Internet Usage among Broadcast Media Practitioners in Nigeria

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Abstract

The study investigates internet usage among broadcast media practitioners in Nigeria. All the media practitioners in NTA, Peace PM and Ray Power stations in Maiduguri, totaling 91, were administered with questionnaire. The study finds out that majority 31(34.07%) of the respondents said they used the internet daily, while minority 6(6.59%) of the respondents said they never used the internet. Majority 32(35.16%) of the respondents said they used internet for news reporting, while minority 9(9.89%) of the respondents said they used the internet for advertising. Also 38(41.76%) of the respondