among them is the fact that Nigerian mobile phone users now have access to Internet applications enabling them to browse the Internet at affordable rates. For example, Nigerian smartphone users prefer Opera mini, a version of the Opera mobile browser, unlike their counterparts in the West who may use the more popular Google Chrome (Smith & Tran, 2017). People who access the Internet from their mobile phones are attracted to the availability of data-saving services, which helps to explain why readers in this study have adopted mobile devices for the purposes of reading several times a day.

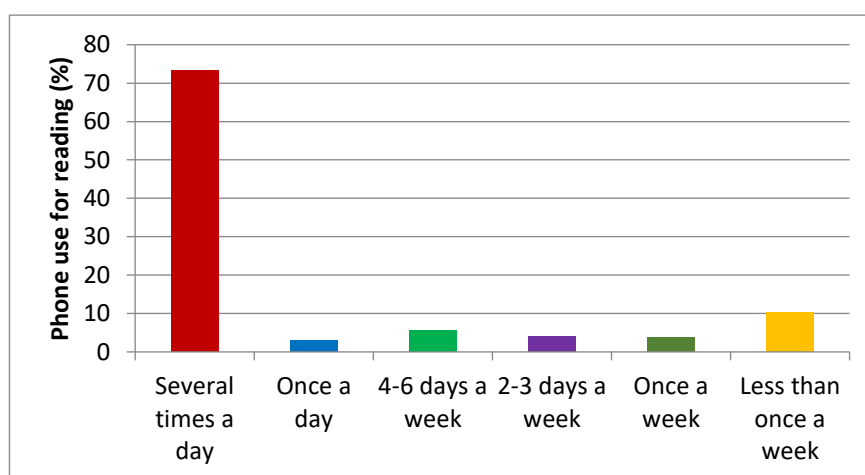


Figure 5.3 Percentage distribution of respondent's opinion on the frequency of mobile phone usage for reading.

5.4 Advantages of E-Reading over Paper Books

Respondents were asked to list the advantages of e-readers compared to paper books. Figure 5.4 shows the distribution of opinions given by respondents. A majority (78%, N=233) of respondents preferred e-readers because they are easy to carry. This replicates previous findings by Baron (2013), which show that people prefer e-reading via mobile devices due to portability and ease of access to materials related to reading.

With the introduction of easy-to-use functionalities on mobile phones, people are increasingly turning to mobiles for reading. Additionally, 32% (N=96) of respondents preferred e-reading because it is cheaper than purchasing paper books. Another 50% (N=151) of respondents said they liked e-reading because mobile phones don't take up much space compared to paper books, and 38% (N=115) said they preferred e-reading because of the faster update of an electronic edition compared to the physical updating of a printed edition.

The mobility and personal nature of mobile devices has blurred boundaries regarding their use. Grant and Kiesler (2001) observe that workers eventually start to see mobile devices meant solely for professional use as their own personal social devices, and conclude that a feeling of attachment is created from the constant use of mobile devices that causes users to see them as personal property. Adults who used e-readers said that mobile devices encouraged them to read more books, and that access to free e-books encouraged them to read books about which they would otherwise never have known (Edidin, 2014). The advantage of e-reading over reading paper books can also be seen in discussions of the properties of text during reading. A reader's experience of reading is determined by several factors, including how text is physically and socially received (Leahy, 2013). As Rapatzikou and Leonard (2016) point out, nowadays readers do not only go through text, but also interact with a digitally-processed interface that offers several methods of consumption. As a consequence, mobile devices encourage readers to become part-producers of the text on the screen (Looy & Baetens, 2003).

The present findings contrast with previous research by Goodwyn (2014), who challenges the benefits of e-reading over reading paper books. According to Goodwyn

(2014), certain features of the modern book that are not replicated by e-readers (e.g., the smell of the book, physical properties of the book-weight). As Ballatore and Natale (2015) assert, paper smells differently and elicits varying reader responses; they also question the appropriateness of e-readers for deep, non-linear modes of reading, since electronic access to long texts can be relatively clumsy and slow. Previous research has also shown that due to its physical–spatial organization, which helps exploration and retention, reading on printed media offers cognitive benefits that promote active learning and deep reading (Rockinson-Szapkiw, Courduff, Carter, & Bennett, 2013). Evidence has shown that students still prefer studying with printed books (Stoop, Kreutzer, & Kircz, 2013); however, as Ballatore and Natale (2015) assert, this trend might change with increased adoption of e-readers and tablets alongside an increased accessibility of digital textbooks. These findings offer an insight to the diffusion of e-readers worldwide and are consistent with previous research on mobile devices and compatibility (Ito et al., 2005; Ling, 2001; Grant & Kiesler, 2001).

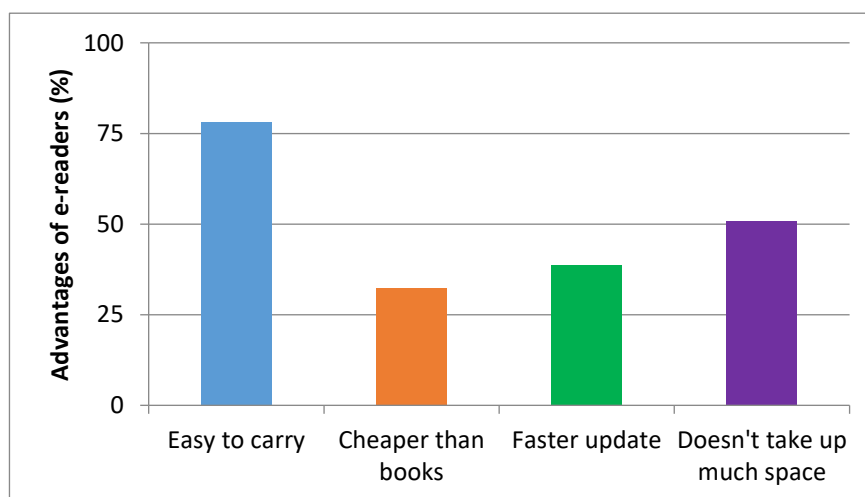


Figure 5.4 Percentage distribution of respondent's opinion on the advantages of e-reading over paper books.

5.5 Genres Read on Devices

It must be pointed out that genres in this context refer specifically to types of writing such as short stories, novels, poems and essays, and not to forms of writing such as action, adventure, crime, fantasy, among others. Figure 5.5 presents the genres respondents read most on their devices. As the figure reveals, 43% ($N=130$) of respondents said they read all genres (essays, novels, short stories, and poems) on their mobile device. Out of the four singular genres, short stories were read the most, with 26% ($N=79$) of respondents reporting this. Novels followed closely, with 15% ($N=45$). Poems and essays were reported at 2% ($N=7$) and 13% ($N=39$), respectively.

These findings confirm the ubiquitous usage of digital devices and that how people work, and play has been greatly influenced by mobile devices (McEwen & Dube, 2015; Gitsaki & Robby, 2014; Jacobsen & Forste, 2011). Sometimes a person's reading pattern or pace is influenced by the character of the text; if the material is familiar, the reader might more easily move through the text, and the complexity of the text (e.g., its syntax) also affects how it is read (Baron, 2013). That respondents in this study read a variety of literary genres on their mobile devices replicates previous studies (e.g. Castells et al., 2007), which suggest that wireless communication is a widely adopted technology and one that people, especially those in developing countries, cannot do without. Although paper books are durable, they are also expensive in Africa. Mobile phones are already in the hands of many people in Africa, and therefore it makes sense to adapt literature for mobile devices.

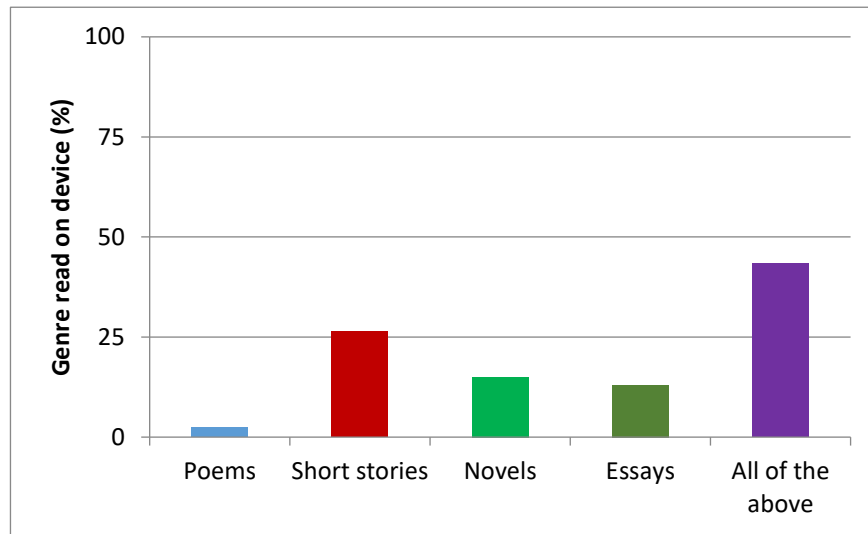


Figure 5.5 Percentage distribution of respondent's opinion on genres read on device.

5.6 Time of the Day for Accessing Literary Content

Respondents were asked to indicate the time of day during which they access literary works in their devices. The results, as depicted in Figure 5.6, show that respondents typically access literary works during the evening and night, which was reported by 62% (N=185) and 55% (N=164) of respondents, respectively. Roughly 34% (N=101) of respondents reported accessing literary works in the morning, and 28% (N=86) said they do so in the afternoon. The fact that the respondents mostly access literary works during the night and evenings highlights empowerment as a distinct characteristic of mobile phones. Night time is generally considered a rest period, and during this time today's mobile phone users are able to read for pleasure as well as download applications, browse the Internet, and log on to social networking sites.

Scholars have spoken of “autonomy of use” (van Deursen & van Dijk, 2015), which means that some people are able to use new media technologies anytime they want.

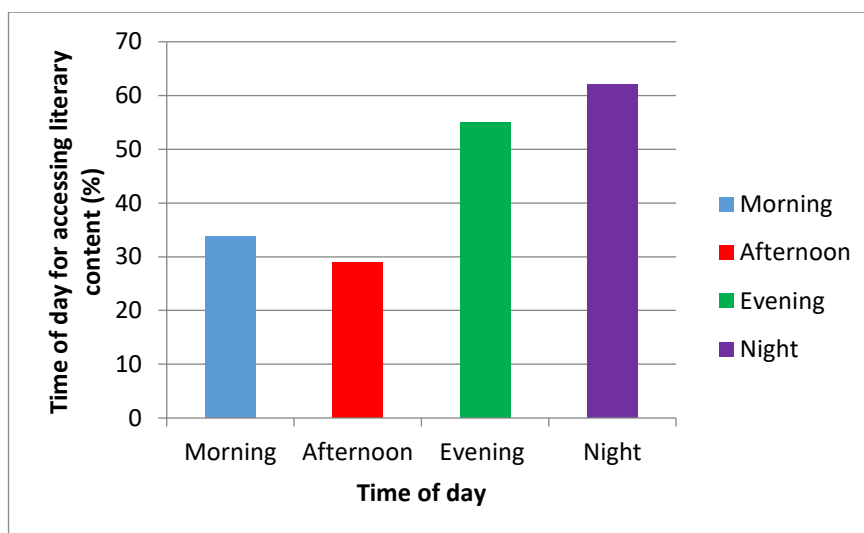


Figure 5.6 Percentage distribution of when literary work is accessed on devices.

5.7 Paying for Online Literary Content

Figure 5.7 presents percentage distribution of respondents who pay for online literary content. More than half of the respondents 61% (N=181) said they do not pay for online literary content while 40% (N=116) admitted to paying for online literary content. The above results are a reminder that readers still prefer to read free content in Africa. Access, affordability, and awareness are some of the barriers to connectivity in developing countries, and although there is an increase in connectivity rates due to mobile phones, it is unclear whether or not, when people get connected, they are able to have access to relevant and useful content (Andreasson, 2015).

The African context is worth considering in terms of both creative writing and educational works. African publishers and authors are faced with many challenges due to a poor publishing infrastructure; in some regions, textbooks do not reach schoolchildren that desperately need them, a situation that has led to a poor reading culture and high levels of illiteracy (Larson, 2001). However, several digital publishing firms are now helping African students read. An example is Worldreader, whose mission is to distribute free e-reading devices to school children, so they can have access to electronic books (Abrams, 2016). With the distribution of e-reading devices in Africa, readers now have access to local and international content, in line with a call by Hanson and Narula (2013) for developing countries to introduce new technologies able to meet the needs and skills of their citizens.

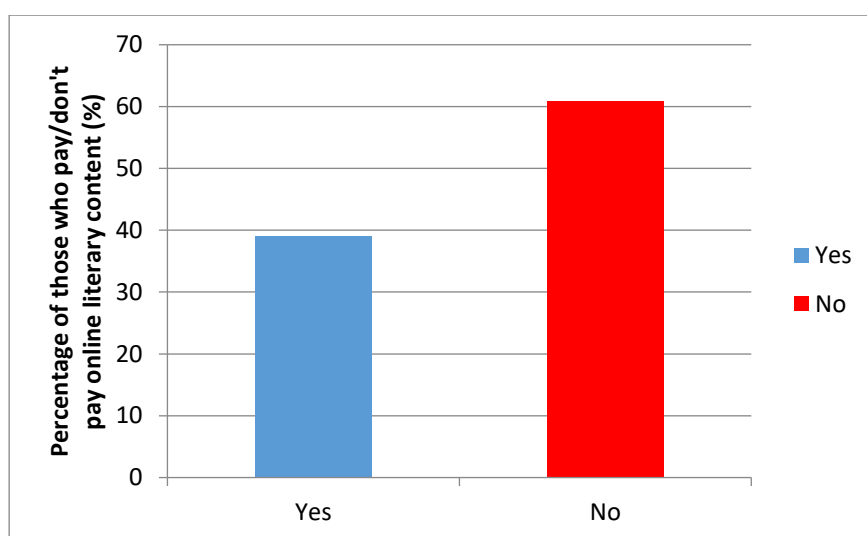


Figure 5.7 Percentage distribution of respondents who pay/do not pay for online literary content.

5.8 Media Used for Reading, Sharing, or Discussing

The different ways respondents shared literary content is depicted in Figure 5.7. As the figure reveals, 58% (N=175) of respondents shared content over Facebook and 40% (or 122) of respondents shared content over Twitter. Less common social networking sites used for sharing included Google+ at 25% (N=77), LinkedIn at 18 % (N=56), and YouTube at 9% (N=27). The majority of respondents in this study said that they specifically used Facebook to share and discuss literary content, thus replicating previous findings (e.g., Kumar, 2014) that through Facebook people become members of an international online community of friends. Facebook is one of the dominant social network sites introduced in recent years and has become a useful tool for collaborative storytelling (Page & Thomas, 2011). A large percentage of respondents said that they specifically used Facebook to share and discuss literary content.

Arguably, as Facebook use increases, the medium itself becomes more visible to others in Africa, and more readers turn to the platform to share and discuss literature. To add some context: in 2015, Nigeria had 15 million monthly active users of Facebook, the highest amount in Africa (Reuters, 2015). Most of these users, according to Facebook, used their mobile phones to access the social media network, and to like, discuss, share, and upload content on the platform (Reuters, 2015). Replicating some elements of oral cultures, where people turned to one another for advice, Internet users are now turning to one another for advice on issues ranging from health to finance (Thomas et al., 2007). Once their questions have been answered, these answers are stored online so that others also can use this information (Thomas et al., 2007).

Writing and reading, as communal practices, are not new, but widespread adoption of social media tools has provided people with the opportunity to carry out these activities frequently, in many ways, and within different online communities (Vlieghe et al., 2016). Due to increasing use of social media, the web has become a vibrant community in which billions of people across the world interact, share, post, and carry out various online activities on a daily basis (Liu et al., 2014).

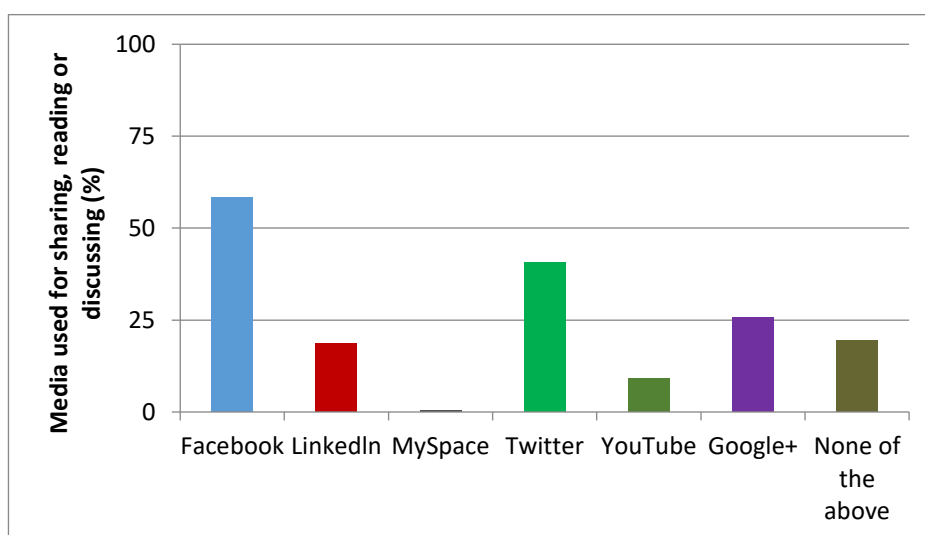


Figure 5.8 Percentage distribution of respondent's opinion on media use to share, read and discuss literature.

5.9 Ways of Accessing Literary Content

Figure 5.9 presents percentage distributions of ways of accessing literary content. As the figure reveals, 73% (N=217) of the respondents maintained that they access literary materials through search engines, and 58% (N=171) said they accessed literary content through literary websites/blogs. Some of the respondents said they

access content through email and social media platforms (e.g., Twitter and Facebook), which represent 46.8% (N=139), 30% (N=90), and 29% (N=88) respectively. When the Internet became popular in the 1990s, search engines began to play a significant role in online traffic and how content was distributed (Trevisan, 2014). However, since many respondents also access content through websites and blogs, this indicates that new media platforms provide an opportunity for readers to take part in publishing nearly instantaneously, almost in real-time (Koskimaa, 2007). About 50% of respondents also access literary content via email. Email has made it easy for information to be disseminated to a large number of people, since electronic documents can be archived and retrieved at any time (Kibby, 2005).

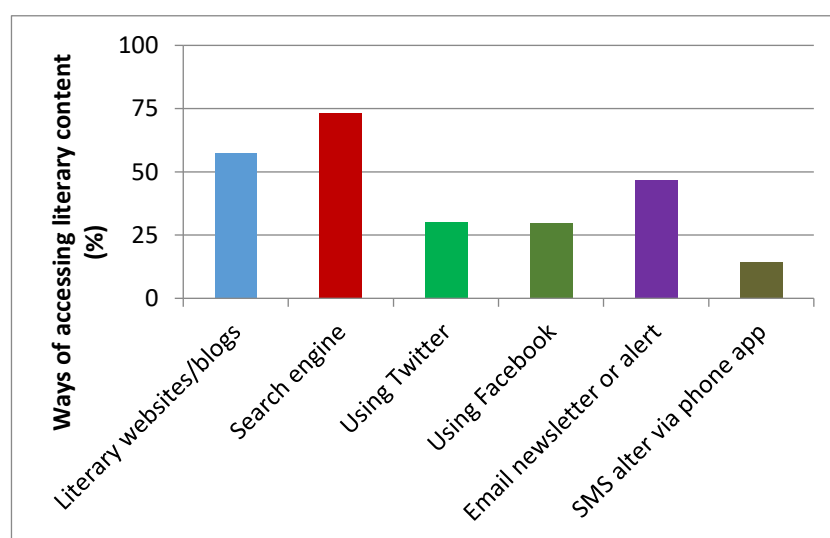


Figure 5.9 Percentage distribution of respondent's opinion on ways of accessing literary contents.

5.10 Placing the Findings within the Context of Applicable Theories

This section explains the application of the relevant theory underpinning this study, which is discussed in detail in Chapter 2, from the perspective of new media

usage. Two theories supply the core theoretical underpinnings for this study: Uses and Gratification theory (U & G) and Diffusion of Innovation theory (DOI). This section applies DOI theory to analyse the study's findings regarding the survey responses from African readers.

DOI theory was used in this study to understand how readers use new media. DOI researchers seek to determine how innovation works, how people adopt innovations, and their consequences. Rogers (2003) highlights five characteristics of innovation that lead to adoption: relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability. Three of these characteristics directly relate with the findings in this study, and they are discussed below. Trialability was not thought to directly relate with these findings, because this characteristic involves trying out an innovation to determine its value or worth. Although, it helps to be able to try innovations before buying, this is not necessarily the case in Nigeria (where the sample size was chosen). As this researcher has observed, most technology users in that country adopt new technologies based primarily on affordability, rather than testing to see how the innovation meets their needs. As an example, the smart phone brand, Tecno, is hugely popular among consumers in Nigeria, not necessarily because of its unique features, but because it is a cheaper alternative to the iPhone or Samsung.

5.10.1 Relative Advantage

Innovations convey a "relative advantage" which can be measured in many ways, including economically (Lin, 2001; Rogers, 2003). For example, people often determine the relative advantage of a new mobile device by focussing on the content it accesses, and cost can affect how or whether people adopt mobile devices as reading

platforms; such variables affects the overall perceived relative advantage of mobile reading devices.

As the findings reveal, the majority of the readers said they do not pay for online literary content. Readers do not seem to want to part with additional money for literature after struggling to pay for their Internet subscriptions. In Chapter Four, it was noted that some online publications, such as *Sentinel Literary Quarterly*, attempted to charge subscription fees but later changed their minds. Not only magazines are available for free online; literary prizes have also used free platforms to make shortlisted works available to a wider audience. For instance, the Caine Prize for African Writing, a major literary prize discussed in Chapter One, makes shortlisted content available for free, at no extra cost to readers.

In summary, the majority of the readers in this study said they do not pay for online literary content, and this might be considered a relative advantage of the Internet (from the point of view of a reader), which makes literary works available for free.

5.10.2 Compatibility

Within the framework of DOI theory, Rogers (2003) defines “compatibility” as the extent that an innovation is in line with the preceding experiences and needs of people. As the findings reveal, readers arguably adopted mobile phones as reading devices because they are compatible with existing literary needs. As discussed in Chapter One, African literature in all genres — whether essays, short stories, novels, or poems — can be used to explore social justice and feed the imaginations of readers. Several African online publications and portals now incorporate all of these literary genres, continuing their traditions of serving the needs of their readers. For instance, the

literary online publication, *Afreada* (<https://afreada.com/>) derives its name from combining the words *Africa* and *reader*, thereby portraying itself as a magazine for African readers at home or abroad. *Afreada* runs a photo-story competition, and readers can download the winning stories for free. Similarly, *Brittle Paper* (<http://brittlepaper.com/>) calls itself an “African literary experience” and provides a potpourri of literary dishes for African readers. It publishes new short stories, poems, reviews, interviews, reviews, and news regarding African literature.

According to Rogers (2003), the compatibility of an innovation greatly determines how it is diffused and adopted. The nature of mobile devices makes them personal and portable. Readers can carry their phones more easily than physical books or printed literary magazines, and as Baron (2013) posits, mobile devices might also contain several e-books while enabling readers to easily access a variety of materials related to their reading, including web pages. To summarize, for the African reader, the compatibility of mobile phones for reading provides two core advantages: (1) access to e-books and online material, and (2) portability.

5.10.3 Complexibility

Rogers (2003) describes “complexibility” as the extent that an innovation is considered difficult to use and adopt. Therefore, innovations that are simpler to use are believed to be more widely adopted than those whose use is complex. The findings in this study reveals that the majority of readers use their mobile phones for reading, possibly because mobile devices have been easy to use. Baron (2013) argues that it took around a decade for e-readers to become widely adopted, because early versions were not user-friendly, and that due to the functionality of mobile phones, people are increasingly turning to them for reading. Irrespective of the format of the text, it is

easier to read on a small screen if the reader is able to scroll down rather than sideways (Goodwyn, 2014; Baron, 2013). Mobile device reading is beneficial to readers who might want to change font size to suit their eyes, and most e-book readers and smartphones support plain text and HTML, which enables readers to easily scroll down. In Nigeria, where the readers surveyed in this study live, several smart phones have been enhanced to become more user-friendly. An example, as this researcher observed, is the Tecno phone, which has 16 GB of internal storage, a 5.5-inch touch display, and an affordable retail price of about £30.

In summary, the readers in this study use their mobile phones for reading, which indicates that the devices are easy to use and widely available.

5.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed findings from the present study, which specifically looked at how new media has influenced the way readers access, share, and discuss African literature. As the findings suggest, the influence of mobile electronic devices on new African literature is increasingly strong. The mobile phone is becoming an acceptable device for reading African literature; apart from serving its primary role of facilitating oral conversations, phones in Africa also serve the unique function of circulating new forms of writing. This chapter also highlighted different ways readers access literary content, with using search engines as the top method. The analysis further revealed that readers read almost all genres on their mobile devices, but are most likely to read short stories and novels. Readers were found to most likely read, share, or discuss literary content using social media platforms (e.g., Facebook and Twitter).

Chapter 6

GENERAL DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

The present thesis was aimed at investigating the production and consumption of new writing in English in Africa. Specifically, the study examined how new media technologies have influenced writing and reading and thus, identified ways new African writers and readers use new media. In this final chapter, the findings from the surveys of writers and readers are integrated and discussed. This chapter also makes recommendations for future studies, discusses the limitations of the study, and outlines its contributions to knowledge.

6.2 Summary of Main Findings and their Applications

This study aimed to make a significant contribution to the field of new media by examining a range of technologies that have impacted the way people read and write creative works in Africa. Both quantitative and qualitative data provided a strong approach to help understand how African writers and readers make use of new media. Specifically, the study sought to answer the following research question: How has new media created opportunities for African literature and how are writers and readers making use of these opportunities? The answers to this question are summarised in the sections below.

6.2.1 African Literature, the Internet and Social Media

Uses and gratifications theory proposes a “how and why” approach to understand media use and gratifications. The findings from this study reveals that writers use new media to fulfil several needs which include: promotion/networking and

accessibility, connection with the audience and increased networking opportunities, endless opportunities, disseminating work and staying up-to-date, creating feedback/networking opportunities, and encouraging publishing opportunities, engagement and accessibility. These fall within Fourie (2007)'s uses and gratification nodes (for instance diversion, personal relations and surveillance). Regarding personal relations, the Internet has, to a great degree, connected emerging African writers and offered networking opportunities with others inside and outside of Africa; several writers use it for the purposes of interacting with colleagues and readers. It could be argued that readers also derive some gratification from using the Internet to read all genres. Although U&G was employed to analyse the responses of the writers, DOI features such as relative advantage, complexibility and compatibility, could also be used to explain these findings. For instance, the collaboration of writers with fellow writers is made possible by the relative advantage of the Internet, which often makes content available for free. Effective collaboration thrives on minimal or no cost. The relative advantage of the Internet could also be seen in the example of search engines, which have now become platforms through which writers and readers discover new opportunities. Also, because the Internet is not complex to use, writers have been able to adopt it to build their presence online, and readers have been able to easily access these writers' profiles. As Zimmer (2008) points out, new media supports people to share information and interact within a wide range of communities, and this promotes creativity and collaboration.

Many new African writers use this new medium of the Internet as a publication tool, due to limited publishing opportunities in print, particularly on the continent. In this regard, online magazines now offer publishing opportunities for previously

unknown writers. This could also be seen within the context of compatibility. The publication of works in online journals are compatible with the writers' needs of getting published. Some online literary journals are mostly open access, thus encouraging unhindered connection between their audiences and the included literary works. Although this free availability of literary works has been discouraged by some African writers, as revealed in the analysis, readers in this study derive gratification from reading free content. For many readers in developing countries, print books are not easily available or too expensive to buy, therefore the Internet has enabled access to literary works they might otherwise have never been able to afford or even know about. It was highlighted in Chapter One that the reach of the Internet is growing exponentially in Africa, and there are plans to expand the infrastructure in Africa even further, so that more people would be connected.

On other unique uses of the Internet, the responses from the writers and readers show that this new medium has also fostered the growth of literature by enabling more creative storytelling in Africa. For instance, it has permitted writers to obtain calls for submissions and contest information, create networking opportunities, access writing forums, and join writers' groups. As Crystal (2001) points out, the Internet expands the range and variety of language and provides exceptional opportunities for personal creativity. For readers, these opportunities appear in the flexibility of reading diverse works, and sharing these works with fellow readers. The Internet has also enabled what Meyers (2012) calls the emergence of a new class of "audience/producers," i.e., an audience that plays a major role in the creation of a creative work. The Internet has modified the production and consumption of literature in previously unimagined ways, thus empowering readers to become active consumers of online content produced by

writers. – a major gratification for readers. In other words, the continued use of the Internet is motivated by the medium's relative advantage and strength for curating and sharing literary content. This demonstrates the gratifications derived from media use, as well as the unique features of the new medium itself.

Motivations for new media uses, for instance for personal relations, and the characteristics of an innovation, for example relative advantage, can be applied to interpret responses from writers and readers in relation to social media. This study finds that social media gives a voice to readers by enabling them to share and discuss works online. A majority of the readers in this study identified Facebook as the main social media platform they use to share content. This was followed closely by Twitter. Similar views were also expressed by writers, with one author revealing that he published his poems on and received editorial feedback through Facebook. The sharing of messages and critiquing of one another's works is enabled by the fact that Facebook and Twitter are free platforms that are relatively easy to use. By commenting on Facebook or Twitter, a reader or writer not only opines, but also responds to a call to recognise and be recognised and to partake in free discussions. Social media therefore enables immediate access to literary information and the real-time sharing of this information because of the relative advantage of the Internet.

Social media platforms thus enable writers and readers to converge and share information, engage in new forms of social interaction, discuss the politics surrounding literary awards, and carry out other literature-related tasks; all these highlight the benefits of using new media, which are indeed made possible by unique features of the media such as complexity, relative advantage and compatibility. The non-complexity of social media therefore encourages creative participation, and make it

an ideal platform for African writers and readers to “speak” with one another. For example, the fact that literary announcements can now be made via Twitter enables messages to travel very fast through retweeting by many people. Although retweeting does not mean that the “retweeter” has endorsed the message, it exemplifies the fluidity of new media platforms and their ability to create and recreate messages while to some extent retaining the original message. In this regard, the use of social media for literary expression challenges previous ways of discussing literature (Berry & Goodwin, 2012), thereby highlighting gratification as well as the relative advantage of the new medium. According to U&G theorists, people use media for various reasons. As the findings revealed, many of the readers use new media to learn about new works, and they derive some gratification from this.

6.2.2 African Literature and New Media Devices

This study shows that new media has presented unprecedented opportunities for African literature. The mobile phone which was originally introduced into the African market as a tool to facilitate telecommunication, has been adapted as a major literary device. Diffusion of innovation theory was used to determine the reasons why readers adopt mobile devices as reading devices. It was found that the nature of phones which made them easy to use and carry were major features of the devices that led to adoption. These reasons could very well apply to the writers who took part in this study. Indeed, as mobile phones now come in portable sizes, African writers are increasingly adopting these wireless communication technologies to write or collaborate with others. In many ways, mobile phones support anytime, anywhere reachability and connectivity. From a uses and gratification perspective, mobile phones serve unique needs of writers and readers, indicating that these devices are no longer just used for talking, but all-in-

one tools that can be used for creative expressions. As discussed in Chapter One, African publishers like CellBook and Okada Books have adapted novels to be read on mobile phones. These new publishing platforms have given readers access to a wide variety of works, and also expanded the reach of a writer's work. In oral cultures, writing and reading were the arts of a specialist few. The use of mobile phones as a medium of publishing and reading creative works marks a defining moment for African literature, by opening new doors for creative writing, whereby the "the screen replaces the page" (Smith, 2012, p. 102).

Although no question in this research project specifically asked writers how often they used mobile phones for writing, their profiles reveal many works available via smartphones. For instance, novels written by some of the respondents are available through the Okada Books publishing project referenced above. While new media technology was important during the creation of these works, the technology also serves the larger function of disseminating the novels and giving the writers desired visibility in creative circles. The analysis in Chapter Five revealed that the majority of readers use mobile phone devices several times per day to read literature, suggesting that there is an audience for literary works created or adapted for mobile phones. The readers therefore derive some gratification from using their devices to read which has resulted in repeated use. This finding therefore touches on aspects of diffusion of innovation theory such as relative advantage and compatibility, but it also intersects areas of U&G, such as diversion.

It is not surprising that African writers and readers value the interactive nature of storytelling enabled by mobile phones. Interactivity is a key feature of new media, just as it is a characteristic of oral cultures. As described in Chapter Two, Africa has a long

and strong history of storytelling; this rich history originated in oral cultures, and oral cultures are communal cultures. To some extent, the published book is a European, colonial construct, lacking communal structure. New media and African storytelling complement each other because of their shared oral, communal aspects. In the example of the Valentine's Day anthology mentioned in Chapter 4, African writers came together to produce an anthology of romantic short stories which was only available in digital and audio formats. The writers also collaborated to record these stories and made them available for free download via devices such as mobile phones. This exemplifies the major role mobile phones play in storytelling in Africa. In producing the digital anthology, readers had the option of reading or listening to some of the stories in other African languages.

The impact of the e-reader/e-book on literature can therefore be seen from a U&G and DOI perspectives, as well as from viewpoints of writers and readers. Electronic literature allows writers and readers to produce and consume audio and visual media alongside the written word (Bradley et al., 2011; Ballatore & Natale, 2015), making it unique compared to paper books. However, the analysis in Chapter Four suggests that on the one hand, most writers acknowledge the gratification they derive from using e-books in Africa, while on the other hand, they were in favour of traditional books, due to its unique features. These findings suggest that print platforms will continue to exist, but alongside online and digital formats (all formats having a place in the publishing world). Such responses from writers are inconsistent with those from readers, who feel that e-readers are better than paper books because of their portability and the resulting ease of access to reading materials. However, a reason for the difference in opinions between writers and readers can be linked to the time the

interview was conducted with writers. As mentioned in Chapter Three, the writers were interviewed in 2010/2011, while the readers were interviewed in 2015. At the time of collating feedback from the writers, e-readers and mobile reading in Africa were not common. Over time, the perception of new media reading devices has changed, and a majority of the readers now prefer e-readers because they are easy to carry and cheaper than traditional books. For most writers, the total replacement of paper books with e-reading seems premature given that the pace of technological advancement is still slow in most African countries. For these reasons, both formats seem likely to survive and work together simultaneously. These insights show that the continued usage of e-reading devices for writing or reading is largely dependent on the material properties of the devices – such as compatibility as described by DOI .

Overall, both readers and writers share the perspective that e-readers offer some relative advantages, as well as some gratifications from using them. However, certain qualities and features of paper books make them viable in contemporary African literary society. As a result, new media technologies such as e-readers may not completely replace traditional paper books, and if they do they will not do so immediately. Certain features of paper books (for example, their smell and weight) are not present in e-readers, and these features that make the book unique and attractive to readers; e.g., the way a book smells can elicit positive responses from readers (Ballatore & Natale, 2015). Furthermore, reading paper books offers some cognitive advantages that promotes active learning (Rockinson-Szapkiw et al., 2013).

6.3 Reflection on the Research

All research requires a critical review to understand how it could have been conducted in a more productive manner. This study began in late 2007, a period when

social media was just getting popular in Africa. During the course of this research, the popularity of social media platforms in Africa surged, and there was a proliferation of digital publishing. As e-books were adapted for mobile phones, these became quite widespread and affordable on the continent, thus indicating the changing nature of new media. Over the course of this study, the researcher had to update some sections of the thesis to reflect advancements in the field – for instance, in Chapter Two, including some examples of mobile phone apps used in Africa.

Originally, this research intended to focus solely on African writers, but after analysis of the survey responses from the writers, the researcher felt it was also important to get feedback from readers. The thesis then expanded to cover African literature (the perspectives of both readers and writers) and not only African writers. In interviewing readers, the researcher decided to focus only on those based in Nigeria (justification for this was provided in Chapter Three). In terms of e-readers, the insights from the readers differed from those of the writers. However, readers' responses on social media use were similar to those of the writers, even though the interviews were conducted years apart.

Prioritising secondary data sources for the literature review was a key factor in this research, particularly because the study intersects the fields of culture, literature, and technology. Apart from primary data, the researcher had access to a wide range of secondary data sources: books, journals, magazines, newspapers, online sources, etc. During the course of the study, the researcher opted to use works that met certain vital criteria, such as the authority and credentials of the author. In the online space, particularly in Africa, there exists a number of websites that claim to be literary journals, but are, in fact often poorly edited electronic magazines or blogs. Such sites

were not reviewed by the researcher, and focus was more on journals that have a wide readership and were of good quality.

In conclusion, this study has attempted to combine elements of technology and culture, with respondents drawn from the literary community. If this research was to be done again, it would focus solely on a particular aspect of new media. For instance, it would seek to investigate the influence of Twitter on African literature. Also, it would seek to carry out a longitudinal study, to determine if the opinions of the respondents would remain the same, given the advances in new media.

6.4 Contribution to Knowledge

This researcher has come to the realisation that although new media does have a great impact on creativity, it does not replace everything that has come before it; for example, most writers and publishers integrate their online activities with more traditional media/publicity approaches (e.g., print, radio, TV, readings, book tours, trade shows/fairs) to achieve maximum effect. In recent years, the transient nature of new media has been increasingly recognised in media, communication, and technology research. Practitioners in these fields have accepted the need to explore the impact of new media in human communications, particularly on how people use the Internet and social media to create, express themselves, and communicate.

This thesis employed uses and gratification theory to analyse the responses of the writers. Previous research (e.g., Fourie, 2007), identified the following motives why people use media: diversion, personal relations, personal identity, and surveillance. Data analysis in this study revealed seven overarching themes and several sub-themes (see section 4.0). Although the majority of these themes fit the categories prescribed by Fourie, this study offers “professional development” as another node. This serves as a

major contribution to knowledge because it has helped to determine how new media technologies have helped African writers not only interact with the audience, but also advance their careers. Professional development, which does not relate to personal identity or personal relations, is critical to the long term success of a writer's career, particularly so because the majority of the writers in this study got into writing without a formal degree in relevant subjects such as creative writing. However, through new media, these new writers have learnt and even perfected the art of writing. Through networking and collaboration with colleagues and readers via the Internet, these writers have been challenged to grow and rise to their full potential. Many have gone on to win awards or sign book deals through contacts they met online. Professional development is therefore a major reason for using new media, and it extends the conversation on the Uses and Gratification theory. As described in Chapter One, U&G would be employed to determine how this theory, which even predates the Internet, could be applied and extended in this study. Professional development also has implications for the publishing industry. Given that most of the writers use Facebook and Twitter to share and discuss their works, more online literary magazines could integrate these social media platforms on their sites, as this would aid collaboration even further.

Similarly, the readers identified many ways that features of new media enable them to adopt mobile reading. Although some of these reasons fit within the nodes prescribed by Rogers (2003), this study offers "portability" as another node. The portability of mobiles enables people to carry them along wherever they go, and in doing so, they are able to read at their convenience. As the survey reveals, people read a range of genres on their mobiles, while also using Facebook and Twitter to share and discuss these works - affordable mobile Internet connectivity is an enabler of these

interactions. A typical mobile phone will usually fit in someone's pocket or handbag, so writers are also able to benefit from this portability; due to functionalities such as touchscreens and small keypads, writers could also use mobile phones to instantly connect with the readers. Portability also contributes to the academic discussions around mobile phones in Africa, and indeed developing countries. As Chapter Two highlighted, scholars have studied the adoption of mobile phones, not just for the purposes of talking, but also for other unique ways such as instant money transfer. This study extends the discussion further by proffering portability as a determinant in the rapid adoption of mobile phones for the purposes of reading in Africa. Portability has therefore added an important node in the features of an innovation that leads to adoption. Portability also has implications for the publishing industry. As seen in the examples of Okada Books, e-books are increasingly popular because they can be read on a mobile phone, and as manufacturers continue to introduce newly improved mobile technologies to the African market, the opportunities for mobile reading are expanded, sending a clear message to publishers who could take advantage of these portable devices to distribute their works.

This study employed the uses and gratification theory and diffusion of innovation theory to analyse the findings. While U & G reveals that writers use new media for diversion, personal relations, surveillance and professional development, DOI reveals that the relative advantage, compatibility, complexity and portability of new media devices enables readers to adopt mobile reading. Both writers and readers are important for the success of literature, therefore this study has highlighted how gratifications and characteristics of new media devices are in many ways helping to keep African literature alive online. By combining the strengths of uses and gratification

as well as diffusion of innovation, this study offers a comprehensive approach for explaining the use and adoption of new technologies. This is a major contribution to knowledge.

Previous research (e.g., Ballatore & Natale, 2015; Bradley et al., 2011) has investigated the influence of new media on literature, but lacked empirical evidence regarding Africa, which consists mainly of communal societies. Similarly, scholars (Hilliard, 2002; Aker and Mbiti, 2010; Burell, 2012; Wakunuma, 2013; Ezenwa and Brooks, 2013) have studied the influence of new media in Africa itself. However, there is a dearth of literature on how new media influences the production or consumption of African literature, and in beginning to redress this paucity of information, these research findings constitute major contributions to knowledge.

This thesis explores various ways new media projects contribute to the development of African literature. Another key finding that emerges is that writers and readers seem to have found a way to circumvent the issue of digital divide through the use of mobile devices that proliferate in Africa. Although this study's recommendations are based on findings from the analysis of fieldwork data in five African countries, they are applicable to several other countries on the continent due to commonalties and shared heritage.

6.5 Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Future Research

The findings from this study have methodological limitations. This section discusses each of these limitations and offers proposals for future research. Firstly, this study has sought the responses of writers from Africa. However, it must be acknowledged that the generalisability of these responses is limited due to the small

sample (N=30) used in the current study. Qualitative studies are designed to determine different patterns in a data set (Fugard & Potts, 2015). Sandelowski (1995) encourages people carrying out qualitative studies to make sure that the sample size is large enough to provide new insights yet small enough for proper management of the available resources. Although the sample size of 30 used in this study is within the recommended guidelines for conducting Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2013), there exists a threat to external validity: the extent to which the research findings can be generalised (Kukull & Ganguli, 2012). Large numbers of new writers are emerging in the continent of Africa. Individual differences amongst these writers might reveal diverse views and opinions on this study's topic. Future research that recruits a more representative sample of the population is needed to more fully evaluate the possibilities raised in this research.

Facebook and Twitter emerged as the most popular social media platforms used by writers and readers, for the purposes of reading and sharing literary works. Further research could apply these findings to another population sample, perhaps even in another field of study. Similarly, search engines were also highlighted as information gathering resources, and this finding can be applied to further studies related to technology and culture.

Paying for online content was a major issue for readers in Nigeria, as highlighted in this study. This finding could be applied to a study involving readers in other developing countries to determine if similar results would be realised. This would help situate and discuss these findings further.

This study has identified ‘professional development’ and ‘portability’ as major contributions to knowledge. It might be helpful to explore these nodes further through new research, perhaps with a different sample size. For instance, new research could seek to determine if ‘professional development’ and ‘portability’ could be applied to the study of new media in another continent.

The majority of participants who took part in this research come from East, Southern, and West Africa, and are all from Anglophone countries. This poses a threat to external validity. The opinions of Francophone writers were not sought, and this is a limitation considering that Africa has as many Francophone as Anglophone writers. Future research that broadens the scope and sample size of the study to include North African writers and writers from Francophone African countries is needed to more fully evaluate the possibilities raised in this research.

Finally, audiobooks were not examined in this research. With the advancement of new media, audiobooks are gaining popularity in the developed world; Baddeley (2015) noted that the UK audio book market went up by 25% in 2014, and is a growing market in publishing generally. At the time this study began, audiobooks had not really made a significant entry into Africa. However, in 2015, Talking Bookz was founded to cater to the needs of those who preferred to listen to rather than read books, and has created audiobook platforms for Africans (Fadolu, 2015). In light of the foregoing, future research might examine audiobooks in relation to orality and storytelling in Africa.

6.6 Summary and Conclusion of the Study

This study investigated the influence of new media technologies on African literature. It explored how new media technologies have shaped the way Africans write,

publish, and read literature. The literature review and analysis of the data revealed that these new technologies have had a large impact on the production, consumption, and circulation of African literature. The following paragraphs summarise the unique ways in which the research brings new insight into the discussion of the production and reception of new writing in Africa.

This study has revealed that mobile phones play a major role in the production and consumption of literary works in Africa. Writers use mobile devices to produce new works, and readers participating in this survey were found to be frequent users of mobile phone devices for reading, with the majority saying that they read multiple genres — essays, novels, short stories, and poems. It was also revealed that readers prefer e-reading devices to paper books because they are easy to carry, while writers have divided opinions on the matter of their preference. Several authors are in support of traditional, paper books, while others admit that both e-readers and print books are necessary for the distribution of African literature.

Similarly, this research has revealed that some businesses have already adopted mobile phones to publish and distribute novels in Africa. As seen in the examples of Okada Books and CellBook, most new works by African writers are made available through mobile phones, thus reaching a wide range of readers. This creates a win-win situation for everyone – publishers make money from it, writers get paid for their books, and readers have access to a variety of books that might have been beyond their reach.

This study also revealed that cost remains a major issue for both writers and readers, and impacts their interactions with literature. While writers want to be paid to publish, the Internet (especially its “Web 2.0” form) tends to make works available freely. Readers seldom buy content online, and prefer to read for free. Therefore

publishers wishing to cater for the needs of African readers must greatly consider the effect of cost.

This study has shown that collaboration plays an important role in the production and consumption of African literature. Writers frequently collaborate with fellow writers from Africa and the rest of the world to produce content, and such collaboration is enhanced through free social networking platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. Readers also collaborate with writers via these social platforms to share content and discuss their works. Affordable mobile internet connectivity has made it easier for these collaborations to occur.

This study has revealed that the Internet has enabled greater accessibility for writers of African literature. Through the Internet, readers across the world have access to new works from the continent. The Internet has also enabled greater storytelling in Africa whereby emerging writers have turned to online journals such as *Brittle Paper* to publish their new works. For those writers whose works are experimental, the Internet is the ideal platform to publish. Similarly, for many new writers, online journals are usually the first place that their works appear, and readers from across Africa are also able to have access to these new works because they are mostly free to read. In addition, organisations such as the Caine Prize are rewarding the works of African writers published online, and this has further fostered the growth of online publications.

In conclusion, these examples show how new media adds value to writers and readers of African literature and has altered the landscape of African publishing.

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Appendix A



Emerging African Writers and the Internet Research

Questions

1. How often do you use the internet? (a) daily (b) weekly (c) monthly
2. Where do you access the internet? (a) home (b) work (c) friend's/relative's (d) public
3. What do you use to access the internet? (a) laptop (b) desktop (c) mobile phone
4. Which of the following social media do you use? MySpace (b) twitter (c) facebook (d) flickr (e) messenger (f) other
5. To what extent do you think the social media influence creative writing?
6. How good are your IT skills? Do you feel confident updating/posting/editing online content?
7. Do you have a blog?
8. Do you think that the internet is changing the way that African writing is being appreciated?
9. Do you write differently for the internet?
10. Could you outline how the internet has influenced your career?
11. How do you think African readers have benefited from the internet? How do you use the internet to interact with other writers and readers?
12. Do you consider online writing to be literature?
13. The rise of the so-called "ebook" has divided the publishing world, with some predicting "the death of the book" and others arguing that the traditional printed version will remain the favoured format. What do you think is the future of writing and publishing?
14. Do you consider online writers as published writers?
15. Would you support an exclusive award for online writing?
16. How would you rate online writing? To what extent do you think online writing differs from print?
17. Do you think that the internet or social media has made it easier for you to gain access to other writers and/or publishers and/or readers?

Appendix B



Emerging African Writers and the Internet Research

Link to survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/GX27Y9Z>

Q1) What is your highest level of education?

- Masters degree
- Bachelors degree or similar
- Professional qualification
- High school

Q2 What is your sex?

- Male
- Female

Q3 What is your age range?

- 18 -24
- 25 – 31
- 32 – 38
- 39 - 44

Q4 How often do you use your phone for reading?

- Several times a day
- Once a day
- 4-6 days a week
- 2-3 days a week
- Once a week
- Less than once a week

Q5 Compared with paper books, what are the advantages of e-readers in your opinion?

- Easy to carry
- Cheaper than books
- Faster update
- Doesn't take up much space

Q6 What genre do you usually read on your device?

- Poems
- Short stories
- Novels
- Essays
- All of the above

Q7 When do you typically access literary works on your device?

Please select as many as apply to you

- Morning
- Afternoon
- Evening
- Night

Q8 Have you paid for ONLINE literary content, or accessed a paid for ONLINE literary content in the last year?

- Yes
- No

Q9 Which are the ways in which you access literary content? (choose as many as appropriate).

- Directly accessing one or more literary websites/blogs
- Using a search engine (e.g. Google, Bing)
- Using Twitter
- Using Facebook
- Getting it via an email newsletter or alert
- Receiving an alert via SMS or through an app on my mobile phone

Q 10 Which of the following have you used for reading, sharing or discussing literature?

- Facebook
- LinkedIn
- MySpace
- Twitter
- YouTube
- Google+
- None of the above

Appendix C

Biography of Writers

1. Gabeba **Baderoon** (South Africa)

Gabeba is the author of the several poetry collections. Her [*The Dream in the Next Body*](#) was named a Notable Book of 2005 by the *Sunday Independent* in South Africa and was a *Sunday Times* Recommended Book. Gabeba was the recipient of a Civitella Ranieri Fellowship in Italy and a Writer's Residency at the University of Witwatersrand. Gabeba has read at international literary festivals in the Netherlands, UK, Jamaica, and Sweden. Her work is also published online.

2. Jackee **Batanda** (Uganda)

Jackee was a regional winner, in the 2003 Commonwealth Short Story Competition, and she also received special commendations at the Caine Prize and Macmillan Writers awards. Batanda's stories have appeared in many publications (online and in print) and on radio broadcasts. She was Writer in Residence at Lancaster University, UK. Jackee is the author of *The Blue Marble*, a children's book.

3. Brian **Chikwava** (Zimbabwe)

Brian is the winner of the 2004 Caine Prize for African writing for his short story *Seventh Street Alchemy*. He is now resident in England, where he published his first novel. He is also a musician, and was part of Rhythm of the Mind, a show involving visual artists, musicians, dancers and writers experimenting on mixed idioms and genres for performance practice.

4. Abel **Dzobo** (Zimbabwe)

Abel is a literary writer and journalist. He has worked as a Sub Editor for *The Sunday Mail*, the highest circulating newspaper in Zimbabwe. His stories have appeared in several online publications. He is an editor of the online writing journal – *Author Me*.

5. Victor **Ehikhamenor** (Nigeria)

Victor Ehikhamenor has been named Leon Forrest Scholar in Fiction, one of 12 Africana Scholars, by the Pan-African Literary Forum. He was born in Nigeria. His fiction and non-fiction have been published online, as well as in print. Ehikhamenor is also an avid painter and photographer whose arts have been used for notable book and journal covers including Chimamanda Adichie's

Purple Hibiscus, Helon Habila's *Measuring Times*, Jonathan Lueck's *Feeding Frenzy*.

6. Lawrence Hoba (Zimbabwe)

Lawrence Hoba was born in Zimbabwe. He studied Tourism and Hospitality Management at the University of Zimbabwe. He represents a new generation of budding writers who are determined to have their voices heard. Hoba's short stories and poetry have appeared in the *Mirror*, the magazine of the Budding Writers of Zimbabwe, and various online journals.

7. Chiedu Ifeozo (Nigeria)

Chiedu is a poet. He studied Engineering in the UK. According to his blog profile: 'Sometimes I write rhymes, words etched in time, solace for my mind...other times words confined, become insufficient to express emotions undefined.' Chiedu uses social networking sites to publish his poetry. Through Facebook, he brought several poets together, to create a book – Poetry for Charity - which is now available online.

8. Eghosa Imasuen (Nigeria)

Imasuen is a medical doctor and he lives in Nigeria. He has had his short fiction published in many online magazines. He was also a participant in the Adichie/Binyavanga/Fidelity Bank writers' workshop that held in Lagos in July 2007. His first novel, an alternate history piece about Nigeria's civil war, is published by independent publisher - Farafina.

9. Judy Kibinge (Kenya)

Judy Kibinge was born in Nairobi. When she was seven, she won a major children's writing competition in the USA. Her film, *Dangerous Affair*, won the overall prize at the Zanzibar Film Festival in 2003. She has recently started a Multimedia Hotshop company called Seven. Judy is a member of Concerned Kenyan Writers, a coalition whose purpose is to use writing skills to help save Kenya.

10. Beatrice Lamwaka (Zimbabwe)

Beatrice Lamwaka is a teacher and writer. Her works have been published in many online journals and anthologies. She graduated from Makerere University with BA (ED) Literature and English Language Studies. She was one of the participants in the British Council Crossing Borders project. She is also a member of Uganda Women Writers Association.

11. Keguro Macharia (Kenya)

Keguro Macharia is an assistant professor of English and comparative literature at the University of Maryland, College Park, US. He writes non-fiction prose, and has recently been published in *Wasafiri* and the anthology *Identity Envy: Wanting to be Who We are Not*. He is a member of the Concerned Kenyan Writers collective.

12. Chris Mlalazi (Zimbabwe)

Mlalazi is a Zimbabwean writer who has been published in 11 short story anthologies, including the 2006 Caine Prize Anthology (*Obituary Tango*), the 2006 Edinburgh Review, and the 2007 PEN SOUTH Africa anthology. He was on the HSBC PEN International Short Story shortlist as well as the 2004 Sable Lit/Arvon Short Story Competition.

13. Tinashe Mushakavanhu (Zimbabwe)

Tinashe Mushakavanhu received a First Class Honours degree in English Literature from the Midlands State University. He became the first African to study for the MA in Creative Writing at Trinity College in Wales. In 2004, he participated in the Crossing Borders Project. Tinashe has had several short stories and poems published in various publications. He is also founder of the online journal of African writing, MAZWI Literary Journal (www.mazwi.net).

14. Crispin Oduobuk (Nigeria)

Crispin currently lives in Abuja, Nigeria. He's been published in some print media, including *BBC Focus on Africa* and *Genevieve*. Online his work has appeared at *Eclectica*, *East of The Web*, *Gowanus*, *Ken*Again*, *The Ultimate Hallucination*, *Prose Toad*, and *Spoiled Ink*. He has worked as the Group Literary Editor of *Daily Trust* and *Weekly Trust*.

15. Tolu Ogunlesi (Nigeria)

Tolu Ogunlesi is the author of a collection of poetry, *Listen to the geckos singing from a balcony* (Bewrite Books, 2004) and a novella, *Conquest & Conviviality* (Hodder Murray, 2008). In 2007 he was awarded a Dorothy Sargent Rosenberg poetry prize, in 2008 the Nordic Africa Institute Guest Writer Fellowship, and in 2009 a Cadbury Visiting Fellowship by the University of Birmingham. His fiction and poetry have been published in various online journals.

16. Rudolf Okonkwo (Nigeria)

Rudolf Okonkwo has an MFA from the Western Connecticut State University. He worked as a reporter for many years in Nigeria, Europe, and North America. His works have been published online and his first book, *Children of a Retired God* was published in 2006. He is also the founder of Iroko Productions LLC and the Olaudah Equiano Prize for Fiction. He lives in Rosedale, New York City.

17. Wilson Orhiunu (Nigeria)

Wilson Orhiunu (Babawilly) works as a general practitioner in Birmingham UK. He has published his poetry on various online journals. In May 2005, his first collection *My Time* was published. Wilson has a deep interest in the use of Nigerian Pidgin English in literary works. Currently, he is working on a paperback version of his web based dictionary – *Babawilly's Dictionary of Nigerian Pidgin English* words and phrases and on his second poetry collection.

18. Novuyo Tshuma (Zimbabwe)

Tshuma studied at the University of Witwatersrand. Her short stories have been published in anthologies in Zimbabwe. At twenty, she won third prize in the Intwasa Short Story Competition 2008. Her short story 'You in Paradise', published in the online journal – African Writing, won the Intwasa Short Story Competition 2009.

19. Uche Umezurike (Nigeria)

Uche is the author of the children's novel *Sam and the Wallet* (2007), the collection of short stories *Tears in Her Eyes* (2005), and two volumes of poetry, *Aridity of Feelings* (2006) and *Dark Through the Delta* (2004), which collectively have brought him numerous national and international awards, including the Commonwealth Short Story Award and the Nigeria Prize for Literature. He has been a fellow at the University of Iowa.

20. Chika Unigwe (Nigeria)

Chika Unigwe won the 2003 BBC Short Story Competition for her story *Borrowed Smile*, a Commonwealth Short Story Award for *Weathered Smiles* and a Flemish literary prize for *De Smaak van Sneeuw*, her first short story written in Dutch. *The Secret*, another of her short pieces, was nominated for the 2004 Caine Prize. She was also a recipient of a 2007 Unesco-Aschberg fellowship for creative writing, and of a 2009 Rockefeller Foundation fellowship for creative writing.

21. Uche Okonkwo (Nigeria)

Uche holds an MA in Creative Writing from the Centre for New Writing, University of Manchester, UK. She works as managing editor at Kachifo Limited (publishers of Farafina Books) in Lagos. In 2011, she was selected to participate in the Farafina Trust Creative Writing Workshop, taught by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Binyavanga Wainaina, and other renowned writers. In 2014, she won the first ever Etisalat Prize for Flash Fiction for her story, 'Neverland'. Her short stories have been published in The Ember Journal, The Manchester Anthology 2012-2013.

22. Igoni Barret (Nigeria)

Igoni Barrett was born in Port Harcourt, Nigeria in 1979. He is the author of *Blackass*, as well as a winner of the 2005 BBC World Service short story competition, the recipient of a Chinua Achebe Center Fellowship, a Norman Mailer Center Fellowship, and a Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Center Residency. His short stories have twice been nominated for a Pushcart Prize. He lives in Nigeria.

23. Blessing Musariri (Zimbabwe)

Blessing Musariri has published four children's titles, two of which have won national awards in Zimbabwe. She has also written short stories and poems published in various international anthologies and online magazines. Blessing had originally thought to be a lawyer but her prolific and overactive imagination took over after being called to the English Bar in 1997, leading her to a more varied, fulfilling life in the world of arts and culture. She holds a Masters degree in Diplomatic Studies from the University of Westminster.

24. James Murua (Kenya)

James is a blogger, journalist, editor and columnist based in Nairobi, Kenya. He had edited and written a column at The Star newspaper as well as contributed to Kenyan publications like Management, Sokoni and Adam.

25. Jude Dibia (Nigeria)

Jude Dibia is an author and equal rights activist from Nigeria. Jude is the author of three successful novels and a number of short stories, which have been featured in both local and international anthologies and magazines. Jude is also a recipient of the Ken-Saro Wiwa Prize for Prose in his native country.

26. Nick Mulgrew (South Africa)

Nick Mulgrew (born 1990) is a South African writer, editor, poet and critic. He is the author of two books, *the myth of this is that we're all in this together* and *Stations*. He is the founder of the poetry press, uHlanga. He studied English and Journalism at Rhodes University. He is the winner of the National Arts Festival Short Sharp Stories Awards in 2014 and a South African Arts Journalism Awards Special Silver Merit for Features, 2014. He was shortlisted for The *White Review* Prize and the Ake/Air France Prize for Prose in 2015.

27. Cat Hellisen (South Africa)

Cat Hellisen is the South African author of fantasy novels *When the Sea is Rising Red*, *House of Sand and Secrets*, and *Beastkeeper*. In 2015, she won the Short Story Day Africa award at the Ake Arts & Book Festival in Nigeria, presented by Prize judge Abubakar Adam Ibrahim, for her story "The Worme Bridge.

28. Beverly Nambozo (Uganda)

Beverly is the founder of the Babishai Niwe (BN) Poetry Foundation formerly The Beverley Nambozo Poetry Award for Ugandan women, which began in 2008 as a platform for promoting poetry. It has since grown to include all African poets and runs as an annual poetry award. Beverly joined the Crossing Borders Scheme British Council Uganda in 2003 under the short stories genre. She was nominated for the August 2009 Arts Press Association (APA) Awards for revitalising poetry in Uganda.

29. Jacqui L'Ange (South Africa)

Jacqui is a Cape Town based journalist, scriptwriter, editor and author of 'The Seed Thief' (Umuzi). Jacqui is the former books editor for Psychologies Magazine and former Deputy Editor and Books Editor of *O – the Oprah Magazine*, South Africa. She writes from a glass house in a fynbos garden in Kommetjie, which she shares with her family and a menagerie of other animals.

30. Glaydah Namukasa (Uganda)

Glaydah is a Ugandan writer and midwife. She is the author of two novels, *Voice of a Dream* and *Deadly Ambition*. She is a member of FEMRITE, the Ugandan Women Writer's Association. She is one of the 39 African writers announced as part of the Africa39 project unveiled by Rainbow, Hay Festival and Bloomsbury Publishing at the London Book Fair 2014.

Appendix D



Anietie Isong

**PhD Researcher, Institute of Creative Technologies, De Montfort University, The Gateway,
Leicester, LE1 9BH, UK**
Personal e-mail: creamers2001@yahoo.com

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the Emerging African Writers and the Internet Research Project, which has been approved by the DMU Faculty of Humanities Human Research Ethics Committee. In accordance with De Montfort University's policy on human research ethics, I should like to point out that your rights to privacy and confidentiality in relation to any material and practices arising from the research will be protected. By way of this letter you are therefore:

- provided with written details of the objectives of the research and of your participation in it (see below)
- invited to give your written consent to your voluntary participation in the research by countersigning and returning this letter (see below)
- free to withdraw from the research at any point without having to offer any reasons for so doing
- given the right to see any written records relating to your involvement in the research
- fully protected in regard to safety according to the university's best practice on risk assessment.

The objectives of the research and of your participation in it

This research aims to determine how the internet is encouraging or discouraging creative works of new African writers. It also wants to find out the attitude of writers towards online writing.
<http://www.ioct.dmu.ac.uk/phd/index.html>

Giving your written consent

Please download this letter, type in your name or add your digital signature if you have one, date it, and email it to me at creamers2001@yahoo.com

Ownership of materials

I would be grateful for your permission to reproduce in audio, print and online:

- parts of the transcript of our conversation
- drawings or diagrams produced during the meeting
- my photographs of you or the location.

Please strike through any you do not give permission for.

If you wish to withdraw from the research, or to see any written records relating to your involvement in the research, or have any other queries, please contact me at creamers2001@yahoo.com

Many thanks for your participation

Anietie Isong, Researcher

I understand the information above and give my consent to this research.

Date.....

Print Name.....

Signature.....

Appendix E

1 Respondent 1

2 Emerging African Writers and the Internet Research

3 Questions

- 4 1. How often do you use the internet? (a) daily
- 5 2. Where do you access the internet? (a) home (d) public
- 6 3. What do you use to access the internet? (a) laptop (c) mobile phone
- 7 4. Which of the following social media do you use? (b) twitter (c) facebook
- 8 5. To what extent do you think the social media influence creative writing?
- 9 It is important in marketing and making known one's status as a writer, be it
- 10 blogger, through online magazine submissions or sharing links to writer events.
- 11 It is important to connect to writers of influence, publishers, festival organisers
- 12 and to know about writer events in the communities. It makes writing more
- 13 accessible because of the people connected to social media spaces. Social media
- 14 also enables interested writers to identify their own comfortable and safe spaces
- 15 to comment and re-shape their own writing destinies.
- 16 6. How good are your IT skills? Do you feel confident updating/posting/editing
- 17 online content? Yes. I do feel extremely confident and constantly update and
- 18 edit content on my personal and official blogs and websites.
- 19 7. Do you have a blog? Yes I do. It's called www.walkingdiplomat.blogspot.com
- 20 8. Do you think that the internet is changing the way that African writing is being
- 21 appreciated? Yes. Because writers from Africa can decide their own destinies. If
- 22 one space seems closed and unrelatable, then we can open up our own spaces
- 23 and opportunities. For example, The Babishai Niwe Poetry Foundation was
- 24 formed because there was no organisation based in Africa that coordinated
- 25 annual poetry competitions for Ugandan women of even African poets. The
- 26 internet also provides instant feedback on writing which is helpful with making
- 27 publishing faster and affordable. There is another argument that suggests the
- 28 internet does not provide the quality feedback and editorial content as print
- 29 publishing does. This is because of the instant gratification and impatience that
- 30 sometimes characterizes the internet. Also, because of the instantaneous nature,
- 31 writers tend to rush over important discussions, not leaving any sense of
- 32 worthiness or deep-seated knowledge. This happens sometimes, not to say that
- 33 often, the internet is deliberately informative for writers.
- 34 9. Do you write differently for the internet? I write so often for both print and
- 35 internet that my writing is basically the same. I steer from shorthand and slang.
- 36 For the internet though, I do write shorter sentences and tend to use the hashtag
- 37 more often.

- 38 10. Could you outline how the internet has influenced your career? It has enabled
39 me to share widely about the Babishai Niwe Poetry Foundation, the Kampala
40 based organisation which coordinates annual poetry competitions for Africans,
41 publishes poetry and coordinates training for children. Through this, I have been
42 able to organise the first poetry festival in Uganda, garnering interest from
43 writers all over the world. I have also been published widely through online
44 magazines which editors and readers have highly acclaimed. Some of my most
45 important travels have been through the internet. My second degree, various
46 symposiums and so on. As a leadership trainer, I also engage with various
47 platforms through the internet.
- 48 11. How do you think African readers have benefited from the internet? How do you
49 use the internet to interact with other writers and readers? African readers spend
50 a lot of time on social media, discussing, sharing work, creating new groups,
51 literary forums and so on. I also engage quite extensively I's so important to
52 promote my business, my brand and to promote the works of other writers.
- 53 12. Do you consider online writing to be literature? Yes, there are very many online
54 spaces like Kalahari Review, Prufrock Magazine, Expound Magazine and so on
55 that have excellent literature. There is no difference in the quality of print and
56 these magazines.
- 57 13. The rise of the so-called "ebook" has divided the publishing world, with some
58 predicting "the death of the book" and others arguing that the traditional printed
59 version will remain the favoured format. What do you think is the future of
60 writing and publishing? The print book will always thrive. As a writer and
61 publisher living in Uganda, I have visited many parts of Africa and for them, the
62 e-book is far from their reality. We often share and distribute books in remote
63 schools because they don't even have libraries and the little print literature they
64 access, they are most grateful for. The print book isn't going anywhere but
65 further upwards.
- 66 14. Do you consider online writers as published writers? Yes, if they are published
67 with a space that has an ISSN.
- 68 15. Would you support an exclusive award for online writing? Yes, if they set a very
69 high standard such that the quality deserves to be celebrated.
- 70 16. How would you rate online writing? To what extent do you think online writing
71 differs from print? My online writing is not far different from my print writing. I
72 take utmost care. The main difference would be the use of emoticons for online
73 writing.
- 74 17. Do you think that the internet or social media has made it easier for you to gain
75 access to other writers and/or publishers and/or readers? Yes, most certainly
76 because we have our own spaces of socialization, publishing and editing.

79 **Respondent 2**

80 **Emerging African Writers and the Internet Research**

81 **Questions**

- 82 1. How often do you use the internet? (a) daily
- 83 2. Where do you access the internet? home
- 84 3. What do you use to access the internet? (a)laptop (c) mobile phone
- 85 4. Which of the following social media do you use?(c) facebook (e) messenger
- 86 5. To what extent do you think the social media influence creative writing? It's
- 87 more or less a distraction. It takes away a lot of productive time but it is handy
- 88 for keeping in touch with other writers and for submission opportunities.
- 89 6. How good are your IT skills? Do you feel confident updating/posting/editing
- 90 online content? Yes. I've been working with computers for more than twenty
- 91 years.
- 92 7. Do you have a blog? I have a weekly column in one of the national dailies which
- 93 also appears online.
- 94 8. Do you think that the internet is changing the way that African writing is being
- 95 appreciated? It's difficult to say but there is more exposure for African writers in
- 96 terms of visibility.
- 97 9. Do you write differently for the internet? I'm more casual.
- 98 10. Could you outline how the internet has influenced your career? It's made
- 99 opportunities for residencies and fellowship and submission calls more
- 100 accessible and kept me in touch with a wide network of writer friends and
- 101 colleagues regularly.
- 102 11. How do you think African readers have benefited from the internet? Lots of
- 103 blogs about African writing and therefore a bigger presence for African writers.
- 104 How do you use the internet to interact with other writers and readers? Facebook
- 105 is my main tool for keeping in touch with other writers and I now have an artist's
- 106 page on Facebook.
- 107 12. Do you consider online writing to be literature? Not really. Even though I use a
- 108 Kindle a lot I still prefer print and it difficult to appreciate literature online.
- 109 13. The rise of the so-called "ebook" has divided the publishing world, with some
- 110 predicting "the death of the book" and others arguing that the traditional printed
- 111 version will remain the favoured format. What do you think is the future of
- 112 writing and publishing? Books in print are just special, nothing can take their
- 113 place. Internet writing and ebooks have their place, especially with stricter
- 114 luggage controls, access to ebooks is invaluable.
- 115 14. Do you consider online writers as published writers? Not really.
- 116 15. Would you support an exclusive award for online writing? Yes.

- 117 16. How would you rate online writing? To what extent do you think online writing
118 differs from print? There seems to be less rules for your online writing. Print is
119 more traditional and has limitations.
120 17. Do you think that the internet or social media has made it easier for you to gain
121 access to other writers and/or publishers and/or readers? Yes, definitely.

122

123 **Respondent 3**

124 **Emerging African Writers and the Internet Research**

125 Questions

- 126 1. How often do you use the internet? (a) daily
127 2. Where do you access the internet? (a) Home
128 3. What do you use to access the internet? (a) laptop
129 4. Which of the following social media do you use? twitter, facebook, tumblr
130 5. To what extent do you think the social media influence creative writing? Almost
131 none, unless someone posts an interesting image or article.
132 6. How good are your IT skills? Do you feel confident updating/posting/editing
133 online content? Yes
134 7. Do you have a blog? Yes. I have also been on LiveJournal since 2004, so my
135 experience of being online in Africa may be a little skewed.
136 8. Do you think that the internet is changing the way that African writing is being
137 appreciated? Yes. Firstly, ebooks and sites like amazon mean that African
138 writers and publishers are able to reach a potentially wider audience. The
139 problem is still one that Western people, particularly Americans, tend to be
140 hesitant in reading outside of what they know. Secondly most of South Africa
141 (my country of experience, though I believe much of Africa is in a similar
142 situation) accesses internet via smart phones, especially now with so many
143 cheap entry-level smart phones becoming available. Some publishers, like
144 Fundza, have realised that there is a waiting market ready to read on their
145 phones, and actively goes after the phone market with short, serialised stories.
146 9. Do you write differently for the internet? My online blogging/social media voice
147 is nothing like my writer's voice. One is me chatting, the other is narrative.
148 10. Could you outline how the internet has influenced your career? It made it much
149 easier for me to learn about how publishing works, how to write a query letter,
150 how to get an agent etc. I learned these things by becoming involved with online
151 writers' forums like Absolute Write. When I first began looking for an agent
152 quite a few still only accepted snail-mail queries, and since the cost of postage
153 on a manuscript or partial manuscript was prohibitive (tip of Africa to New York
154 or London is and was costly), my choices were limited to agents actively
155 accepting email submissions.

- 156 11. How do you think African readers have benefited from the internet? How do you
157 use the internet to interact with other writers and readers? Being able to connect
158 with a writer in Kenya when you're in South Africa is just as vital as being able
159 to connect with a writer in the UK. Africa is huge, and the internet enables us to
160 begin making webs across our own cultural divides.
- 161 12. Do you consider online writing to be literature? What kind of online writing?
162 Blogs can be helpful or funny and interesting, but they're not usually literature in
163 the sense I believe you mean. But there is much online that is literature—online-
164 only serialised novels, fan fiction, even journalism with literary merit.
- 165 13. The rise of the so-called "ebook" has divided the publishing world, with some
166 predicting "the death of the book" and others arguing that the traditional printed
167 version will remain the favoured format. What do you think is the future of
168 writing and publishing? Ah, my turn to play Cassandra! I think that unless the
169 prices of hard cover and trade paperbacks becomes something close to
170 affordable (especially in South Africa), eventually paper and ink books will
171 become a smaller and smaller market. On the other hand, publishers might make
172 hard covers something akin to art-pieces, and price them that way, will the
173 expectant small sales boosted by a much cheaper, less "artistic" (no deckle
174 edges, printed covers, embossing, heavy. glossy paper, print-only fonts,
175 illustrations, etc) ebooks. Books and stories are becoming ultimately disposable,
176 with writer earnings dwindling rapidly. People can get a huge variety of fiction
177 free online, or at vast discounts, or cheaply via places like Smashwords.
- 178 14. Do you consider online writers as published writers? If they've published a book,
179 then they're published. The distinction really now is are they self-published or
180 small press or trade. Some self-published books are brilliant, and the majority of
181 them awful. But the same goes for small press and trade, with perhaps a slightly
182 smaller pool of awful. It doesn't seem to matter.
- 183 15. Would you support an exclusive award for online writing? I'm not sure it would
184 matter. It doesn't take much to set up a book for print via something like
185 Createspace on Amazon. What's online only now could be available in print
186 tomorrow.
- 187 16. How would you rate online writing? To what extent do you think online writing
188 differs from print? The differences of style lie in the genres, rather than in the
189 medium, though I suspect that there are a far higher number of erotica novels
190 available online than in the brick and mortar stores.
- 191 17. Do you think that the internet or social media has made it easier for you to gain
192 access to other writers and/or publishers and/or readers? Of course. Without the
193 internet I would have negligible reach. I write fantasy, which does not exist as a
194 market published in South Africa, and the readership here is very very very
195 small.

196

197 **Respondent 4**

198 **Emerging African Writers and the Internet Research**

199 **Questions**

- 200 1. How often do you use the internet? i use the internet daily
- 201 2. Where do you access the internet? Home
- 202 3. What do you use to access the internet? mobile phone and the laptop
- 203 4. Which of the following social media do you use? (a) MySpace (b) twitter (c)
- 204 facebook (d) flickr (e) messenger (f) other. Mainly facebook, WhatsApp, e-mail
- 205 5. To what extent do you think the social media influence creative writing? I think
- 206 social media has to a good extent enhanced creative writing because it has
- 207 made communication easier and faster. Just the click of a mouse or phone key
- 208 and literary information is flowing between writers and readers, writers and
- 209 writers, writers and publishers, readers and readers, Writers and editors, and
- 210 between all the other interested parties. for example a publisher will just send a
- 211 call for submissions to a few contacts and it will circulate world wide on face
- 212 book, emails e.t.c.
- 213 6. How good are your IT skills? Do you feel confident updating/posting/ editing
- 214 online content? My IT skills are good enough because I can do all the basic
- 215 things I need. and if I face a challenge, I can always consult someone for
- 216 instructions.
- 217 7. Do you have a blog? No
- 218 8. Do you think that the internet is changing the way that African writing is being
- 219 appreciated? Oh yes. The internet is taking African writing places. The internet
- 220 has made African writing accessible to the world, to different audiences. The
- 221 more the world accesses African writing the more they appreciate it.
- 222 9. Do you write differently for the internet? That depends on the reason or the
- 223 platform I am writing for. If I am writing say a story for an on line literary
- 224 magazine I write with aesthetic value in mind. If i am writing a piece for posting
- 225 say on a blog I write differently.
- 226 10. Could you outline how the internet has influenced your career? It has made
- 227 communication quicker, I can easily access all sorts of material especially
- 228 creative writing material, I carry out a lot of research on the internet, I access
- 229 calls for submissions, submit my work electronically, submit for literary
- 230 competitions, exchange work with other writers for critiquing, apply for writers
- 231 residencies, stay in touch with writers I meet where ever I travel to, and I have
- 232 worked with editors on works before, for example I worked with Ellah Alfrey on
- 233 a novel extract published in the Africa39 Anthology. All exchanges were online
- 234 and it made work faster and easier. if I am to travel I carry out all transactions
- 235 and flight bookings on line. I exchange literary information with other writers, i

236 have marketed myself on the internet; the internet has surely enhanced my
 237 career.

238 11. How do you think African readers have benefited from the internet? How do you
 239 use the internet to interact with other writers and readers? As long as they can
 240 access the connection, African readers make good use of the internet. In fact I
 241 have met people who say they developed the interest in reading from reading on
 242 line material. To me that shows that the internet is contributing to the uplift of
 243 the reading culture in Africa.

244 12. Do you consider online writing to be literature? I think that depends on the
 245 circumstances surrounding the publication. Is the publication in an online
 246 literary magazine? Is it a Facebook post? Blog post? A story? Poem? Novel?
 247 An article? Of course keeping in mind that literature has several definitions. And
 248 if we are to consider all definitions then most of internet writing is literature.

249 13. The rise of the so-called "ebook" has divided the publishing world, with some
 250 predicting "the death of the book" and others arguing that the traditional printed
 251 version will remain the favoured format. What do you think is the future of
 252 writing and publishing? The way things are now, the future of writing and
 253 publishing seems to be tending towards the "e-book" I am looking at this in
 254 terms of 'the reader', because writers write for readers, publishers publish for
 255 readers. The readers of tomorrow are the children. And children are getting
 256 exposed to "E-versions" of different things right from a very young age. So their
 257 interest towards E-operations is being nurtured. So with the majority of the
 258 future readership interested in the "e-book" E-publishing may become the
 259 trend. But at the same time there are those readers who will still be interested in
 260 the printed book therefore I think that E-publishing may overwhelm but it will
 261 not replace traditional publishing.

262 14. Do you consider online writers as published writers? Yes I do because their
 263 work is out there for the public to read.

264 15. Would you support an exclusive award for online writing? Yes I would but my
 265 vote would be for poems, short stories, novels and non fiction as long as the
 266 work has merit and is not self published.

267 16. How would you rate online writing? To what extent do you think on line writing
 268 differs from print? As long as work is not self-published then it is okay. But
 269 many writers have used the platform to publish work of "unpublishable"
 270 standards just because it's free, cheap and easy to do. That drops the standards. I
 271 think this is where the difference lies; the convenience of it all. Print publishing
 272 is not that quick, cheap and easy. But again some on line writing is of high
 273 literary merit. In fact there are many on line works that have won prestigious
 274 awards. Quality writing will remain quality writing whether on line or in print.

275 17. Do you think that the internet or social media has made it easier for you to gain
 276 access to other writers and/or publishers and/or readers? Yes. And the good
 277 thing is that the internet is no longer expensive. With as little as five hundred

278 Uganda shillings I can load 20 mbs of data and use it to reach on line
279 information, send on line information, look up publishers, communicate with
280 readers who have appreciated my work, keep in touch with all writers I meet.
281 And with smart phones, everyone and everything is only a click away.

282

283 **Respondent 5**

284 **Emerging African Writers and the Internet Research**

285 Questions

- 286 1. How often do you use the internet? (a) daily (b) weekly (c) monthly
287 2. Where do you access the internet? (a) home (b) work (c) friend's/relative's (d)
288 public
289 3. What do you use to access the internet? (a) laptop (b) desktop (c) mobile phone
290 4. Which of the following social media do you use? (a) MySpace (b) twitter (c)
291 facebook (d) flickr (e) messenger (f) other
292 5. To what extent do you think the social media influence creative writing? As
293 much influence as the theatre had on writing in the middle ages, or photography
294 on 19th century writing, or the film industry on 20th century writing. Social
295 media (to broaden the term, the internet) is the foremost social influence (so far)
296 of the 21st century.
297 6. How good are your IT skills? Do you feel confident updating/posting/editing
298 online content? Good enough to feel at home in digital space. I've felt confident
299 with online content for the past eight years.
300 7. Do you have a blog? No.
301 8. Do you think that the internet is changing the way that African writing is being
302 appreciated? Yes.
303 9. Do you write differently for the internet? No.
304 10. Could you outline how the internet has influenced your career? At different
305 stages of my career, the internet has always been a platform for quicker feedback
306 from readers.
307 11. How do you think African readers have benefited from the internet? They've
308 gotten more choice of affordable reading material, and more opportunity to
309 broaden their reading tastes. How do you use the internet to interact with other
310 writers and readers? My interactions are mostly by private email.
311 12. Do you consider online writing to be literature? Yes.
312 13. The rise of the so-called "ebook" has divided the publishing world, with some
313 predicting "the death of the book" and others arguing that the traditional printed
314 version will remain the favoured format. What do you think is the future of
315 writing and publishing? The future of writing is yoked, as always, to the

- 316 existence of a readership; the future of publishing will be decided by how the
317 readership spends its money.
- 318 14. Do you consider online writers as published writers? Yes.
- 319 15. Would you support an exclusive award for online writing? Yes.
- 320 16. How would you rate online writing? To what extent do you think online writing
321 differs from print? My rating would depend on the piece of writing itself, not its
322 publication platform. In my experience, the power of a well-written story or
323 poem remains the same whether read in print or online.
- 324 17. Do you think that the internet or social media has made it easier for you to gain
325 access to other writers and/or publishers and/or readers? Yes.

326

327 **Respondent 6**

328 **Emerging African Writers and the Internet Research**

329 **Questions**

- 330 1. How often do you use the internet? EVERY DAY
- 331 2. Where do you access the internet? AT HOME, (WORK FROM HOME
332 OFFICE), ON THE ROAD, IN CAFES/COFEESHOPS WITH WIFI
- 333 3. What do you use to access the internet? LAPTOP AND IPHONE
- 334 4. Which of the following social media do you use? PRIMARILY FACEBOOK,
335 ALSO TWITTER, INSTAGRAM, LINKED-IN GROUPS
- 336 5. To what extent do you think the social media influence creative writing? NOT
337 AT ALL IN TERMS OF STYLE/SUBJECT/CONTENT (THUS FAR). BUT IT
338 DEFINITELY AIDS RESEARCH AND NETWORKING
- 339 6. How good are your IT skills? Do you feel confident updating/posting/ editing
340 online content? I'M OKAY - CAN PUT TOGETHER A BASIC WORDPRESS
341 OR BLOGSPOT BLOG PAGE, BUT NEED HELP TO MAKE IT REALLY
342 WHIZ AND BE PRETTY
- 343 7. Do you have a blog? YES, A FEW. SOME ARE PRIVATE FOR MUSINGS,
344 ONE IS SPECIFICALLY FOR AND ABOUT THE MAKINGS OF MY
345 NOVEL 'THE SEED THIEF', ONE IS MY AUTHOR WEBSITE.
- 346 8. Do you think that the internet is changing the way that African writing is being
347 appreciated? I THINK IT IS GIVING IT MUCH GREATER ACCESS TO
348 READERS AND FELLOW WRITERS BOTH IN AFRICA AND ACROSS
349 THE WORLD. IT IS CONNECTING PEOPLE AND INFORMING US OF
350 ONE ANOTHER'S WORKS, IT IS ALLOWING DIALOGUES AND THE
351 EXCHANGE OF IDEAS. IT IS HELPING TO CREATE A DYNAMIC
352 MARKETPLACE OF WORDS
- 353 9. Do you write differently for the internet? I DON'T THINK I WRITE 'FOR THE
354 INTERNET'. MY BACKGROUND IS JOURNALISM SO MY 'PUBLIC

355 VOICE' WAS FORMED THERE. I DO THINK THAT A BLOG, BECAUSE
 356 OF THE SOLITARY NATURE OF CREATING IT AND POSTING IT,
 357 ALLOWS A KIND OF INTIMACY IN TERMS OF TONE. THIS IS A
 358 BLESSING AND CAN ALSO LAND PEOPLE IN HOT WATER IF THEY
 359 FORGET THAT WORDS, ONCE OUT THERE, STAY OUT THERE...

360 10. Could you outline how the internet has influenced your career? I SPENT SOME
 361 TIME IN MULTIMEDIA IN THE EARLY 90s AND BECAME VERY
 362 EXCITED ABOUT THE POSSIBILITIES WITHIN THE NEW MEDIUM,
 363 PRINCIPALLY HOW TO WORK WITHIN THE RESTRICTIONS THAT IT
 364 OFERED (IN TERMS OF FILE SIZE ETC.). BUT IT ALSO REMINDED ME
 365 THAT THE WORD, THE IDEA, THE COMMUNICATION IS THE THING -
 366 THE MESSAGE, RATHER THAN THE MEDIUM. AND EVENTUALLY I
 367 WENT BACK TO THE BASIC FORM, WHICH IS THE STORY,
 368 PREFERABLY ON THE PAGE.

369 11. How do you think African readers have benefited from the internet? How do you
 370 use the internet to interact with other writers and readers? ACCESSIBILITY
 371 (SEE ABOVE). THERE WERE EXPERIMENTS WITH TINY SHORT
 372 STORIES ON CELLPHONES (VIA MXIT ETC) SINCE MOBILE PHONES
 373 ARE HOW MOST PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO DON'T HAVE
 374 THE LUXURY OF PCS OR LAPTOPS, ACCESS THE INTERNET. AS FAR
 375 AS I KNOW THESE HAVE REMAINED EXPERIMENTAL - BUT THERE
 376 IS INNOVATION THERE. (SADLY I BELIEVE MXIT HAS JUST DIED -
 377 BUT SOMETHING ELSE WILL TAKE ITS PLACE...)

378 12. Do you consider online writing to be literature? STORY IS STORY, NO
 379 MATTER WHERE YOU ACCESS IT. I DO THINK THERE IS AN
 380 ATTENTION TO DETAIL THAT COMES WITH THE PROCESS OF
 381 EDITING AND RE-EDITING, WITH PROOFING AND TRIMMING, THAT
 382 YOU DON'T ALWAYS GET WITH THE IMMEDIACY OF ONLINE
 383 PUBLISHING (UNLESS LIKE ME YOU ARE OBSESSIVE AND GO BACK
 384 AND BACK TO CHECK AND TWEAK ALL THE TIME).

385 13. The rise of the so-called "ebook" has divided the publishing world, with some
 386 predicting "the death of the book" and others arguing that the traditional printed
 387 version will remain the favoured format. What do you think is the future of
 388 writing and publishing? I THINK IT'S NOT GOING ANYWHERE, AND WE
 389 NEED TO BE A BIT LESS PRECIOUS ABOUT HOW WE ACCESS
 390 STORIES AND JUST BE GRATEFUL THAT WE CAN - AND HELP
 391 SPREAD THE WORDS TO PEOPLE WHO CANNOT ACCESS THEM AS
 392 EASILY.

393 14. Do you consider online writers as published writers? I THINK AS LONG AS IT
 394 IS WITHIN AN ESTABLISHED RECOGNISED ENTITY - MAGAZINE,
 395 JOURNAL, INSTITUTION ... THERE NEEDS TO BE SOME MEANS OF
 396 CURATING WRITING, SORTING OUT THE TRULY CRAFTED AND

397 CONSIDERED PROSE FROM THE KNEE JERK RESPONSE/INDULGENT
 398 RAMBLING?
 399 15. Would you support an exclusive award for online writing? SURELY IT WOUL
 400 BE AN AWARD FOR PUBLISHING RATHER THAN WRITING -
 401 ESTABLISHED BY A BODY LIKE THE ONES MENTIONED IN THE
 402 PREVIOUS QUESTION?
 403 16. How would you rate online writing? To what extent do you think online writing
 404 differs from print? THINK I ANSWERED THAT IN NUMBER 12 ABOVE
 405 17. Do you think that the internet or social media has made it easier for you to gain
 406 access to other writers and/or publishers and/or readers? YES ABSOLUTELY.
 407 BUT YOU HAVE TO WORK AT IT CONSTANTLY, WHICH TAKES
 408 AWAY FROM YOUR WRITING TIME. IT'S A FINE BALANCING ACT...

409

410 **Respondent 7**

411 **Emerging African Writers and the Internet Research**

412 Questions

- 413 1. How often do you use the internet? (a) daily (b) weekly (c) monthly
- 414 2. Where do you access the internet? (a) home (b) work (c) friend's/relative's (d)
 415 public
- 416 3. What do you use to access the internet? (a)laptop (b) desktop (c) mobile phone
- 417 4. Which of the following social media do you use? (a) MySpace (b) twitter (c)
 418 facebook (d) flickr (e) messenger (f) other Instagram, Tumblr and Pinterest
- 419 5. To what extent do you think the social media influence creative writing?
- 420 6. How good are your IT skills? Do you feel confident updating/posting/editing
 421 online content? I'm pretty OK. I run a blog pretty much on my own.
- 422 7. Do you have a blog? Yes. JamesMurua.com
- 423 8. Do you think that the internet is changing the way that African writing is being
 424 appreciated? It has changed in a big way. This is because the writing has to
 425 capture an audience that is already hooked to social media channels like
 426 Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. These channels allow for writers to inform
 427 people of current projects, new work and launches. It was more difficult before
 428 this.
- 429 9. Do you write differently for the internet? I do. For day job at the newspaper I
 430 follow a style sheet that cannot be changed. With the web I can be more
 431 experimental.
- 432 10. Could you outline how the internet has influenced your career? My career has
 433 been influenced hugely since college. My first job was as a web developer for a
 434 Kenyan newspaper. All my biggest roles have been sourced from my internet
 435 activities.

- 436 11. How do you think African readers have benefited from the internet? How do you
437 use the internet to interact with other writers and readers? African readers can
438 access content that was once accessible to a privileged few at the click of a
439 button and often onto the cost of Internet access which here is very reasonable. I
440 tend to use social media to chat with these writers
- 441 12. Do you consider online writing to be literature? I do. Online writing is not any
442 different from other writing. It is just a different kind of writing quality wise.
- 443 13. The rise of the so-called "ebook" has divided the publishing world, with some
444 predicting "the death of the book" and others arguing that the traditional printed
445 version will remain the favoured format. What do you think is the future of
446 writing and publishing? The future of writing and publishing is bright. It is a
447 growing sector as more people pick up the habit in spite of all the naysayers.
- 448 14. Do you consider online writers as published writers? Publishing is a process
449 where a publication is gone over by several professionals to ensure that it is of
450 the highest quality. I have seen writing in online journal that has gone through
451 such a process from publications like Saraba magazine and Jalada. Those who
452 are in these publications are therefore published writers just like those in the
453 physical versions.
- 454 15. Would you support an exclusive award for online writing? I would support one
455 as long as the writers who are to take part aren't being asked to pay money enter.
456 It also needs to be award for African writing.
- 457 16. How would you rate online writing? To what extent do you think online writing
458 differs from print? Online writing can be as potent as print. While a few years
459 ago the copy being put out online left a lot to be desired today the quality is just
460 as goods and some instances even better than the printed.
- 461 17. Do you think that the internet or social media has made it easier for you to gain
462 access to other writers and/or publishers and/or readers? It is the principle reason
463 for the success I have seeing as I am blogger of books.

464

465 **Respondent 8**

466 **Emerging African Writers and the Internet Research**

467 **Questions**

- 468 1. How often do you use the internet? Daily
- 469 2. Where do you access the internet? Home and work
- 470 3. What do you use to access the internet? Laptop and mobile phone.
- 471 4. Which of the following social media do you use? Twitter
- 472 5. To what extent do you think the social media influence creative writing? Social
473 media hasn't influenced my writing that much. I use it to keep in touch with my
474 readers as well as being aware of what social issues are trending and being

- 475 talked about. If some of these issues show up in my subsequent writing, then to
476 that extent social media may have influenced certain themes.
- 477 6. How good are your IT skills? Do you feel confident updating/posting/ editing
478 online content? I believe I am quite competent with regards IT skills. I used to
479 run a vibrant blog some years ago, which required I update, post and edit online
480 content.
- 481 7. Do you have a blog? I do, but it hasn't been updated in a while.
- 482 8. Do you think that the internet is changing the way that African writing is being
483 appreciated? Yes. I think the internet has allowed multiple narratives on the
484 African life to be seen and accessed by the wider world. More Africans have
485 taken charge of how their stories are being told, collapsing old held stereotypes
486 that abound about who or what is African.
- 487 9. Do you write differently for the internet? I don't believe I do.
- 488 10. Could you outline how the internet has influenced your career? My writing
489 became more accessible to a wider audience not just in my country but also from
490 Africa and the wider world. To some extent, interest in my books in foreign
491 countries was spurred by the impact of the internet and what readers were saying
492 and posting online about my work.
- 493 11. How do you think African readers have benefited from the internet? How do you
494 use the internet to interact with other writers and readers? One of the main
495 benefits for readers will be the immediate access to writers, their works and the
496 ability to interact with them. For me, I correspond with the writers I am friendly
497 with directly by email. I still cherish some privacy when online and find it not
498 for me to post every emotion or thought on my wall etc.
- 499 12. Do you consider online writing to be literature? It certainly could be. There are
500 tons of important literary online e-zines that are publishing good literature. Not
501 everything piece of writing online is literature. But we should not forget that
502 literature has many genres.
- 503 13. The rise of the so-called "ebook" has divided the publishing world, with some
504 predicting "the death of the book" and others arguing that the traditional printed
505 version will remain the favoured format. What do you think is the future of
506 writing and publishing? I think it is inevitable that some point in the future
507 ebooks will take over from traditional paper books. The evidence is there that
508 more and more people are using their smart phones and tablets to access things
509 from TV shows, movies and magazines. I think because people want immediate
510 gratification, the wait for ordering a book or actually going to a bookshop to buy
511 an actual book has become tedious for many. And there's also the cost of actual
512 books. I don't believe that books will die off as there will be a few people that
513 still enjoy the touch and feel of an actual book.
- 514 14. Do you consider online writers as published writers? Yes, as long as their
515 writing is published on other reputable online platforms other than their own.

- 516 These writing must undergo the rigorous editing process that is required for all
517 good creative writing.
- 518 15. Would you support an exclusive award for online writing? I haven't thought
519 much about this, but I don't see why this will be an issue.
- 520 16. How would you rate online writing? To what extent do you think online writing
521 differs from print?
- 522 17. Do you think that the internet or social media has made it easier for you to gain
523 access to other writers and/or publishers and/or readers? Yes, I believe it has.

524

525 **Respondent 9**

526 **Emerging African Writers and the Internet Research**

527 Questions

- 528 1. How often do you use the internet? (a) daily
- 529 2. Where do you access the internet? (a) home
- 530 3. What do you use to access the internet? (a) laptop (b) desktop (c) mobile
531 phone
- 532 4. Which of the following social media do you use? (b) twitter (c) facebook (f)
533 other
- 534 5. To what extent do you think the social media influence creative writing? For me,
535 hugely. My debut collection of poetry is partly about the influence of social
536 media on language and knowledge sharing. Otherwise it is a very useful tool for
537 research and sharing work among colleagues.
- 538 6. How good are your IT skills? Do you feel confident updating/posting/editing
539 online content? Yes, and I do so daily.
- 540 7. Do you have a blog? Yes.
- 541 8. Do you think that the internet is changing the way that African writing is being
542 appreciated? Hugely. It also increases opportunities for African writers to
543 collaborate, find places to submit work to and build networks where there were
544 none before.
- 545 9. Do you write differently for the internet? Yes, you have to. Online is a
546 completely different format, with different idioms, conventions and ways of
547 speaking.
- 548 10. Could you outline how the internet has influenced your career? I'm what's
549 known as a "digital native". I've been fortunate to live with a computer with a
550 modem in my house since I was 7 years old (I'm 25 now.) It's difficult,
551 therefore, to outline how the internet has influenced my career because I've
552 never known a life without it.

- 553 11. How do you think African readers have benefited from the internet? How do you
554 use the internet to interact with other writers and readers? Communication,
555 sharing stories, collaboration.
- 556 12. Do you consider online writing to be literature? Yes.
- 557 13. The rise of the so-called "ebook" has divided the publishing world, with some
558 predicting "the death of the book" and others arguing that the traditional printed
559 version will remain the favoured format. What do you think is the future of
560 writing and publishing? My opinion is that both formats will survive and work
561 together side-by-side. Although ebooks are revolutionising literature worldwide,
562 print is still a format that is taken more seriously than others. The very act of
563 producing and printing a book taps into a primal, prejudiced part of us that
564 prefers to hold and behold something that is a physically interactive object. Print
565 implies emotional and professional investment. It requires financial investment.
566 Print implies quality. We're beginning to overcome this prejudice with things
567 like news media, but with most books we are more likely to take the physical
568 form or implied physical form of a text than a digital version.
- 569 14. Do you consider online writers as published writers? It depends on the
570 publication that publishes them. If it's on a blog, then generally no. If it's on the
571 online site of a publication or newspaper, yes. If it's on an online-only
572 publication, then it depends. It's a sliding scale, with no hard and fast answer.
- 573 15. Would you support an exclusive award for online writing? In principle, yes, but
574 I don't think it will garner fair criticism or will be viewed with the same prestige
575 as a print-only or print-and-online award would.
- 576 16. How would you rate online writing? To what extent do you think online writing
577 differs from print? I read all my news online. Online is good for immediate
578 writing, for things that need to be published and read with immediacy. Print, due
579 to the format, is less time-sensitive.
- 580 17. Do you think that the internet or social media has made it easier for you to gain
581 access to other writers and/or publishers and/or readers? Absolutely. It's
582 allowed me to connect with colleagues and be able to create networks. I don't
583 think I'd have a career in writing without the influence of the internet.

584

585 **Respondent 10**

586 **Emerging African Writers and the Internet Research**

587 **Questions**

- 588 1. How often do you use the internet? (a) daily (b) weekly (c) monthly
- 589 2. Where do you access the internet? (a) home (b) work (c) friend's/relative's (d)
- 590 public
- 591 3. What do you use to access the internet? (a) laptop (b) desktop (c) mobile phone

- 592 4. Which of the following social media do you use? (a) MySpace (b) twitter (c)
593 facebook (d) flickr (e) messenger (f) other
- 594 5. To what extent do you think the social media influence creative writing? To the
595 extent that writers are bolder, there are more avenues to put work out, and fewer
596 gatekeepers.
- 597 6. How good are your IT skills? Do you feel confident updating/posting/ editing
598 online content? Good enough IT skills to post to a simple website or a blog
- 599 7. Do you have a blog? Yes
- 600 8. Do you think that the internet is changing the way that African writing is being
601 appreciated? To some extent, because it's generally easier to find and read
602 content from anywhere in the world, so African writing (and writing from
603 anywhere) benefits from this.
- 604 9. Do you write differently for the internet? Not really, except maybe in terms of
605 length; shorter pieces for online.
- 606 10. Could you outline how the internet has influenced your career? I have a blog,
607 which means that I don't need to get approval or permission from anyone to put
608 content out. I've also discovered writing and connected with other writers
609 through the internet. Twitter and Facebook help me share my content. The
610 internet helps me to submit my work very widely to contests and also
611 publications. My first ever writing prize (Etisalat Flash Fiction Prize) was
612 internet based. The internet exposes me to inspiration and material that helps
613 with my writing.
- 614 11. How do you think African readers have benefited from the internet? How do you
615 use the internet to interact with other writers and readers? I think African writers
616 have benefitted from the internet the same way others have: fewer gatekeepers
617 so more work gets out; books are more accessible, so writers can read more
618 widely; writers get to hear about publications and contests they can submit to.
619 Interaction with other writers via the internet comes through my blog, Facebook,
620 Twitter. We read and share each others' work, share news etc.
- 621 12. Do you consider online writing to be literature? Yes
- 622 13. The rise of the so-called "ebook" has divided the publishing world, with some
623 predicting "the death of the book" and others arguing that the traditional printed
624 version will remain the favoured format. What do you think is the future of
625 writing and publishing? I think that writing will remain but the way we consume
626 it might change. I don't believe that printed books will die; even now, printed
627 books are favoured still by many. Eventually printed books might become more
628 niche, perhaps like collectors' items. But I believe the appreciation of printed
629 material will remain
- 630 14. Do you consider online writers as published writers? Yes, because as far as
631 publishing goes, many publications (both print and online) prefer to be first
632 publishers, so they'll say something like 'the work must not have been
633 published/appeared anywhere, online or print.' So online is publishing, in that

- 634 sense. But if someone says they're a published writer, my mind goes straight to
635 print.
- 636 15. Would you support an exclusive award for online writing? Not sure exactly what
637 'support' means here, but probably, if it's clear the award values good quality
638 writing.
- 639 16. How would you rate online writing? To what extent do you think online writing
640 differs from print? I can't really rate online writing as opposed to print; there's
641 good and bad writing both online and in print. I think, though, that due to the
642 cost of printing, as opposed to publishing online, there's usually a stricter vetting
643 of the material and so the quality might be better. But this isn't always so.
- 644 17. Do you think that the internet or social media has made it easier for you to gain
645 access to other writers and/or publishers and/or readers? Yes, definitely

646

647 **Respondent 11**

648 **Emerging African Writers and the Internet Research**

649 **Questions**

- 650 1. How often do you use the internet? (a) daily (b) weekly (c) monthly
- 651 2. Where do you access the internet? (a) home (b) work (c) friend's/relative's (d)
652 public
- 653 3. What do you use to access the internet? (a) laptop (b) desktop (c) mobile phone
- 654 4. Which of the following social media do you use? MySpace (b) twitter (c)
655 facebook (d) flickr (e) messenger (f) other
- 656 5. To what extent do you think the social media influence creative writing?
657 Answer: To a lesser extent because: i) The environment usually isn't that
658 conducive for creativity. Either you are in a crowded environment, eg an internet
659 café, or in the office where the workplace has it's own pressures and deadens
660 creativity. One needs to be far from the madding crowd, in harmony with nature
661 for the creative juices to be released.
- 662 6. How good are your IT skills? Do you feel confident updating/posting/ editing
663 online content? Answer: I am very proficient in ICTs. Editing, posting online
664 content is not intimidating at all.
- 665 7. Do you have a blog? Answer: I have two blogs, among them:
666 www.zimwritersink.blogspot.com
- 667 8. Do you think that the internet is changing the way that African writing is being
668 appreciated? Answer: Mixed. In Africa itself people do not appreciate blogs. So
669 it's helping those in more developed countries to see the talent in Africa, rather
670 than for interactive purposes. Look at online purchases of books. In Zimbabwe
671 facilities such as credit cards are not accessible to many, and most African
672 countries do not fancy their chances on that one.

- 673 9. Do you write differently for the internet? Answer: Yes, I bare all without
674 reservations. 'Big brother' has no capacity to monitor that one.
- 675 10. Could you outline how the internet has influenced your career? Answer: In great
676 ways. Facebook has helped with interaction. I am also Zimbabwe editor for
677 Author-me.com Publishing group, thus this interaction has paid it's dividends. I
678 managed to link up with Tinashe mushakavanhu, PHD student and lecturer at
679 Kent University and I contributed twop poems in "State of the nation." I have
680 also benefitted from online writing tips.
- 681 11. How do you think African readers have benefited from the internet? How do you
682 use the internet to interact with other writers and readers? Answer: Problem is,
683 only a few people can access the internet. But of those few, yes, they read online
684 articles, but since this is at work, very little book/ story reading can be done.
685 Otherwise I meet other writers on facebook and also visit other writers' blogs.
686 But if you were to check www.kreativehive.blogspot.com, my short story blog,
687 you will find zero comments. So in Africa we are still scratching the surface,
688 internet has not broken it's way into the mainstream media.
- 689 12. Do you consider online writing to be literature? Answer. Indeed, it is literature.
690 It is unfettered, those in authoritarian regimes have more freedom to express
691 themselves. Only that it can't be enjoyed far from the madding crowd, now the
692 internet can't be forgiven for that. Though one can use a laptop to access the
693 internet while maybe in a park, it is still largely a pipe dream.
- 694 13. The rise of the so-called ebook" has divided the publishing world, with some
695 predicting "the death of the book" and others arguing that the traditional printed
696 version will remain the favoured format. What do you think is the future of
697 writing and publishing? Answer. That's the joke that because Madonna can
698 afford all the make-up she wants, she can do without her skin! No way. That's
699 technological determinism, it never works. The hard copy is portable, very
700 convenient. You read it on the subway, on the commuter omnibus. You read it in
701 the park, you can read it over and over again. You can show others, hey, I read it
702 in the book, here it is, you are so confident. Children are not allowed much
703 internet time for fear that they will imbibe obscene material , which, without any
704 need to qualify, is a staple product on the web. Let's go back a bit. Newspaper:
705 wonders of the Guternberg Press, the rest is tabloids, broadsheets etc. it became
706 the focal point in habermas' public Sphere, later on to be used for propaganda
707 purposes, look at the first President of Nigeria. Radio: respecting not
708 geographical boundaries, linguistic boundaries, radio had a great impact. Used
709 extensively in the 1st and 2nd woorld war. In Africa, it is dubbed: "the drum for
710 Africa". But the audio could not usurp the newspaper. It was always a virtue to
711 say, here it is, I ain't lying, I read it in the Press. Television: Now, here came
712 real life on the screen. Is it Jean Baudrillard's "world of hyperreality? Audio-
713 visual media had a very great impact on the socio-economic and political
714 landscape. But you can't lug a television set around, your body enmeshed by a

- 715 spaghetti of wires in the name of aerial cables. So the newspaper survived, the
 716 radio survived. Internet: the same fate awaits the internet. These media will only
 717 complement each other, but no way one can enjoy monopoly on media product
 718 consumers.
- 719 14. Do you consider online writers as published writers? Answer. No, because the
 720 people the writer must appeal to have no access to the internet. You must be
 721 holding the copy for you to say you are published. It's good to have a hard copy,
 722 and the e-copy as a complementary product.
- 723 15. Would you support an exclusive award for online writing? Answer: yes, because
 724 as I said, some authors cannot get published in the hard copy format for various
 725 economies. Zimbabwe has experienced an unprecedented fall in published
 726 books coz of the economic quagmire swamping the country. Only school
 727 setbooks are being published, coz they are a basic. But no novels, they are a
 728 luxury. Mambo Press, Weaver press are all chasing a potential school setbook.
 729 So fiction could stay alive by having an internet award. Then authoritarian
 730 regimes have to be circumvented, so the internet becomes a safe haven for those
 731 deemed as "unpatriotic".
- 732 16. How would you rate online writing? To what extent do you think online writing
 733 differs from print? Answer. I rate it highly as a fellow artist, but I think that my
 734 view is not that important. We write for the audience, so if those who must
 735 consume it can't access it, then it's a farce. So since it's an art not appreciated
 736 for the intended consumers, then overall my rating is low. Internet published
 737 things are a bit inferior to books because the latter pass through a production
 738 chain. Now online material can be self-published, no other experienced person
 739 looks at it. If anybody does, they are hurrying, the computer screen is not very
 740 good for the eyes.
- 741 17. Do you think that the internet or social media has made it easier for you to gain
 742 access to other writers and/or publishers and/or readers? Answer It has
 743 tremendously helped me in accessing other writers and publishers, but glaringly
 744 inept at being the interface between me and the readers. The end.

745

746 **Respondent 12**

747 **Emerging African Writers and the Internet Research**

748 **Questions**

- 749 1. How often do you use the internet? (a) daily
 750 2. Where do you access the internet? (b) work
 751 3. What do you use to access the internet?(a)laptop
 752 4. Which of the following social media do you use? (c) facebook (e) messenger

- 753 5. To what extent do you think the social media influence creative writing? I stay
754 in touch with other writers who are interested in writing Access to publishing
755 opportunities Access to literary events around the world
- 756 6. How good are your IT skills? Do you feel confident updating/posting/editing
757 online content? Yes, I'm confident of my IT skills but each day I learn
758 something new.
- 759 7. Do you have a blog? Nope
- 760 8. Do you think that the internet is changing the way that African writing is being
761 appreciated? Yes, every now and then I get an email of someone who has found
762 my work interesting Wider readership of my work All sorts of work (positive
763 and negative) are available for readers to access
- 764 9. Do you write differently for the internet? Nope
- 765 10. Could you outline how the internet has influenced your career? I normally get
766 calls on thematic subjects and I have to write according to the publishers'
767 guidelines including number of words. I have got overwhelming numbers of
768 calls for short stories i.e. my work has got market (motivated me to write more)
- 769 11. How do you think African readers have benefited from the internet? How do you
770 use the internet to interact with other writers and readers? The readers can keep
771 in touch with their writers Readers read what they want to read I google, and
772 emailwriters
- 773 12. Do you consider online writing to be literature? Yes, I use it as references
774 whenever I write research paper
- 775 13. The rise of the so-called "ebook" has divided the publishing world, with some
776 predicting "the death of the book" and others arguing that the traditional printed
777 version will remain the favoured format. What do you think is the future of
778 writing and publishing? Many still value the traditional printed version and
779 much more effective. The traditional printed version is there to stay.
- 780 14. Do you consider online writers as published writers? Yes but they must consider
781 themselves as published too (its about the attitude I guess)
- 782 15. Would you support an exclusive award for online writing? Yes, I give as much
783 time to writing pieces for the internet as I would to my writing for print.
- 784 16. How would you rate online writing? To what extent do you think online writing
785 differs from print? There are some websites that are credible and one cannot
786 trash them but there are others that have questionable information and so its up
787 to the readers to gauge their data. One cannot read online work in bed but work
788 in print ☺
- 789 17. Do you think that the internet or social media has made it easier for you to gain
790 access to other writers and/or publishers and/or readers? Internet has played a
791 big role in my writing and will continue to do so. I'm now looking for an agent
792 to represent and it's from the internet that I will find one credible agent. A
793 number of researchers have found me on the internet and been able to interview
794 me regarding my writing and contribution to the literary world.

795 **Respondent 13**

796 **Emerging African Writers and the Internet Research**

797 **Questions**

- 798 1. How often do you use the internet? (a) daily
799 2. Where do you access the internet? (a) home
800 3. What do you use to access the internet? (b) desktop
801 4. Which of the following social media do you use? None
802 5. To what extent do you think the social media influence creative writing? Not at
803 al
804 6. How good are your IT skills? Do you feel confident updating/posting/editing
805 online content? Good
806 7. Do you have a blog? I set one u but never really used it.
807 8. Do you think that the internet is changing the way that African writing is being
808 appreciated? Not so much how it is approached but that the conersations which
809 would have belwo radar are now becoming more visible/audible.
810 9. Do you write differently for the internet? I never write for the internet
811 10. Could you outline how the internet has influenced your career? It has helped
812 with getting publicity further distance than would have been without it.
813 11. How do you think African readers have benefited from the internet? How do you
814 use the internet to interact with other writers and readers? They now have
815 conversations more often than would have been without the internet. Personally
816 I prefer interacting with other writers of readers in person because doing it
817 online on sites like Facebook etc can gobble an immense amount of time, which
818 I can ill afford.
819 12. Do you consider online writing to be literature? Yes
820 13. The rise of the so-called "ebook" has divided the publishing world, with some
821 predicting "the death of the book" and others arguing that the traditional printed
822 version will remain the favoured format. What do you think is the future of
823 writing and publishing? I think traditional books will be with us for some time to
824 come and that ebook devices like Amazon's kindle will also find it's place but it
825 may be a while before people abandon the paperback.
826 14. Do you consider online writers as published writers? As log as they are
827 published by reputable online publishers and not simply vanity publishing.
828 15. Would you support an exclusive award for online writing? No. Writing is
829 writing – just as there is simply no special case for printed literature there is
830 none for online literature.
831 16. How would you rate online writing? To what extent do you think online writing
832 differs from print? There is no difference really if you look at mags like Granta,
833 the New Yorker, Kwani, Farafina, Cassava Republic etc.

834 17. Do you think that the internet or social media has made it easier for you to gain
835 access to other writers and/or publishers and/or readers? Certainly easier to
836 access other writers' work.

837

838 **Respondent 14**

839 **Emerging African Writers and the Internet Research**

840 Questions

- 841 1. How often do you use the internet? (a) daily (b) weekly (c) monthly
842 2. Where do you access the internet? home (b) work (c) friend's/relative's (d)
843 public
844 3. What do you use to access the internet? (a) laptop (b) desktop (c) mobile phone
845 4. Which of the following social media do you use? (a) MySpace (b) twitter (c)
846 facebook (d) flickr (e) messenger (f) other
847 5. To what extent do you think the social media influence creative writing? To a
848 great extent, Social networking sites and blogs have encouraged more creative
849 writers to present their work.
850 6. How good are your IT skills? Do you feel confident updating/posting/ editing
851 online content? I have very good IT skills and i have no problems with updating
852 online content on a regular basis.
853 7. Do you have a blog? Yes
854 8. Do you think that the internet is changing the way that African writing is being
855 appreciated? I think African writing needs more exposure, and the internet is
856 providing that. There are many stories that are not being appreciated by a wider
857 audience but the internet provides that opportunity to reach out to more people
858 and grow an interest in African writing.
859 9. Do you write differently for the internet? No, although both audiences access
860 literature differently, i keep the content the same but for the internet i may take
861 advantage of various multimedia options.
862 10. Could you outline how the internet has influenced your career? I slowly began to
863 present my writing on my blog and facebook profile in 2007. The first
864 opportunity i had to present my work in public came through a facebook
865 connection and there has been many similar opportunities since. It has helped
866 me to connect with fellow writers, local and international publishers, journalists,
867 as well as a global literary audience. I have continued to utilize the internet,
868 using it to publish my first poetry collection and fostering a charity fund raising
869 drive using a collection of poetry that has contributors from around the world.
870 My literary career so far has been greatly influenced by the internet.
871 11. How do you think African readers have benefited from the internet? How do you
872 use the internet to interact with other writers and readers? African readers

873 continue to benefit from the range of African writing now available on the
874 internet, they are now exposed to many genres and writing styles, for me this
875 means that through a simple google search African readers and african writing
876 enthusiasts can now enjoy a more complete picture of the African continent.
877 This i believe is certainly a good thing. I use a host of social networking sites to
878 interact with readers and writers like twitter, facebook, blogger, linkedin, tumblr,
879 but the main site i utilize is facebook. I started a facebook group where writers
880 can present their work and readers can discuss various poetry pieces. I try to
881 update the various sites as often as i can.

882 12. Do you consider online writing to be literature? Good question, i do believe
883 online writing is certainly still literature. It is simply literature from writers that
884 take advantage of the internet and technology in general.

885 13. The rise of the so-called "ebook" has divided the publishing world, with some
886 predicting "the death of the book" and others arguing that the traditional printed
887 version will remain the favoured format. What do you think is the future of
888 writing and publishing? I do not believe ebooks can completely replace the
889 traditional book format, however people now access digital content even more,
890 and they are more used to, or more likely to read a blog than go to the bookstore.
891 The future of writing and publishing depends on how well publishers can
892 monetize the online content similar to what is being done with MP3's. With
893 ebooks there are no printing costs and the content can be immediately accessed
894 by the reader, it is a more interactive technology that may also be purchased
895 along with audio book versions, i see this as a positive move for the publishing
896 industry who can now spend the savings from printing less traditional books, on
897 marketing and promoting the online ebook versions.

898 14. Do you consider online writers as published writers? Many online writers bypass
899 the traditional publisher, which is why they are referred to as self published
900 writers and not published writers. I consider online writers who follow through
901 with printed and ebook content as being a published writer.

902 15. Would you support an exclusive award for online writing? Yes i would.

903 16. How would you rate online writing? To what extent do you think online writing
904 differs from print? Not all content on the internet is great, just like not every
905 book that make it to the stores via traditional publishers is a good book. I would
906 rate online writing on a scale of 1-10, a 6. Personally i believe both media
907 formats are not drastically different from each other.

908 17. Do you think that the internet or social media has made it easier for you to gain
909 access to other writers and/or publishers and/or readers? Yes

910

911

912

913 **Respondent 15**

914 **Emerging African Writers and the Internet Research**

915 **Questions**

- 916 1. How often do you use the internet? (a) daily (b) weekly (c) monthly
917 2. Where do you access the internet?(a) home (b) work (c) friend's/relative's (d)
918 public
919 3. What do you use to access the internet? (a)laptop (b)desktop (c) mobile phone
920 4. Which of the following social media do you use? (a) MySpace (b) twitter (c)
921 facebook (d) flickr (e) messenger (f) other
922 5. To what extent do you think the social media influence creative writing? There
923 is a more immediate interaction with readers and other writers; writing is tagged
924 and shared on fb, for example
925 6. How good are your IT skills? Do you feel confident updating/posting/ editing
926 online content? My IT skills are average. Yes to all three
927 7. Do you have a blog? Yes, but I only post on it sporadically
928 8. Do you think that the internet is changing the way that African writing is being
929 appreciated? I think it is changing the way African writing is being
930 disseminated. There is a lot more being published and readers who would not
931 otherwise have known about African writing are confronted by them on almost a
932 daily basis. There is much more knowledge of what is available
933 9. Do you write differently for the internet? No
934 10. Could you outline how the internet has influenced your career? One of the
935 turning points of my career was being shortlisted for the caine prize. The short
936 story for which I was shortlisted was published on an online journal
937 11. How do you think African readers have benefited from the internet? How do you
938 use the internet to interact with other writers and readers? I have been / am a
939 member of various cybergroups, mainly writing groups. I mentor young African
940 writers (I read and comment on their works) via e mail. I connect with some of
941 my readers via e mail. The internet has made publishing less expensive, less
942 strenuous and much easier for (African) writers.
943 12. Do you consider online writing to be literature? Certainly. Granted, some online
944 journals publish poorly edited work, but we get that too with traditional
945 publishing
946 13. The rise of the so-called "ebook" has divided the publishing world, with some
947 predicting "the death of the book" and others arguing that the traditional printed
948 version will remain the favoured format. What do you think is the future of
949 writing and publishing? I think that there would always be people who would
950 prefer to hold a book in their hands, flip the pages and read. I do not believe it is
951 a case of either/or but rather one of peaceful co-existence
952 14. Do you consider online writers as published writers? Yes

- 953 15. Would you support an exclusive award for online writing? Why not?
954 16. How would you rate online writing? To what extent do you think online writing
955 differs from print? I think the difference lies in the ease with which one can
956 publish online. The flip side of the coin is that this ease makes that works do not
957 often go through the same rigorous editing that traditional publishing often
958 requires because technically, anyone can be an e publisher
959 17. Do you think that the internet or social media has made it easier for you to gain
960 access to other writers and/or publishers and/or readers? YES!

961

962 **Respondent 16**

963 **Emerging African Writers and the Internet Research**

964 **Questions**

- 965 1. How often do you use the internet? (a) daily
966 2. Where do you access the internet? (b) work
967 3. What do you use to access the internet? (b) desktop (c) mobile phone
968 4. Which of the following social media do you use? (c) facebook
969 5. To what extent do you think the social media influence creative writing? Not
970 much.
971 6. How good are your IT skills? Do you feel confident updating/posting/editing
972 online content? Fairly so.
973 7. Do you have a blog? Used to.
974 8. Do you think that the internet is changing the way that African writing is being
975 appreciated? I do.
976 9. Do you write differently for the internet? Yes, the internet is more permissive
977 towards risqué material.
978 10. Could you outline how the internet has influenced your career? More good stuff
979 to read; more quality markets to submit to and the ease to have my work read at
980 these quality literary sites by readers around the world.
981 11. How do you think African readers have benefited from the internet? How do you
982 use the internet to interact with other writers and readers? I've workshopped my
983 stories in writers' groups and gotten useful feedback. Also, the internet allows
984 me to read contemporary writing that passes muster at quality literary websites.
985 12. Do you consider online writing to be literature? Very much so.
986 13. The rise of the so-called "ebook" has divided the publishing world, with some
987 predicting "the death of the book" and others arguing that the traditional printed
988 version will remain the favoured format. What do you think is the future of
989 writing and publishing? In a sentence, the advent of television did not spell the
990 end of the radio. I doubt if the ebook will kill paper back or hard cover.

14. Do you consider online writers as published writers? I do for the simple reason that publication at quality websites require that one's work be considered worthy of being published by independent editors who more often than not are propelled purely by the love of literature. Moreover, once a story, for instance, is published on a website that has a standard editorial process, the reading public have access to it as do publishers who may want to republish such works in hard copy. I have had works that were basically published free on the internet end up in paying print markets by virtue of the fact that the print editors saw the works online.
15. Would you support an exclusive award for online writing? storySouth already runs a popular online award that I'm in support of and I would support another well administered exclusive award for online writing.
16. How would you rate online writing? To what extent do you think online writing differs from print? Online writing is no better or worse than print. There's good and bad online writing just like there's good and bad writing in print. The major difference would be the relatively free nature of most online writing websites and the immediacy of access to new works posted online.
17. Do you think that the internet or social media has made it easier for you to gain access to other writers and/or publishers and/or readers? Yes.

1010

1011 **Respondent 17**

1012 **Emerging African Writers and the Internet Research**

1013 **Questions**

1. How often do you use the internet? (a) daily
2. Where do you access the internet? (a) home
3. What do you use to access the internet?(a)laptop
4. Which of the following social media do you use? (c) facebook (e) messenger
5. To what extent do you think the social media influence creative writing? I think they have a great deal of influence. The interactions with readers and fans tend to remove the mystery and mystique of the author. The new social media bring you into contact with your readers. You get asked questions, questions that breakdown the walls separating the readers from the writer. I feel the internet and sites like facebook, etc, brings writers closer to the oral tradition of storytelling. For example, look at the notes on facebook; I've seen some exceptional flash fiction published there. While doing this can tend towards the narcissistic, it still brings varied responses from quite enthusiastic readers who offer surprisingly apt advice, comments, etc.
6. How good are your IT skills? Do you feel confident updating/posting/ editing online content? Yes to all

- 1030 7. Do you have a blog? No. But I have been a member of one. It's called
1031 Udonandu. It was a private blog we—the alumni of the first fidelity bank
1032 workshop—set up so we could continue work-shopping/critiquing our fiction
1033 long after the real workshop ended. The blog tried. It lasted all of eleven months
1034 before we outgrew it. I'm current involved with Ivor Hartmann's Storytime
1035 Africa. It's a blog that publishes the writing of its members; it's an ezine. And it
1036 also encourages submitting work to the caine prize. It's just writers helping each
1037 other.
- 1038 8. Do you think that the internet is changing the way that African writing is being
1039 appreciated? Yes.
- 1040 9. Do you write differently for the internet? Yes. Faster. With less regard for
1041 correct grammar, etc.
- 1042 10. Could you outline how the internet has influenced your career? Small question,
1043 big answer. I learnt almost everything I know about writing fiction from the
1044 internet. I started my first novel in 2005. I knew nothing and was always
1045 flummoxed by why my sentences didn't ring true, didn't have bite, like what I
1046 read in novels. So I searched: online; in second-hand bookshops; everywhere.
1047 The online search paid off. I stumbled upon the website, www.sfwaworld.org. It is
1048 run by the Science Fiction Writers of America. They have a vast writers'
1049 resource page; with tips, advice, comments on writing, editing, agents,
1050 manuscript prep. The information there was most helpful, and free. And I was
1051 first published online. I met the publisher of my novel, Kachifo, online. I met
1052 you online. So could I outline—completely—how the internet influenced my
1053 career? The scope of this study couldn't contain the ways.
- 1054 11. How do you think African readers have benefited from the internet? How do you
1055 use the internet to interact with other writers and readers?
- 1056 12. Do you consider online writing to be literature? Yes, some of it. I feel the
1057 lessened cost of publishing in ether makes it easier to read literature. There is a
1058 new wave of writing and it's online. But sometimes I understand the reasoning
1059 behind the question. The guilt for the ease with which every craseman can brand
1060 himself an author these days rest solely on the shoulders of Microsoft Word and
1061 the other word-processors. They democratised the thing. Imagine if we still had
1062 to actually "cut and paste"; or if we had to use an actual thesaurus. It's the same
1063 thing with online writing. How many prospective authors take manuscript
1064 preparation seriously; how many of them know what a SASE (self-addressed
1065 stamped envelope) is? How many can tell the difference between paragraph
1066 indentations and double-spaced paragraphs and monospaced fonts. This is where
1067 online writing might irritate. But it is still literature; I believe all storytelling is.
- 1068 13. The rise of the so-called "ebook" has divided the publishing world, with some
1069 predicting "the death of the book" and others arguing that the traditional printed
1070 version will remain the favoured format. What do you think is the future of
1071 writing and publishing? Some people said the television spelled the end of

- 1072 movie theatres. In a way it did. It spelled the end of movie going as that
 1073 generation knew it. It made movie going more special; an actual event, a
 1074 Saturday night thing, worth dressing up for, etc. I think the analogy is apt
 1075 because eBooks won't kill publishing. It will just make things different. But
 1076 there will always be a place for books; after all the laptop's battery will run out
 1077 one day or NEPA will take light and what better way to rest the mind than to
 1078 curl up in front of the lantern with a good paperback?
- 1079 14. Do you consider online writers as published writers? I feel the terms need
 1080 definition. Do I consider them published? I would say yes if I wanted to win an
 1081 argument with a stuck up old fashioned dinosaur. But in defence of hierarchy I
 1082 would have to say, "Not really." There has to be the consensus of a body of
 1083 people—a publishing house, copyeditors, agents—willing to take a risk on what
 1084 you have written. Willing to bet their money that there is an audience out there
 1085 for your voice. I feel that traditional publishing—with the royalty checks, nasty
 1086 copyeditors, and tasteless marketing departments—is still the real publishing.
 1087 Note that this excludes most self-publishing.
- 1088 15. Would you support an exclusive award for online writing? Yes, I would. But I
 1089 cannot imagine the drivel that the judges of such an award would have to sieve
 1090 through to find their flecks of gold. There is so much stuff out there.
- 1091 16. How would you rate online writing? To what extent do you think online writing
 1092 differs from print? The main difference is that there is almost no filter between
 1093 the writer's "pen" and the reader's eyes in online writing. Things that wouldn't
 1094 be seen in print tend to escape online to embarrass both author and reader. It
 1095 comes down to quality control: in most print media there is some form available;
 1096 online you are mostly on your own.
- 1097 17. Do you think that the internet or social media has made it easier for you to gain
 1098 access to other writers and/or publishers and/or readers? Yes.

1099

1100 **Respondent 18**

1101 **Emerging African Writers and the Internet Research**

1102 Questions

- 1103 1. How often do you use the internet? (a) daily X (b) weekly (c) monthly
 1104 2. Where do you access the internet? (a) home AND WORK X (b) work (c)
 1105 friend's/relative's (d) public
 1106 3. What do you use to access the internet? (a) laptop X (b) desktop (c) mobile
 1107 phone
 1108 4. Which of the following social media do you use? (a) MySpace (b) twitter (c)
 1109 facebook (d) flickr (e) messenger (f) other NONE

- 1110 5. To what extent do you think the social media influence creative writing? NOT
1111 VERY MUCH IN MY PERSONAL EXPERIENCE
- 1112 6. How good are your IT skills? Do you feel confident updating/posting/editing
1113 online content? I WORK WITH THE DESIGNER OF MY WEBSITE.
- 1114 7. Do you have a blog? NO
- 1115 8. Do you think that the internet is changing the way that African writing is being
1116 appreciated? YES, IT OFFERS THE POSSIBILITY OF GREATER VISIBIITY
1117 FOR AFRICAN WRITING
- 1118 9. Do you write differently for the internet? NO. ALL GOOD WRITING IS THE
1119 SAME. AND YES, DEPENDING ON THE FORMAT.
- 1120 10. Could you outline how the internet has influenced your career? I HAD A
1121 WEBSITE EARLY IN MY CAREER AND THIS PROBABLY GAVE MORE
1122 INTERNATIONAL VISIBILITY TO MY WORK – THE INTERNET
1123 ALLOWS READERS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD TO ENCOUNTER
1124 ONE’S WORK.
- 1125 11. How do you think African readers have benefited from the internet? How do you
1126 use the internet to interact with other writers and readers? BECAUSE THERE
1127 IS A RELATIVE PAUCITY OF CULTURAL TRAFFIC BETWEEN
1128 AFRICAN COUNTRIES, THE INTERNET HAS GIVEN READERS ON THE
1129 CONTINENT GREATER ACCESS TO WRITERS FROM AROUND THE
1130 CONTINENT. WRITERS AND READERS WHO WISH TO CONTACT ME
1131 CAN DO SO THROUGH MY WEBSITE. THE VERY OPENNESS OF THE
1132 INTERNET CAN MAKE SUCH CONTACT EITHER PLEASING OR QUITE
1133 SUPERFICIAL.
- 1134 12. Do you consider online writing to be literature? ONE CAN CERTAINLY FIND
1135 GOOD WRITING ON THE INTERNET. THE CHANCES ARE BETTER
1136 WHEN THE SITE HAS AN EDITOR, BUT THERE IS THE CHANCE OF
1137 ENCOUNTERING GREAT WRITING IN UNEXPECTED PLACES.
- 1138 13. The rise of the so-called "ebook" has divided the publishing world, with some
1139 predicting "the death of the book" and others arguing that the traditional printed
1140 version will remain the favoured format. What do you think is the future of
1141 writing and publishing? I FIND THIS HARD TO PREDICT. WHATEVER
1142 THE ULTIMATE FORM, THE TASK OF WRITING REMAINS, AND IT IS
1143 COMPLEX ENOUGH.
- 1144 14. Do you consider online writers as published writers?
- 1145 15. Would you support an exclusive award for online writing? I THINK THAT
1146 WOULD BE FINE, AS LONG AS IT DOES NOT DISPLACE OTHER
1147 AWARDS. THE CRITERIA AND JUDGING PROCEDURE WILL
1148 DETERMINE THE WAY THE AWARD IS SEEN.
- 1149 16. How would you rate online writing? To what extent do you think online writing
1150 differs from print? I READ MANY NEWSPAPERS ONLINE. I JUDGE
1151 WRITING BY THE SAME CRITERIA WHETHER IN PRINT OR ONLINE. I

1152 TEND NOT TO READ POETRY ONLINE VERY OFTEN BUT I DO READ
 1153 ESSAYS AND FICTION ON THE INTERNET.
 1154 17. Do you think that the internet or social media has made it easier for you to gain
 1155 access to other writers and/or publishers and/or readers? I THINK THE
 1156 INTERNET HAS MADE IT EASIER FOR READERS AND PERHAPS
 1157 WRITERS TO FIND MY WORK. I DON'T BELIEVE IT HAS HAD AN
 1158 IMPACT ON MY RELATIONS WITH PUBLISHERS.

1159

1160 **Respondent 19**

1161 **Emerging African Writers and the Internet Research**

1162 Questions

- 1163 1. How often do you use the internet? (a) daily (b) weekly (c) monthly
- 1164 2. Where do you access the internet?(a) home (b) work (c) friend's/relative's (d)
- 1165 public
- 1166 3. What do you use to access the internet? (a)laptop (b)desktop (c) mobile phone
- 1167 4. Which of the following social media do you use? (a) MySpace (b) twitter (c)
- 1168 facebook (d) flickr (e) messenger (f) other
- 1169 5. To what extent do you think the social media influence creative writing? Social
- 1170 media influences creative writing to a large extent. This because it is currently
- 1171 being as a medium for advertising writing opportunities, fellowships etc. it also
- 1172 keeps writers in touch in touch with their fans and readers with their authors, a
- 1173 process that makes the communication process fruitful.
- 1174 6. How good are your IT skills? Do you feel confident updating/posting/ editing
- 1175 online content? Yes.
- 1176 7. Do you have a blog? No.
- 1177 8. Do you think that the internet is changing the way that African writing is being
- 1178 appreciated? The internet is a very resourceful tool in this age of information.
- 1179 Yes it is changing the appreciation of African writing. A number of the new
- 1180 breed of published African writers now maintain blogs or websites, there are a
- 1181 number of sites dedicated to African writing and also the internet offers an
- 1182 opportunity for online publishing and offers an opportunity to many African
- 1183 writers who would otherwise have no access to the resources and readership the
- 1184 internet offers.
- 1185 9. Do you write differently for the internet? No I do not writer differently for the
- 1186 internet. My fiction work is the same and the internet is just another medium
- 1187 through which I can reach out to my readers.
- 1188 10. Could you outline how the internet has influenced your career? The internet has
- 1189 played a significant role in my writing career. Starting from my first online
- 1190 published story, Radio Africa, in 2001 to date, I have relied heavily on it. For

1191 publishing resources, a way to network with other writers. In the early 2000s I
 1192 was part of a virtual African writers group that met each week to critic each
 1193 other's work. Members included Helon Habila, Chika Unigwe, Chimamanda
 1194 Ngozi Adichie, all of whom have later on gone to publish books. We
 1195 communicated through email. To date, a number of writing gigs and resources
 1196 have been possible through the availability of the internet. I guess the internet
 1197 has given me that edge in writing as I am able to access many resources and
 1198 follow up on the news events in the literary world.

1199 11. How do you think African readers have benefited from the internet? How do you
 1200 use the internet to interact with other writers and readers? (A lot of this as been
 1201 answered in the above question.)

1202 12. Do you consider online writing to be literature? Yes it is. It is only the medium.
 1203 As the world evolves we keep in touch with the times. The world has moved on
 1204 from only print media to electronic and online media. The quality of work is the
 1205 same; it is only the medium that is changing.

1206 13. The rise of the so-called "ebook" has divided the publishing world, with some
 1207 predicting "the death of the book" and others arguing that the traditional printed
 1208 version will remain the favoured format. What do you think is the future of
 1209 writing and publishing? I recently read a quotation from a book that went, "there
 1210 are only three guarantees in life: death, taxes and change." So I guess this
 1211 applies to the writing world too.

1212 14. Do you consider online writers as published writers? Yes I do. Take for instance,
 1213 all the established writers have also been published online at one point either a
 1214 work of fiction, an essay etc.

1215 15. Would you support an exclusive award for online writing? Yes I would.

1216 16. How would you rate online writing? To what extent do you think online writing
 1217 differs from print? The difference would be that most online publishers are yet
 1218 to hit the jackpot and credibility like the print publishers have done. But again,
 1219 the print industry took years to get to where it is. So this has influence on the
 1220 kind of writing published online.

1221 17. Do you think that the internet or social media has made it easier for you to gain
 1222 access to other writers and/or publishers and/or readers? Yes. Like I answered
 1223 already, the internet is an immense tool to keep in touch with the writing world
 1224 no matter where one is. For instance once can catch their favourite authors
 1225 reading on You Tube, or read samples of their works online or even extracts of
 1226 their most recent works. Furthermore, it is imperative for each writer to have
 1227 their own website, it is the best marketing tool can get (I guess I need to follow
 1228 my advise and work on a website of my own too.)

1229

1230

1231 **Respondent 20**

1232 **Emerging African Writers and the Internet Research**

1233 Questions

- 1234 1. How often do you use the internet? (a) daily
1235 2. Where do you access the internet? (a) home (b) work
1236 3. What do you use to access the internet? (a) laptop (c) mobile phone
1237 4. Which of the following social media do you use? (b) twitter (c) facebook (e)
1238 messenger (f) Gmail above all... its BRILLIANT and needs its own category
1239 5. To what extent do you think the social media influence creative writing? totally
1240 6. How good are your IT skills? Do you feel confident updating/posting/ editing
1241 online content? Yes
1242 7. Do you have a blog? No :-(but understand importance of and soon will
1243 8. Do you think that the internet is changing the way that African writing is being
1244 appreciated? Yes
1245 9. Do you write differently for the internet? Depends. Pieces posted can transfer
1246 across diff media, but ofcourse with socuial updates , briefer
1247 10. Could you outline how the internet has influenced your career? People know
1248 more about me and my work. They contact me more easily... but I haven't even
1249 begun to exploit it.
1250 11. How do you think African readers have benefited from the internet? How do you
1251 use the internet to interact with other writers and readers? Through publishers
1252 who choose the net – Kwani in Kenya, African Colours, etc. Bt so far, its been
1253 them reaching out to me and I realise I need to take control of it.
1254 12. Do you consider online writing to be literature? Yes
1255 13. The rise of the so-called "ebook" has divided the publishing world, with some
1256 predicting "the death of the book" and others arguing that the traditional printed
1257 version will remain the favoured format. What do you think is the future of
1258 writing and publishing? Its dying. Im doing a documentary for a big media
1259 group and have noticed how stagnant their circulations become. I read more
1260 online stuff in past 3 years than I go to bookshops.
1261 14. Do you consider online writers as published writers? Hmm that's hard. Yes and
1262 no. Actually, no more than yes.
1263 15. Would you support an exclusive award for online writing? Absolutely. In fact
1264 Binyavanga forst Caine Prize (which ended up kicking off Kenyan writing) had
1265 only been published online when awarded if I have history right
1266 16. How would you rate online writing? To what extent do you think online writing
1267 differs from print? It makes your spelling terrible... but its more accsible
1268 17. Do you think that the internet or social media has made it easier for you to gain
1269 access to other writers and/or publishers and/or readers? Only a certain kind of
1270 writer. But I must say in last year I have downloaded a lot of free online books

1271 but seem to value them less and read them half-heartedly... free things are
1272 difficult, you always want more and treasure less. Also, you cant hold an online
1273 book, you cant smell it.

1274

1275 **Respondent 21**

1276 **Emerging African Writers and the Internet Research**

1277 Questions

- 1278 1. How often do you use the internet? (a) daily (b) weekly (c) monthly—Daily
1279 2. Where do you access the internet? (a) home (b) work (c) friend's/relative's (d)
1280 public—Home and Work
1281 3. What do you use to access the internet? (a) laptop (b) desktop (c) mobile
1282 Phone— Laptop
1283 4. Which of the following social media do you use? (a) MySpace (b) twitter (c)
1284 facebook (d) flickr (e) messenger (f) other—news groups/listservs
1285 5. To what extent do you think the social media influence creative writing? Social
1286 media has enabled new genre forms to emerge—one issue of the Kenyan journal
1287 *Kwani?*, for instance, transcribes online conversations and presents it as a piece
1288 of creative writing. Additionally, social media has presented emerging writers
1289 with new forms of supportive communities of readers, fellow writers, editors,
1290 and audiences. It is also clear that some forms of social media (abbreviated
1291 modes of writing, for example) are now shaping syntax and semantics.
1292 However, it's too early to say that this influence is significant.
1293 6. How good are your IT skills? Do you feel confident updating/posting/ editing
1294 online content? I'm a fairly average computer user, fairly comfortable with
1295 online content, though by no means an expert.
1296 7. Do you have a blog? Yes.
1297 8. Do you think that the internet is changing the way that African writing is being
1298 appreciated? The internet is providing new outlets for African writers, some of
1299 whom are now reaching new readers without relying on published books. To
1300 some extent, however, it's difficult to measure whether "African literature" is
1301 being appreciated differently. I would suggest there are two reasons for this.
1302 First, a huge number of those writing "literary" works live abroad and have
1303 often been educated abroad. As such the "African"-ness of their work is
1304 mediated by the immigration status (whether temporary or permanent). In fact, it
1305 might be more appropriate to write of African immigrant literature rather than
1306 simply African literature. Second, tropes of "authenticity" and patterns of
1307 exoticism continue to mark the reception of African writers. They are praised for
1308 sounding "authentic" and "telling it like it is." The ideological rationales behind
1309 such appraisals suggest that the medium of expression, the internet, might not be

1310 significant enough to affect their reception, especially by non-African readers.
 1311 Now, as to whether Africans themselves are appreciating African writers
 1312 differently, this would rely on data that I do not have: to what extent have
 1313 Africans “traditionally” received other African writers? (My sense is not very
 1314 much.) To what extent does internet penetration affect Africa? What do
 1315 continental Africans “do” online? And so on.

1316 9. Do you write differently for the internet? Yes. I am less academic when writing
 1317 online.

1318 10. Could you outline how the internet has influenced your career? Not really. I am
 1319 an academic, and we are judged by different standards.

1320 11. How do you think African readers have benefited from the internet? How do you
 1321 use the internet to interact with other writers and readers? At this point, I suspect
 1322 the internet has a higher impact on non-continental Africans, and this might have
 1323 something to do with internet penetration on the continent, the cost of computers
 1324 and internet connectivity. I suspect that African readers continue to read news
 1325 sources over creative writing, or confessional writing in the form of blogs, but
 1326 these are speculations. I belong to a few newsgroups and occasionally participate
 1327 in online writing. I have also edited work online. I have also followed a few
 1328 exceptional writers online (Teju Cole, most famously).

1329 12. Do you consider online writing to be literature? Some online writing is
 1330 imaginative and creative, and this would qualify it as literature.

1331 13. The rise of the so-called "ebook" has divided the publishing world, with some
 1332 predicting "the death of the book" and others arguing that the traditional printed
 1333 version will remain the favoured format. What do you think is the future of
 1334 writing and publishing? Writing will not change. Individuals will still slave over
 1335 work—the change to ebooks will have no effect on the writing process. As for
 1336 publishing, it is changing quite rapidly in the U.S., which is the context with
 1337 which I am most familiar. I remain unsure whether the rapid changes in the U.S.
 1338 will translate to Africa, where the publishing structures are quite different, and
 1339 the markets are also quite different (textbooks predominate over leisure reading,
 1340 for instance). New delivery systems (online content via e-readers) could help
 1341 some African publishers push their material abroad (I know a few considering
 1342 such options).

1343 14. Do you consider online writers as published writers? They are published writers
 1344 if they have contracts and can get institutional recognition (royalties, speaking
 1345 engagements, paid gigs). Without such institutional recognition, they remain
 1346 unpublished writers.

1347 15. Would you support an exclusive award for online writing? It would be an
 1348 important way to provide institutional recognition to online writers. Though, it
 1349 must be noted, few authors work in either/or mediums, and many work online
 1350 and offline.

- 1351 16. How would you rate online writing? To what extent do you think online writing
1352 differs from print? I honestly don't understand the first question. As for the
1353 second, print writing is much the same as online writing, and the major
1354 difference comes in publishing opportunities. Having said that, of course, online
1355 writing offers new experiments in hypertext and so on, and can be a multimedia
1356 experience in ways that print texts cannot. But at some point, comparison
1357 becomes impossible.
- 1358 17. Do you think that the internet or social media has made it easier for you to gain
1359 access to other writers and/or publishers and/or readers? Information about some
1360 smaller African publishers is now available, though not consistently. And it's
1361 more possible to research writers. It's more difficult to answer about readers as I
1362 am not predominantly a creative writer.

1363

1364 **Respondent 22**

1365 **Emerging African Writers and the Internet Research**

1366 **Questions**

- 1367 1. How often do you use the internet? (a) daily
1368 2. Where do you access the internet? (a) home (d) public; Most times at home, but
1369 sometimes publicly
1370 3. What do you use to access the internet? (b) desktop
1371 4. Which of the following social media do you use? (c) facebook
1372 5. To what extent do you think the social media influence creative writing? Social
1373 media make it easier to find a global audience for your work, and also allow for
1374 comments,
1375 6. How good are your IT skills? Do you feel confident updating/posting/ editing
1376 online content? I think i am above average skilled in IT. I can confidently
1377 update, post and edit content on those sites which are not too complicated
1378 7. Do you have a blog? i do, but rarely update it. I prefer blogging on common
1379 blogs as these are more linked to other sites.
1380 8. Do you think that the internet is changing the way that African writing is being
1381 appreciated? As people around the world get to see more African works, they are
1382 beginning to appreciate that there are more writers in Africa than the few old
1383 faces they used to know, and they also get to see the diversity new authors are
1384 bringing making their appreciation of African literature somehow different.
1385 9. Do you write differently for the internet? I mostly write only poetry for the
1386 internet and reserve short stories for paper publishing. Am however working on
1387 new stories for the internet, and i believe they have to be shorter because most
1388 people dont want to take too long reading one article on the internet or
1389 computer.

- 1390 10. Could you outline how the internet has influenced your career? As of now most
1391 of the success has not really been linked to the internet, though i am hoping to be
1392 fully utilising it in marketing my work. I think it presents great opportunities for
1393 marketing one's work, and i will not be stupid enough not to utilise it.
- 1394 11. How do you think African readers have benefited from the internet? How do you
1395 use the internet to interact with other writers and readers? I can give the example
1396 of zimbabwean writers who have really become one close-knit family regardless
1397 of location. As you might be aware, previous challenges in Zimbabwe resulted
1398 in many of its people emigrating all over the world, but the increasing use of
1399 the internet has brought those people closer together. Thus Zimbabwean authors
1400 have been linking each other up on personal blogs, informing each other of
1401 publishing opportunities and reading each other's works. Everyone is getting an
1402 opportunity through others. I however feel that in Zimbabwe readers have not
1403 really embraced the internet as a place where they can read fiction literature
1404 mostly because it is very expensive to access the internet and most people are on
1405 the internet, let's say on average 2 hours per week, and they have more pressing
1406 issues than read fiction. N.B an hour of internet usage in most public cafes costs
1407 two United States dollars, and that is not cheap at all.
- 1408 12. Do you consider online writing to be literature? I do believe online writing still
1409 is literature. It's like music, does it stop being music because it is now in digital
1410 form on your iPod and not on cassette or Vinyl disc or CD. I think what
1411 constitutes anything is the content and not the medium on which it comes to the
1412 market.
- 1413 13. The rise of the so-called "ebook" has divided the publishing world, with some
1414 predicting "the death of the book" and others arguing that the traditional printed
1415 version will remain the favoured format. What do you think is the future of
1416 writing and publishing? I believe the death of the book is still some time away in
1417 most African countries because of the lag in adopting new technologies. But i
1418 see nothing wrong with the ebook taking over from the book. If it's going to
1419 make more people get the literature, if it's going to result in less environmental
1420 destruction, then what more can one want. I think it's also getting more easier to
1421 fight piracy with improving technologies. Imagine, how many copies can you
1422 photocopy from one book? Countless. But some songs when you download
1423 them once, you cannot transfer them to another phone or gadget. The same can
1424 be done to ebooks and in the end, artists would benefit from their works.
- 1425 14. Do you consider online writers as published writers? yes
- 1426 15. Would you support an exclusive award for online writing? Definitely.
- 1427 16. How would you rate online writing? To what extent do you think online writing
1428 differs from print? I am beginning to rate it highly, i mean starting recently. The
1429 only difference is that one author can tell people to search for his work on the
1430 web globally, whereas the other can move with suitcases of his work sometimes
1431 confined only to his locality. Otherwise, writing is writing.

1432 17. Do you think that the internet or social media has made it easier for you to gain
1433 access to other writers and/or publishers and/or readers? The internet has opened
1434 a whole lot of possibilities for getting my work known to my contemporaries,
1435 readers and other publishers. I mean, within a week of my first solo book being
1436 published, i had managed to use Facebook to let all people who know me know
1437 about the book, and they in turn let people who know them know about it, and
1438 now, my inbox is getting overwhelmed.

1439

1440 **Respondent 23**

1441 **Emerging African Writers and the Internet Research**

1442 Questions

- 1443 1. How often do you use the internet? (a) daily (b) weekly (c) monthly
1444 2. Where do you access the internet? (a) home (b) work (c) friend's/relative's (d)
1445 public
1446 3. What do you use to access the internet? (a) laptop (b) desktop (c) mobile phone
1447 4. Which of the following social media do you use? (a) MySpace (b) twitter (c)
1448 facebook (d) flickr (e) messenger (f) other
1449 5. To what extent do you think the social media influence creative writing? It has
1450 made the distribution of creative writing easier and made communication much
1451 much easier- it's a revolutionary step re writing media and the scope of its reach.
1452 Many partnerships, friendships and opportunities are born and found via this
1453 medium. In this age of information, it makes distribution faster and more
1454 efficient- for a writer in Africa, such as myself, New York has become just one
1455 click away.
1456 6. How good are your IT skills? Do you feel confident updating/posting/ editing
1457 online content? yes
1458 7. Do you have a blog? Yes- www.novuyorosa.blogspot.com
1459 8. Do you think that the internet is changing the way that African writing is being
1460 appreciated? Oh definitely, when you consider that now African writers are able
1461 to interact with writers from other places on a larger scale. There is more info
1462 out there and hence perceptions can be better influenced.
1463 9. Do you write differently for the internet? Not at all- I write as I would a piece of
1464 work that would be published in a physical book
1465 10. Could you outline how the internet has influenced your career? Well, my career
1466 is still at its 'birth' stages. But. It has progressed and is progressing the way it is
1467 largely thanks to the internet. For example, you get a piece of your work
1468 published online, and next you may receive an email from someone who is
1469 interested in your work. That is opportunity. Via blogging, you get to meet and
1470 interact with writers from all over and you find that friendships are born in the

1471 process. There is easier access to others' work and hence you grow as a writer.
 1472 You discover new writers and learn about books you wouldn't otherwise have
 1473 learned about, you buy great books online. It most definitely is a vital, if not the
 1474 vital, tool for advancing one's career- social sites allow you to let others know
 1475 what you're doing, link them to your work.

1476 11. How do you think African readers have benefited from the internet? How do you
 1477 use the internet to interact with other writers and readers? Those who have
 1478 benefitted are largely those in the Diaspora, who have easier access to the
 1479 internet and are aware of its multiple benefits. In Africa, much is still yet to be
 1480 done in this respect re writing. In order for readers to be able to appreciate online
 1481 work, internet must be easily accessible, efficient and cheap. Reading is largely
 1482 a solitary thing done when one is relaxing at home, rarely will you find someone
 1483 pouring over a piece of work in a public internet café. Hence, internet at home
 1484 plays a vital part to the reading of online works. Blogging has been one of the
 1485 best forms of interacting- maintaining a blog as well as interacting with others
 1486 on their blogs. And sites like facebook help to link readers to one's work.

1487 12. Do you consider online writing to be literature? Of course. Literature projected
 1488 via a different medium.

1489 13. The rise of the so-called "ebook" has divided the publishing world, with some
 1490 predicting "the death of the book" and others arguing that the traditional printed
 1491 version will remain the favoured format. What do you think is the future of
 1492 writing and publishing? Well, it is vital for writing, like any other medium, to
 1493 take advantage of technology and its benefits. At the end of the day I believe it
 1494 becomes a matter of viability- ebook publishing is still at its young stages, but as
 1495 it is being refined, with time its viability will become apparent- cheaper method
 1496 of production, mass production, wider reach, easier access to the readers (mostly
 1497 in the developed world), cheaper for the consumer, use of audio and visual
 1498 media along with the written word, less cutting down of trees. I believe with
 1499 time its practicality and its advantages will surpass those of the traditional
 1500 version, although I do not believe the traditional version will suffer an instant
 1501 death. There are still a lot of people who prefer the traditional format and feel
 1502 without it a book will not be a 'real' book. Ultimately, it is the consumers who
 1503 will decide- supply will meet what they demand.

1504 14. Do you consider online writers as published writers? Of course. Again, it is
 1505 simply a different medium.

1506 15. Would you support an exclusive award for online writing? Well, that depends.
 1507 Does online writing deserve an exclusive forum of its own, and why? The idea
 1508 for an 'exclusive award' gives me the impression that online writing may feel in
 1509 some way marginalised. Is that the case? Because it has quite a bit going for it
 1510 presently, easier access to readers and other writers, and discussion forums
 1511 which of course would not be possible via the printed format. Simply, online
 1512 writing should be treated like published writing and be eligible for those awards

- 1513 that printed writing is eligible for. An ‘exclusive award for online writing’
 1514 would take away focus from the writing itself and channel it to the online
 1515 medium. Does it matter whether writing is ‘online’ or printed on paper? Should
 1516 it matter? I don’t think so. It’s the work that should matter, that should be the
 1517 focus of our attention.
- 1518 16. How would you rate online writing? To what extent do you think online writing
 1519 differs from print? Well, I would rate it relatively ok, it does have its pros and
 1520 cons. Online literary magazines play the role of publishers- to sieve through
 1521 work and exclusively put together what they believe is ‘quality’- so this helps to
 1522 maintain some form of control. Also, online writing has compressed the world
 1523 of writing, and there is access to so much work out there, and so many minds out
 1524 there. You can read the work and also access the writer, bringing a more
 1525 intimate dimension to the writer-reader relationship. The downside of online
 1526 writing is that in most instances it’s not as viable as print. If you intend to make
 1527 a living from writing, you certainly cannot do it via online writing. So here
 1528 online writing marries print, in that you can use the online medium to promote
 1529 your printed work. Another downside is that online writing works really well
 1530 only with short stories and poetry- reading a whole three hundred pages of a
 1531 novel or a compilation online...nah. It is more pleasurable to run one’s hands
 1532 over the cover and smell those crisp, fresh pages brimming with great story
 1533 telling. Now that is the atmosphere that online writing has not yet managed to
 1534 replicate, and a vital aspect for any good, long read.
- 1535 17. Do you think that the internet or social media has made it easier for you to gain
 1536 access to other writers and/or publishers and/or readers? That is an undisputable
 1537 yes. You want to know what’s happening in the writing industry? Google it.
 1538 Want to know more about a writer and their work? Google them. Want to know
 1539 about writing competitions? Google them. Google google google.

1540

1541 **Respondent 24**

1542 **Emerging African Writers and the Internet Research**

1543 Questions

- 1544 1. How often do you use the internet? (a) daily (b) weekly (c) monthly
 1545 2. Where do you access the internet? (a) home (b) work (c) friend’s/relative’s (d)
 1546 public
 1547 3. What do you use to access the internet? (a) laptop (b) desktop (c) mobile phone
 1548 4. Which of the following social media do you use? (a) MySpace (b) twitter (c)
 1549 facebook (d) flickr (e) messenger (f) other

- 1550 5. To what extent do you think the social media influence creative writing? It gives
1551 me greater audience – an audience that is more intimate. It also brings about
1552 instant response.
- 1553 6. How good are your IT skills? Do you feel confident updating/posting/ editing
1554 online content? Yes.
- 1555 7. Do you have a blog? Yes.
- 1556 8. Do you think that the internet is changing the way that African writing is being
1557 appreciated? Not really. I do not see any evidence that it has increased the
1558 appreciation of African writing. The same people who would have been reading
1559 are still reading. They are not paying for what they read and as such are not
1560 advancing the cause of African writing.
- 1561 9. Do you write differently for the internet? Yes. I make it simple and short. It is
1562 harder to read long prose on the computer screen than reading hard copy.
- 1563 10. Could you outline how the internet has influenced your career? My writings
1564 reach wider audience in many remote parts of Africa. But they have not figured
1565 out how to pay for it. And until then...
- 1566 11. How do you think African readers have benefited from the internet? How do you
1567 use the internet to interact with other writers and readers? The internet has
1568 hastened the connection of African writers to one another. But it hasn't done
1569 much more.
- 1570 12. Do you consider online writing to be literature? It could be if it is done well.
1571 Many are not done well, though.
- 1572 13. The rise of the so-called "ebook" has divided the publishing world, with some
1573 predicting "the death of the book" and others arguing that the traditional printed
1574 version will remain the favoured format. What do you think is the future of
1575 writing and publishing? Everything will still be there in different fashion. The
1576 book will survive. The real question is whether someone will pay for such
1577 material in whatever form they come out. It hasn't happened for the African
1578 writer, yet.
- 1579 14. Do you consider online writers as published writers? It depends on the publisher
1580 and the online site. If you post your story on blogspot.com that is not publishing.
- 1581 15. Would you support an exclusive award for online writing? No. If it is equivalent
1582 to traditional publishing it should be competing at the same level.
- 1583 16. How would you rate online writing? To what extent do you think online writing
1584 differs from print? Online writing is still growing. It hasn't reach its peak and
1585 many writers have not bought into it. Some sites do publish good writing. But
1586 again, they do not get the support they need. It is just accessible. And for free.
- 1587 17. Do you think that the internet or social media has made it easier for you to gain
1588 access to other writers and/or publishers and/or readers? Yes. But for what
1589 purpose? It has not made it possible for more writers to make a living from
1590 writing. That is the bottom line. That is what will save African writing.

1591 **Respondent 25**

1592 **Emerging African Writers and the Internet Research**

1593 Questions

- 1594 1. How often do you use the internet? (a) daily (b) weekly (c) monthly
1595 2. Where do you access the internet? (a) home (b) work (c) friend's/relative's (d)
1596 public
1597 3. What do you use to access the internet? (a) laptop (b) desktop (c) mobile phone
1598 All of the above depending on what I am doing, where I am, whether I am
1599 travelling or not.
1600 4. Which of the following social media do you use? (a) MySpace (b) twitter (c)
1601 facebook (d) flickr (e) messenger (f) other
1602 5. To what extent do you think the social media influence creative writing? The
1603 social media has helped my writing in other means than the actual process of
1604 writing itself. It has exposed me to a wider readership, introduced me to various
1605 publishing opportunities in literary magazines in various parts of the world,
1606 enabled me to discuss and debate with other young African writers on the craft,
1607 limitations and opportunities available to us, as well as being invited to literary
1608 festivals.
1609 6. How good are your IT skills? Do you feel confident updating/posting/ editing
1610 online content? I am very competent with computers – I type and edit my own
1611 writings, post and update my website but I should hasten to add that these were
1612 skills acquired out of curiosity rather from learning from school. I had no
1613 computer training in primary and secondary school because I attended
1614 government run schools that were too poor to afford computers. There was no
1615 computer at home. The first time, I was exposed to a computer was when I was
1616 20 and joined Weaver Press (a small but vibrant Harare based publisher) as an
1617 intern for a year.
1618 7. Do you have a blog? I still resist the urge to run a blog because I find the
1619 medium too self indulgent and confessional at times. Besides, I already share my
1620 thoughts and feelings in my writings for newspapers and arts websites and for
1621 the meantime that is enough.
1622 8. Do you think that the internet is changing the way that African writing is being
1623 appreciated? Internet has made a significant revolution in the way African
1624 writing can be read and appreciated. 2002 Caine Prize for Writing in Africa,
1625 Binyavanga Wainaina's winning entry was originally published on an online
1626 journal in America. I was also one of the young writers from Africa to
1627 participate in the Crossing Borders Creative Writing Project, an interactive
1628 initiative that linked young writers from Africa with experienced and published
1629 writers in Britain over a period of nine months to encourage the cross-
1630 pollination of ideas and broaden our mindsets. And where most African

- 1631 publishers are reluctant to take risks with young and unknown writers, they have
1632 found opportunities on the internet, ‘crossing borders’ and becoming easily
1633 accessible to wider and diverse audiences.
- 1634 9. Do you write differently for the internet? I have a deep mistrust for the internet.
1635 There’s so much bad writing on the internet because it lacks the quality control
1636 that traditional publishing offers. Anyone can just wake up and post a novel or
1637 short stories or poems that are badly edited or not at all and claim to be a writer.
1638 The internet deludes many people that they are writers when all they are doing is
1639 ‘vanity’ publishing. I still favour traditional publishing because some people
1640 somewhere take time to read and vet my writing before public consumption. The
1641 only writings I do for the internet are mainly journalistic in nature because they
1642 are audience specific and have specific word limits and structure.
- 1643 10. Could you outline how the internet has influenced your career? The invaluable
1644 contribution the internet has made in my life is to allow me contact with writers
1645 from all over the world – social networking is the manure of any individual’s
1646 growth. As a result of this organic family, I have been invited to participate at
1647 festivals, commissioned to write pieces for magazines as well as get publishing
1648 opportunities. In that respect, the internet has made the writer in me visible to
1649 the world. But, I must also add that the internet opened my eyes too. In 2004, i
1650 posted a poem on an American based poetry website and within days they sent
1651 me an email saying I had been chosen as ‘Poet of the World’ and they were
1652 inviting me to the awards ceremony *but* had to my way there. I forwarded the
1653 good news to a few writer friends and one of them, an award winning youth
1654 author from Uganda, warned me to ignore the message as it was a ‘scam.’ And
1655 that put me off carelessly publishing my work anywhere. There is no shortcut to
1656 becoming a writer. We can only grow by receiving true and sincere criticism of
1657 our work and hence I am still sceptical of the internet.
- 1658 11. How do you think African readers have benefited from the internet? How do you
1659 use the internet to interact with other writers and readers? Unfortunately, internet
1660 in Zimbabwe where I come from is a ‘luxury.’ Most times, people go to public
1661 internet cafes to check emails and never to read as it is almost always for very
1662 limited times. Every second is a penny dropping into the cash till. The internet is
1663 certainly an information highway that Africa needs to replace the dusty roads of
1664 ignorance. With internet access, Africa has the opportunity to be anywhere in the
1665 world through the click of a button. Most of my writer friends are on Facebook,
1666 have got email accounts and that is essentially our mode of communication and
1667 is more effective than making telephone calls.
- 1668 12. Do you consider online writing to be literature? There is good writing, and lots
1669 of bad writing on the internet. Because of blogs and other self publishing
1670 software, there is lack of quality control and peer reviewing of each other’s work
1671 that is necessary. Wikipedia, despite its popularity, is not a very reliable source
1672 because it lacks quality control. Facts are not checked. Anyone can write

1673 whatever they want. Good literature is good because like grains it has been
 1674 sifted through and the bad seeds chaffed away.

1675 13. The rise of the so-called "ebook" has divided the publishing world, with some
 1676 predicting "the death of the book" and others arguing that the traditional printed
 1677 version will remain the favoured format. What do you think is the future of
 1678 writing and publishing? It will be a shame to loose the book. I love the smell of
 1679 new books. CD's do not smell at all. I still love to walk into the Oxfam
 1680 Bookshop in our High Street because I find the sight and smell of books
 1681 alluring. I still want to tuck in bed and read a book to sleep. Reading on the
 1682 computer does not give the same experience. Books are the best companions.

1683 14. Do you consider online writers as published writers? Anyone who writes for a
 1684 public other than himself is a published writer. The quality of one's writing, the
 1685 subject he deals with, the language, the marketing of the work determines ones
 1686 reputation.

1687 15. Would you support an exclusive award for online writing? Good writing
 1688 deserves to be recognised whether in print or online. Awards are a way of
 1689 quality control, vetting the real talent from the 'wannabes.' That could be a way
 1690 of screening the bad writing from the good.

1691 16. How would you rate online writing? To what extent do you think online writing
 1692 differs from print? In some instances there is no difference – the same material
 1693 that appears in the tabloids is also published online. Printing is by its very nature
 1694 expensive, has limited space and therefore generally competitive and very often
 1695 goes through quality checking – editing, proofreading, copyediting, etc whereas
 1696 anyone can publish online at any given time.

1697 17. Do you think that the internet or social media has made it easier for you to gain
 1698 access to other writers and/or publishers and/or readers? In 2005, I was sitting in
 1699 our University library when I started chatting to a Welsh poet whom I had met
 1700 during a British Council writing workshop in Harare. I told her of my childhood
 1701 desire to study overseas, of getting access to more books, of studying creative
 1702 writing (as no institution in Zimbabwe teaches the subject). She encouraged me
 1703 to apply at a Welsh university and two years later I was to graduate with an MA
 1704 in Creative Writing and became the first African at Trinity University College to
 1705 receive the degree. Thanks to the internet. I also love the interaction with readers
 1706 and other writers, the exchanges almost always results in reading suggestions,
 1707 publishing opportunities. Every day you learn new things.

1708

1709

1710

1711

1712 Respondent 26

1713 Emerging African Writers and the Internet Research

1714 Questions

- 1715 1. How often do you use the internet? (a) daily (b) weekly (c) monthly
- 1716 2. Where do you access the internet? (a) home (b) work (c) friend's/relative's (d)
- 1717 public
- 1718 3. What do you use to access the internet? (a) laptop (b) desktop (c) mobile phone
- 1719 4. Which of the following social media do you use? (a) MySpace (b) twitter (c)
- 1720 facebook (d) flickr (e) messenger (f) other
- 1721 5. To what extent do you think the social media influence creative writing? BY
- 1722 MAKING IT EASIER TO DISSEMINATE WRITING, IT HAS
- 1723 SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASED THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO ARE
- 1724 WRITING FOR THE PUBLIC. ALSO, SOCIAL MEDIA OFTEN
- 1725 GUARANTEE INSTANT FEEDBACK FOR WRITERS
- 1726 6. How good are your IT skills? Do you feel confident updating/posting/editing
- 1727 online content? YES
- 1728 7. Do you have a blog? YES
- 1729 8. Do you think that the internet is changing the way that African writing is being
- 1730 appreciated? YES. IT HAS VASTLY EXPANDED OUR AUDIENCE
- 1731 9. Do you write differently for the internet? NO.
- 1732 10. Could you outline how the internet has influenced your career? IT HAS
- 1733 PROVIDED THE FOLLOWING:
- 1734 PUBLICATION OPPORTUNITIES (CALLS FOR SUBMISSIONS,
- 1735 CONTEST INFO)
- 1736 THE CHANCE TO SUBMIT MY WORK BY EMAIL AS OPPOSED TO
- 1737 SENDING OUT SNAIL MAIL
- 1738 SUBMISSIONS NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES: WRITING FORUMS,
- 1739 WRITERS' GROUPS, SOCIAL NETWORKING
- 1740 PUBLICITY OPPORTUNITIES: ONLINE LINKS ON TWITTER,
- 1741 FACEBOOK, GOOGLE, ETC
- 1742 RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES (GOOGLE ETC)
- 1743 11. How do you think African readers have benefited from the internet? How do you
- 1744 use the internet to interact with other writers and readers? AFRICAN
- 1745 READERS CAN ACCESS MAGAZINES AND JOURNALS FROM ALL
- 1746 OVER THE WORLD. FOR EXAMPLE I READ THE NEW YORKER, NEW
- 1747 YORK TIMES AND UK GUARDIAN ONLINE, FROM NIGERIA. THERE IS
- 1748 A WEALTH OF DOWNLOADABLE MATERIAL AVAILABLE ALSO ON
- 1749 THE INTERNET – WRITING RESOURCES, CLASSIC LITERATURE.
- 1750 12. Do you consider online writing to be literature? YES, IT COULD BE, IF IT IS
- 1751 WRITTEN TO THE SAME STANDARDS AS PRINT. OFTEN ONLINE

- 1752 MATERIAL IS OF BETTER QUALITY THAN A LOT OF WHAT IS
 1753 AVAILABLE IN PRINT.
- 1754 13. The rise of the so-called "ebook" has divided the publishing world, with some
 1755 predicting "the death of the book" and others arguing that the traditional printed
 1756 version will remain the favoured format. What do you think is the future of
 1757 writing and publishing? PRINT WILL CONTINUE, BUT IT WILL
 1758 INCREASINGLY HAVE TO SHARE THE PLATFORM WITH ONLINE
 1759 AND DIGITAL FORMATS. BUT I DOUBT THAT PRINT WILL EVER DIE,
 1760 AS HAS OFTEN BEEN PREDICTED.
- 1761 14. Do you consider online writers as published writers? YES
- 1762 15. Would you support an exclusive award for online writing? YES
- 1763 16. How would you rate online writing? To what extent do you think online writing
 1764 differs from print? IT WOULD DIFFER ONLY IN TERMS OF THE FACT
 1765 THAT ONLINE WRITING CAN BE INTERACTIVE IN A WAY THAT IS
 1766 NOT AVAILABLE TO PRINT – HYPERLINKS, EMBEDDED AUDIO AND
 1767 VIDEO, ONLINE POLLS, ETC
- 1768 17. Do you think that the internet or social media has made it easier for you to gain
 1769 access to other writers and/or publishers and/or readers? YES IT HAS. IT HAS
 1770 ALLOWED MY WORK TO TRAVEL FAR AND REACH AUDIENCES
 1771 THAT WOULD OTHERWISE BE UNREACHABLE. IT HAS ALSO
 1772 ALLOWED ME TO STAY IN TOUCH WITH WRITERS FROM ACROSS
 1773 THE WORLD

1774

1775 **Respondent 27**

1776 **Emerging African Writers and the Internet Research**

1777 **Questions**

- 1778 1. How often do you use the internet? (a) daily (b) weekly (c) monthly
- 1779 2. Where do you access the internet?(a) home (b) work (c) friend's/relative's (d)
 1780 public
- 1781 3. What do you use to access the internet? (a) laptop (b)desktop (c) mobile phone
- 1782 4. Which of the following social media do you use? (a) MySpace (b) twitter (c)
 1783 facebook (d) flickr (e) messenger (f) other
- 1784 5. To what extent do you think the social media influence creative writing? *Offers*
 1785 *room for posting works and critique, Feedback from fellow creative writers.*
- 1786 6. How good are your IT skills? Do you feel confident updating/posting/ editing
 1787 online content? *Very good. Very confident.*
- 1788 7. Do you have a blog? *Have, but dormant.*
- 1789 8. Do you think that the internet is changing the way that African writing is being
 1790 appreciated? *Changing it quite rapidly, significantly and positively; for instance,*

- 1791 *most popular young African writers became published and known via e-zines, e-*
1792 *mag, and other various e-publishing options. I myself might not have gotten this*
1793 *far in creative writng if the Internet has not been accessible to our world.*
- 1794 9. Do you write differently for the internet? *No*
- 1795 10. Could you outline how the internet has influenced your career? *My earliest short*
1796 *stories were first published on the Internet before appearing in book form. The*
1797 *first ever feedback, critique, and edit I got for my writings were also from on-*
1798 *line writing sites such as Author-Me, Edit Red, etc, and all this greatly boosted*
1799 *my confidence and resolve to take creative writing more seriously than I ever*
1800 *would have were there to be no Internet.*
- 1801 11. How do you think African readers have benefited from the internet? How do you
1802 use the internet to interact with other writers and readers? *African readers have*
1803 *benefited as well, because of the ubiquity and accessibility of on-line prose and*
1804 *poetry. Just a click of the mouse and you can readily access writings of classical*
1805 *and modernist eras. I use the Internet through participating in on-line discourse*
1806 *and exchanges in listservs, writers' forum, and so on. The Internet offers a*
1807 *virtual writers' group, a pseudo-creative writing forum.*
- 1808 12. Do you consider online writing to be literature? *Certainly, yes!*
- 1809 13. The rise of the so-called "ebook" has divided the publishing world, with some
1810 predicting "the death of the book" and others arguing that the traditional printed
1811 version will remain the favoured format. What do you think is the future of
1812 writing and publishing? *The more things change the more they remain the same,*
1813 *so goes a saying. The 'death of the book' is a myth; for there's nothing more*
1814 *interactive and intimate than thumbing through a newly-acquired book.*
- 1815 14. Do you consider online writers as published writers? *In a way, I think, as most*
1816 *contemporary African, and probably, world writers were first published online*
1817 *before being discovered by literary agents and publishing houses. But if we are*
1818 *to stick to traditional publishing parlance, you might say one is only published*
1819 *when their book is in paperback or hardcover.*
- 1820 15. Would you support an exclusive award for online writing? *If I am that buoyant,*
1821 *and perhaps disposed to managing it all through.*
- 1822 16. How would you rate online writing? To what extent do you think online writing
1823 differs from print? *That's not easily assessed, because, for instance, different*
1824 *online literay magazines have more first-rate standards than others. Somehow,*
1825 *though, much of the online writing tends to be appeare hurried, as editing is not*
1826 *as painstaking as it is in the print version.*
- 1827 17. Do you think that the internet or social media has made it easier for you to gain
1828 access to other writers and/or publishers and/or readers? *Yes, of course. It is*
1829 *nearly a daily given.*
- 1830
- 1831

1832 **Respondent 28**

1833 **Emerging African Writers and the Internet Research**

1834 **Questions**

- 1835 1. How often do you use the internet? (a) daily (b) weekly (c) monthly
- 1836 2. Where do you access the internet? (a) home (b) work (c) friend's/relative's (d)
- 1837 public
- 1838 3. What do you use to access the internet? (a) laptop (b) desktop (c) mobile phone
- 1839 4. Which of the following social media do you use? (a) MySpace (b) twitter (c)
- 1840 facebook (d) flickr (e) messenger (f) other
- 1841 5. To what extent do you think the social media influence creative writing? A: To a
- 1842 large extent, because writers can now post their writings and receive multiple
- 1843 and instant feedback on their works. Also, having an audience (no matter how
- 1844 small) encourages creative writing, writers who would have been discouraged
- 1845 from writing because they have no platform or the traditional publishers would
- 1846 not publish them in journals or anthologies now have an instant "publishing"
- 1847 opportunity online.
- 1848 6. How good are your IT skills? Do you feel confident updating/posting/ editing
- 1849 online content? A: Very good. I feel confident writing, updating, posting and
- 1850 editing online content.
- 1851 7. Do you have a blog? A: Yes.
- 1852 8. Do you think that the internet is changing the way that African writing is being
- 1853 appreciated? A: I would say so. The Internet helps take African writing to places
- 1854 far and beyond. It has also giving opportunity to more writers from Africa.
- 1855 9. Do you write differently for the internet? A: Not really, if at all I do, not
- 1856 consciously.
- 1857 10. Could you outline how the internet has influenced your career? A: - I have sold
- 1858 some short stories to Online magazine. I have read others work that are helpful
- 1859 to my own writings. I use the Internet to share my new writings with fans,
- 1860 friends and families. I have also use some online writing resources. I have had
- 1861 my works edited by members of listserv I belong to.
- 1862 11. How do you think African readers have benefited from the internet? How do you
- 1863 use the internet to interact with other writers and readers? A: I believe some
- 1864 African writers have benefited tremendously from the use of the Internet. Most
- 1865 of them have won prizes they entered through the Internet. Many have also been
- 1866 "discovered" through their online writing. What became One Day For The Thief
- 1867 a novel by Nigerian writer Teju Cole started as a personal blog – a publisher saw
- 1868 it and decided to publish it as a novel. The most expensive short story I have
- 1869 sold so far was to an online magazine. The internet is becoming my only way of
- 1870 interacting with my fellow writers, in every sense of the word. The traditional

- 1871 letter writing is dead; therefore one has to rely on email, text messages etc. I
 1872 have also sent drafts to fellow writers to help edit before sending to publishers.
 1873 12. Do you consider online writing to be literature? A: Yes, I do. The earlier one
 1874 accepts it the better.
 1875 13. The rise of the so-called "ebook" has divided the publishing world, with some
 1876 predicting "the death of the book" and others arguing that the traditional printed
 1877 version will remain the favoured format. What do you think is the future of
 1878 writing and publishing? A: Both have a place in the publishing word. I think one
 1879 has to look at it demographically. The young reader might want to have his/her
 1880 text delivered as e-book, while the older reader/editor/reviewer would still like to
 1881 hold a hard copy where he can pencil things down. First Editions and Hardbacks
 1882 are still very much cherished by a lot of people. The end of traditional
 1883 publishing as we know it now is not anywhere near yet.
 1884 14. Do you consider online writers as published writers? A: Not quite. You must
 1885 have a few hardcopies.
 1886 15. Would you support an exclusive award for online writing? A: I don't have
 1887 anything against that kind of award, as long as it has integrity and serves
 1888 literature well.
 1889 16. How would you rate online writing? To what extent do you think online writing
 1890 differs from print? A: Online writing lacks the rigorous editing that traditional
 1891 publishing requires. Online writing is the orphan brother of the print. You see
 1892 most traditional publications like AGNI or GRANTA accepting works for
 1893 online, yet they won't publish those same writers in their prints.
 1894 17. Do you think that the internet or social media has made it easier for you to gain
 1895 access to other writers and/or publishers and/or readers? A: Yes, to a very large
 1896 extent. In some places where it is difficult to subscribe to magazines like New
 1897 Yorker, one has to rely on online to read short stories and sort.

1898

1899 **Respondent 29**

1900 **Emerging African Writers and the Internet Research**

1901 **Questions**

- 1902 1. How often do you use the internet? (a) daily (b) weekly (c) monthly **Daily**
 1903 2. Where do you access the internet? (a) home (b) work (c) friend's/relative's (d)
 1904 public **At Home and at Work**
 1905 3. What do you use to access the internet? (a)laptop (b)desktop (c) mobile phone
 1906 **Laptop at home and desk top at work**
 1907 4. Which of the following social media do you use? (a) MySpace (b) twitter (c)
 1908 facebook (d) flickr (e) messenger (f) other **Facebook mainly. I am registered**
 1909 **with My Space/Twitter but hardly use**

- 1910 5. To what extent do you think the social media influence creative writing? *I*
 1911 *publish work on my blog for review. I do research for articles on the web. I*
 1912 *host a web site and have work published on various websites which affords me*
 1913 *the opportunity to reach a wide range of people*
 1914 6. How good are your IT skills? Do you feel confident updating/posting/ editing
 1915 online content? *I am confident about up- dating my blogs and using Facebook*
 1916 *Not confident with maintaining my web site (work is done by web designer)*
 1917 7. Do you have a blog? *Yes. I have 2 blogs. a- General blog. b- one for my stories*
 1918 *on Tropical medicine*
 1919 8. Do you think that the internet is changing the way that African writing is being
 1920 appreciated? *I am not in a position to comment on this, as i do not know what*
 1921 *the traffic is like in sites that publish African writing but i do know that*
 1922 *Africans are not free to put out their work without having to wait for*
 1923 *publishers to decide if their voices should be heard*
 1924 9. Do you write differently for the internet? *No*
 1925 10. Could you outline how the internet has influenced your career? *Some of my*
 1926 *work is experimental, and without the internet i would not have been able to*
 1927 *have published my work e.g the Nigerian Pidgin English Dictionary*
 1928 11. How do you think African readers have benefited from the internet? How do you
 1929 use the internet to interact with other writers and readers? *It is free to read, so*
 1930 *the prohibitive cost of books is not a hindrance. I use Facebook to interact*
 1931 *with other writers and can keep abreast of the latest books or literary events*
 1932 12. Do you consider online writing to be literature? *Yes*
 1933 13. The rise of the so-called "ebook" has divided the publishing world, with some
 1934 predicting "the death of the book" and others arguing that the traditional printed
 1935 version will remain the favoured format. What do you think is the future of
 1936 writing and publishing? *The Traditional book will always be there but with*
 1937 *time more people will be reading books off their mobile phones*
 1938 14. Do you consider online writers as published writers? *Yes*
 1939 15. Would you support an exclusive award for online writing? *No*
 1940 16. How would you rate online writing? To what extent do you think online writing
 1941 differs from print? *The quality of on line writing varies. There is the good and*
 1942 *the bad*
 1943 17. Do you think that the internet or social media has made it easier for you to gain
 1944 access to other writers and/or publishers and/or readers? *Yes*

1945

1946

1947

1948

1949 **Respondent 30**

1950 **Emerging African Writers and the Internet Research**

1951 Questions

- 1952 1. How often do you use the internet? (a) daily
- 1953 2. Where do you access the internet? -I rent a studio/office and that is where I
- 1954 access.
- 1955 3. What do you use to access the internet? -I access through laptop, mobile phone
- 1956 4. Which of the following social media do you use? - I use twitter and facebook
- 1957 5. To what extent do you think the social media influence creative writing? - they
- 1958 give drive is one sees achievement of other writers, and also spread contacts and
- 1959 give publishing opportunity.
- 1960 6. How good are your IT skills? Do you feel confident updating/posting/ editing
- 1961 online content? -I am studying ICDL as part of my long distance degree studies
- 1962 (Communication Scince with UNISA) and have done 4 modules, so I am good.
- 1963 7. Do you have a blog? -www.chris-writingseriously.blogspot.
- 1964 8. Do you think that the internet is changing the way that African writing is being
- 1965 appreciated?-It is bringing to the fore written work that previously would not
- 1966 have been accessible to the international reader had it remained only in hard
- 1967 copy.
- 1968 9. Do you write differently for the internet? -my writing is the same, both for the
- 1969 internet and the hardcopy.
- 1970 10. Could you outline how the internet has influenced your career? -it has brought a
- 1971 great deal of change because it has speeded up communication with publishers
- 1972 and other writers. It also keeps me informed of literature global trends
- 1973 instantly. Also, it is much easier to research on the internet than walking to
- 1974 libraries.
- 1975 11. How do you think African readers have benefited from the internet? How do you
- 1976 use the internet to interact with other writers and readers? - to a large extent, a
- 1977 great many people/writers/readers on the African content still do not have access
- 1978 to the internet because of lack of these facilities or the finances to go to the
- 1979 internet shop, or if they have access, are discouraged to stay connected for long
- 1980 because of slow speeds which mean more money to stay on. I have a network of
- 1981 writers and publishers spread around the globe and I use it frequently if I want to
- 1982 make announcements that have a bearing on literature, like calls for
- 1983 submissions, competitions, or if I want to find somebody to critique my work.
- 1984 12. Do you consider online writing to be literature? I have never really thought
- 1985 about this, but I would like to believe that if it has text and a writer behind it, yes
- 1986 it is literature. But then we have to be careful and also put to question self
- 1987 published work because largely it is not considered much if does not have an
- 1988 independent publisher behind it as self publishing compromises on content of

- 1989 work as anybody can publish anything. The independent publisher fills in the
 1990 gap her by being a sort of quality guard.
- 1991 13. The rise of the so-called "ebook" has divided the publishing world, with some
 1992 predicting "the death of the book" and others arguing that the traditional printed
 1993 version will remain the favoured format. What do you think is the future of
 1994 writing and publishing? -This is a difficult one, yes the 'e-book' seems to be the
 1995 in-thing now as it is more convenient, a reader who goes online is actually in
 1996 possession of millions of books but from a single computer and so has no need
 1997 to create space for hardcopy in their homes and thus also preventing clutter, but
 1998 also that there is that romance of hardcopy, of actually carrying a printed book
 1999 and reading from it, of having a book shelf packed with books – I would like to
 2000 believe the future of writing and publishing lies both ways, both online and
 2001 hardcopy.
- 2002 14. Do you consider online writers as published writers? Yes online writers are
 2003 published writers because the story has been published, but then we again have
 2004 to discriminate between self publishing and having an independent publisher.
- 2005 15. Would you support an exclusive award for online writing? -I wouldn't because
 2006 that would be discriminating against the printed book. Awards should consider
 2007 both online and printed and put them in the same category.
- 2008 16. How would you rate online writing? To what extent do you think online writing
 2009 differs from print?-I rate online on the same level with print and so no difference
 2010 whatsoever in both formats, except the fact that one is online and the other is
 2011 print.
- 2012 17. Do you think that the internet or social media has made it easier for you to gain
 2013 access to other writers and/or publishers and/or readers? -yes it has because like
 2014 I said earlier it has increased and speeded up my contacts and opportunity.

Appendix F

Phase Two (Braun and Clarke, 2006)

Data extract	Coded for
<p>“The internet also provides instant feedback on writing which is helpful with making publishing faster and affordable” (Respondent 1, Lines 25-27). “IT IS CONNECTING PEOPLE AND INFORMING US OF ONE ANOTHER'S WORKS, IT IS ALLOWING DIALOGUES AND THE EXCHANGE OF IDEAS” (Respondent 6, lines 349-351). “These channels allow for writers to inform people of current projects, new work and launches” (Respondent 7, lines 426-428). “So it’s helping those in more developed countries to see the talent in Africa, rather than for interactive purposes” (Respondent 11, lines 668-670). “Yes, every now and then I get an email of someone who has found my work interesting” (Respondent 12, lines 761-762). “I think African writing needs more exposure, and the internet is providing that. There are many stories that are not being appreciated by a wider audience but the internet provides that</p>	<p>Raise awareness about African literature</p>

<p>opportunity to reach out to more people and grow an interest in African writing” (Respondent 14, lines 855-858). “There is a lot more being published and readers who would not otherwise have known about African writing are confronted by them on almost a daily basis” (Respondent 15, lines 930-932). “YES, IT OFFERS THE POSSIBILITY OF GREATER VISIBIITY FOR AFRICAN WRITING” (Respondent 18, lines 1116-1117). “As people around the world get to see more African works, they are beginning to appreciate that there are more writers in Africa than the few old faces they used to know, and they also get to see the diversity new authors are bringing making their appreciation of African literature somehow different” (Respondent 22, lines 1381-1384). “<i>Changing it quite rapidly, significantly and positively; for instance, most popular young African writers became published and known via e-zines, e-mag, and other various e-publishing options</i>”(Respondent 27, lines 1790-1792). “The</p>	
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<p>Internet helps take African writing to places far and beyond” (Respondent 28, lines 1853-1854).</p>	
<p>“.....but there is more exposure for African writers in terms of visibility” (Respondent 2, Lines 95-96). “....., ebooks and sites like amazon mean that African writers and publishers are able to reach a potentially wider audience” (Respondent 3, Lines 137-138). “The internet has made African writing accessible to the world, to different audiences. The more the world accesses African writing the more they appreciate it” (Respondent 4, Lines 219-221). “I THINK IT IS GIVING IT MUCH GREATER ACCESS TO READERS AND FELLOW WRITERS BOTH IN AFRICA AND ACROSS THE WORLD” (Respondent 6, Lines 347-349). “I think the internet has allowed multiple narratives on the African life to be seen and accessed by the wider world” (Respondent 8, lines 483-484). “To some extent, because it’s generally easier to find and read content from anywhere in the world, so African writing (and writing from anywhere) benefits from this” (Respondent 10, lines 601-603). “All sorts of work (positive and negative) are available for readers to access” (Respondent 12, lines 762-763). “the internet offers an opportunity to many African writers who would otherwise have no access to the resources and readership the internet offers” (Respondent 19, lines 1182-1184). “The internet is providing new outlets for African writers, some of whom are now reaching new readers without relying on published books” (Respondent 21, lines 1298-1299). “YES. IT HAS VASTLY EXPANDED OUR AUDIENCE” (Respondent 26, line 1730). “It is bringing to the fore written work that previously would not have been accessible to the</p>	<p>Easy reach to audience</p>

international reader had it remained only in hard copy” (Respondent 30, lines 1965-1967).	
“More Africans have taken charge of how their stories are being told, collapsing old held stereotypes that abound about who or what is African” (Respondent 8, lines 484-486).	Take control of ownership
“Hugely. It also increases opportunities for African writers to collaborate, find places to submit work to and build networks where there were none before” (Respondent 9, lines 542-544). “Oh definitely, when you consider that now African writers are able to interact with writers from other places on a larger scale” (Respondent 23, lines 1460-1461). “I was also one of the young writers from Africa to participate in the Crossing Borders Creative Writing Project, an interactive initiative that linked young writers from Africa with experienced and published writers in Britain over a period of nine months to encourage the cross-pollination of ideas and broaden our mindsets” (Respondent 25, lines 1626-1630).	Increase collaboration
“It is important in marketing and making known one’s status as a writer” (Respondent 1, line 9).	Recognition of one’s work
“It is important to connect to writers of influence, publishers, festival organisers” (Respondent 1, lines 11). “.....it is handy for keeping in touch with other writers and for submission opportunities” (Respondent 2, lines 87-88). “BUT IT DEFINITELY AIDS RESEARCH AND NETWORKING” (Respondent 6, lines 337-338). “Otherwise it is a very useful tool for research and sharing work among colleagues” (Respondent 9, lines 536-537). “I stay in touch with other writers who are interested in writing” (Respondent 12, lines 753-754). “There is a more immediate interaction with readers and other writers” (Respondent 15,	Collaboration with other writers

<p>line 922-923). “it also keeps writers in touch in touch with their fans and readers with their authors” (Respondent 19, lines 1171-1172). “Many partnerships, friendships and opportunities are born and found via this medium” (Respondent 23, lines 1452-1453). “, enabled me to discuss and debate with other young African writers on the craft, limitations and opportunities available to us, as well as being invited to literary festivals” (Respondent 25, lines 1606-1608).</p>	
<p>“It makes writing more accessible because of the people connected to social media spaces” (Respondent 1, lines 12-13). “it has made communication easier and faster” (Respondent 4, line 206-207). “Access to literary events around the world” (Respondent 12, line 755). “The new social media bring you into contact with your readers” (Respondent 17, lines 1020-1021). “Social media make it easier to find a global audience for your work” (Respondent 22, line 1372-1373). “I host a web site and have work published on various websites which affords me the opportunity to reach a wide range of people” (Respondent 29, lines 1911-1913).</p>	Accessibility
<p>“Social networking sites and blogs have encouraged more creative writers to present their work” (Respondent 14, lines 848-849).</p>	Encourage creativity
<p>“Offers room for posting works and critique, Feedback from fellow creative writers” (Respondent 27, lines 1784-1785). “To a large extent, because writers can now post their writings and receive multiple and instant feedback on their works” (Respondent 28, lines 1841-1843).</p>	Evaluating ones work
<p>“we have our own spaces of socialization, publishing and editing” (Respondent 1, lines 76).</p>	Reach out to others easily, encourage networking

“With as little as five hundred Uganda shillings I can load 20 mbs of data and use it to reach on line information, send on line information, look up publishers, communicate with readers who have appreciated my work, keep in touch with all writers I meet” (Respondent 4, lines 277-280).

“It’s allowed me to connect with colleagues and be able to create networks. I don’t think I’d have a career in writing without the influence of the internet” (Respondent 9, lines 581-583).

“...tremendously helped me in accessing other writers and publishers” (Respondent 11, lines 743). “A number of researchers have found me on the internet and been able to interview me regarding my writing and contribution to the literary world” (Respondent 12, lines 792-794).

“Certainly easier to access other writers’ work” (Respondent 13, lines 835-836). “ I THINK THE INTERNET HAS MADE IT EASIER FOR READERS AND PERHAPS WRITERS TO FIND MY WORK” (Respondent 18, lines 1155-1157). “the internet is an immense tool to keep in touch with the writing world no matter where one is” (Respondent 19, lines 1223-1224). “The

<p>internet has opened a whole lot of possibilities for getting my work known to my contemporaries, readers and other publishers” (Respondent 22, lines 1433-1435). “IT HAS ALLOWED MY WORK TO TRAVEL FAR AND REACH AUDIENCES THAT WOULD OTHERWISE BE UNREACHABLE. IT HAS ALSO ALLOWED ME TO STAY IN TOUCH WITH WRITERS FROM ACROSS THE WORLD” (Respondent 26, lines 1769-1773). “yes it has because like I said earlier it has increased and speeded up my contacts and opportunity” (Respondent 30, lines 2013-2014).</p>	
<p>“It is the principle reason for the success I have seeing as I am blogger of books” (Respondent 7, lines 462-463). “It has not made it possible for more writers to make a living from writing” (Respondent 24, lines 1589-1590).</p>	Brings success to ones work
<p>“It has enabled me to share widely about the Babishai Niwe Poetry Foundation, the Kampala based organisation which coordinates annual poetry competitions for Africans, publishes poetry and coordinates training for children”</p>	Disseminating ones work

<p>(Respondent 1, lines 38-41). “All my biggest roles have been sourced from my internet activities” (Respondent 7, lines 434-435). “My writing became more accessible to a wider audience not just in my country but also from Africa and the wider world. To some extent, interest in my books in foreign countries was spurred by the impact of the internet and what readers were saying and posting online about my work” (Respondent 8, lines 488-492). “The internet helps me to submit my work very widely to contests and also publications” (Respondent 10, lines 609-611). “It has helped with getting publicity further distance than would have been without it” (Respondent 13, lines 811-812). “...the ease to have my work read at these quality literary sites by readers around the world” (Respondent 16, lines 979-980). “THE INTERNET ALLOWS READERS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD TO ENCOUNTER ONE’S WORK” (Respondent 18, lines 1122-1124). “People know more about me and my work. They contact me more easily” (Respondent 20, lines 1247-1248). “I think it</p>	
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<p>presents great opportunities for marketing one's work, and i will not be stupid enough not to utilise it" (Respondent 22, lines 1392-1393). "I use the Internet to share my new writings with fans, friends and families" (Respondent 28, lines 1859-1860).</p>	
<p>".....kept me in touch with a wide network of writer friends and colleagues regularly" (Respondent 2, lines 100-101). "It has helped me to connect with fellow writers, local and international publishers, journalists, as well as a global literary audience" (Respondent 14, lines 865-867). "Via blogging, you get to meet and interact with writers from all over and you find that friendships are born in the process" (Respondent 23, lines 1469-1471). "The invaluable contribution the internet has made in my life is to allow me contact with writers from all over the world – social networking is the manure of any individual's growth" (Respondent 25, lines 1643-1646). "It has provided.....NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES: WRITING FORUMS,</p>	<p>Stay in touch with colleagues</p>

<p>WRITERS' GROUPS, SOCIAL NETWORKING" (Respondent 26, lines 1738-1739).</p>	
<p>"It made it much easier for me to learn about how publishing works, how to write a query letter, how to get an agent etc" (Respondent 3, lines 148-150). "I have continued to utilize the internet, using it to publish my first poetry collection" (Respondent 14, lines 867-868).</p> <p>"One of the turning points of my career was being shortlisted for the caine prize. The short story for which I was shortlisted was published on an online journal" (Respondent 15, lines 934-936). "PUBLICATION OPPORTUNITIES (CALLS FOR SUBMISSIONS, CONTEST INFO)" (Respondent 26, lines 1734-1735).</p> <p><i>"Some of my work is experimental, and without the internet i would not have been able to have published my work e.g the Nigerian Pidgin English Dictionary"</i> (Respondent 29, lines 1925-1927).</p>	<p>Learn about publishing</p>
<p>"It has made communication quicker, I can easily access all sorts of material especially</p>	<p>Easy flow of communication</p>

creative writing material” (Respondent 4, lines 226-228).	
<p>“At different stages of my career, the internet has always been a platform for quicker feedback from readers” (Respondent 5, lines 304-306).</p> <p><i>“The first ever feedback, critique, and edit I got for my writings were also from on-line writing sites such as Author-Me, Edit Red, etc”</i></p> <p>(Respondent 27, lines 1796-1798).</p>	It helps to evaluate ones work
<p>“I learnt almost everything I know about writing fiction from the internet” (Respondent 17, lines 1043-1044). “I guess the internet has given me that edge in writing as I am able to access many resources and follow up on the news events in the literary world” (Respondent 19, lines 1196-1198). “You discover new writers and learn about books you wouldn’t otherwise have learned about, you buy great books online” (Respondent 23, lines 1472-1473). “It also keeps me informed of literature global trends instantly” (Respondent 30, lines 1972-1973).</p>	Broaden knowledge
“African readers can access content that was once accessible to a privileged few at the click of a button and often onto the cost of Internet	Easy reception of African literature

<p>access which here is very reasonable. I tend to use social media to chat with these writers” (Respondent 7, lines 437-440).</p> <p>“BECAUSE THERE IS A RELATIVE PAUCITY OF CULTURAL TRAFFIC BETWEEN AFRICAN COUNTRIES, THE INTERNET HAS GIVEN READERS ON THE CONTINENT GREATER ACCESS TO WRITERS FROM AROUND THE CONTINENT. WRITERS AND READERS WHO WISH TO CONTACT ME CAN DO SO THROUGH MY WEBSITE. THE VERY OPENNESS OF THE INTERNET CAN MAKE SUCH CONTACT EITHER PLEASING OR QUITE SUPERFICIAL” (Respondent 18, lines 1126-1133). <i>“African readers have benefited as well, because of the ubiquity and accessibility of on-line prose and poetry. Just a click of the mouse and you can readily access writings of classical and modernist eras”</i> (Respondent 27, lines 1802-1805). “AFRICAN READERS CAN ACCESS MAGAZINES AND JOURNALS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD. FOR EXAMPLE I READ THE NEW YORKER, NEW YORK TIMES AND UK GUARDIAN ONLINE, FROM NIGERIA. THERE IS A WEALTH OF DOWNLOADABLE MATERIAL AVAILABLE ALSO ON THE INTERNET – WRITING RESOURCES, CLASSIC LITERATURE” (Respondent 26, lines 1744-1749).</p>	
<p>“African readers spend a lot of time on social media, discussing, sharing work, creating new groups, literary forums and so o. I also engage quite extensively I’s so important to promote my business, my brand and to promote the works of other writers” (Respondent 1, lines 49-52).</p> <p>“Being able to connect with a writer in Kenya when you're in South Africa is just as vital as being able to connect with a writer in the UK.</p>	<p>Greater involvement</p>

<p>Africa is huge, and the internet enables us to begin making webs across our own cultural divides” (Respondent 3, lines 157-160). “The readers can keep in touch with their writers” (Respondent 12, line 770-771). “They now have conversations more often than would have been without the internet” (Respondent 13, lines 814-815). “...they are now exposed to many genres and writing styles, for me this means that through a simple google search African readers and african writing enthusiasts can now enjoy a more complete picture of the African continent” (Respondent 14, lines 874-876). “The interactions with readers and fans tend to remove the mystery and mystique of the author. The new social media bring you into contact with your readers. You get asked questions, questions that breakdown the walls separating the readers from the writer. I feel the internet and sites like facebook, etc, brings writers closer to the oral tradition of storytelling” (Respondent 17, lines 1019-1024).</p> <p>“The most expensive short story I have sold so far was to an online magazine. The internet is becoming my only way of interacting with my fellow writers, in every sense of the word. The traditional letter writing is dead; therefore one has to rely on emails and text messages. I have also sent drafts to fellow writers to help edit before sending to publishers” (Respondent 28, lines 1868-1872).</p>	
<p>“The main difference would be the use of emoticons for online writing” (Respondent 1, line 72-73). “While a few years ago the copy being put out online left a lot to be desired today the quality is just as goods and some instances</p>	<p>Online writing has additional features</p>

<p>even better than the printed” (Respondent 7, lines 458-460). “online writing offers new experiments in hypertext and so on, and can be a multimedia experience in ways that print texts cannot” (Respondent 21, lines 1354-1356). “IT WOULD DIFFER ONLY IN TERMS OF THE FACT THAT ONLINE WRITING CAN BE INTERACTIVE IN A WAY THAT IS NOT AVAILABLE TO PRINT – HYPERLINKS, EMBEDDED AUDIO AND VIDEO, ONLINE POLLS, ETC”(Respondent 26, lines 1764-1767).</p>	
<p>“I think this is where the difference lies; the convenience of it all. Print publishing is not that quick, cheap and easy. But again some on line writing is of high literary merit” (Respondent 4, lines 270-273). “Online is good for immediate writing, for things that need to be published and read with immediacy” (Respondent 9, lines 577-578). “I think the difference lies in the ease with which one can publish online” (Respondent 15, lines 955-956).</p>	<p>Ease of use</p>

<p>“My online writing is not far different from my print writing. I take utmost care” (Respondent 1, lines 71-72). “In my experience, the power of a well-written story or poem remains the same whether read in print or online” (Respondent 5, lines 322-323). “I can’t really rate online writing as opposed to print; there’s good and bad writing both online and in print”(Respondent 10, lines 640-641). “Internet published things are a bit inferior to books because the latter pass through a production chain. Now online material can be self-published, no other experienced person looks at it. If anybody does, they are hurrying, the computer screen is not very good for the eyes” (Respondent 11, lines 736-739). “There are some websites that are credible and one cannot trash them but there are others that have questionable information and so its up to the readers to gauge their data” (Respondent 12, lines 785-787). “Not all content on the internet is great, just like not every book that make it to the stores via traditional publishers is a good book”(Respondent 14, lines 904-905). “Online writing is no better or worse than print. There’s</p>	<p>Sceptical about online writing</p>
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<p>good and bad online writing just like there's good and bad writing in print" (Respondent 16, lines 1004-1005). "It makes your spelling terrible..." (Respondent 20, line 1267). "In some instances there is no difference – the same material that appears in the tabloids is also published online" (Respondent 25, lines 1692-1693). "Online writing lacks the rigorous editing that traditional publishing requires" (Respondent 28, lines 1890-1891). "I rate online on the same level with print and so no difference whatsoever in both formats, except the fact that one is online and the other is print" (Respondent 30, lines 2009-2011).</p>	
<p>"The print book isn't going anywhere but further upwards" (Respondent 1, line 64-65). "Books in print are just special, nothing can take their place" (Respondent 2, lines 112-113). "...I think that E-publishing may overwhelm but it will not replace traditional publishing" (Respondent 4, lines 260-261). "I don't believe that books will die off as there will be a few people that still enjoy the touch and feel of an actual book"</p>	<p>Preference for traditional books</p>

<p>(Respondent 8, lines 512-513). “Although ebooks are revolutionising literature worldwide, print is still a format that is taken more seriously than others. The very act of producing and printing a book taps into a primal, prejudiced part of us that prefers to hold and behold something that is a physically interactive object”</p> <p>(Respondent 9, lines 561-564). “. I don’t believe that printed books will die; even now, printed books are favoured still by many. Eventually printed books might become more niche, perhaps like collectors’ items. But I believe the appreciation of printed material will remain”</p> <p>(Respondent 10, lines 626-629). “The hard copy is portable, very convenient. You read it on the subway, on the commuter omnibus. You read it in the park, you can read it over and over again. You can show others, hey, I read it in the book, here it is, you are so confident” (Respondent 11, lines 699-702). “The traditional printed version is there to stay” (Respondent 12, line 779). “I think traditional books will be with us for some time to come and that ebook devices like Amazon’s kindle will also find it’s place but it</p>	
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<p>may be a while before people abandon the paperback” (Respondent 13, lines 823-825). “In a sentence, the advent of television did not spell the end of the radio. I doubt if the ebook will kill paper back or hard cover” (Respondent16, lines 989-990). “I believe the death of the book is still some time away in most African countries because of the lag in adopting new technologies” (Respondent 22, lines 1416-1417). “There are still al lot of people who prefer the traditional format and feel without it a book will not be a ‘real’ book” (Respondent 23, lines 1501-1502). “It will be a shame to loose the book. I love the smell of new books. CD’s do not smell at all. I still love to walk into the Oxfam Bookshop in our High Street because I find the sight and smell of books alluring. I still want to tuck in bed and read a book to sleep. Reading on the computer does not give the same experience. Books are the best companions” (Respondent 25, lines 1678-1682). “<i>The more things change the more they remain the same, so goes a saying. The ‘death of the book’ is a myth; for there’s nothing more interactive and intimate than</i></p>	
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<i>thumbing through a newly-acquired book”</i> (Respondent 27, lines 1812-1814).	
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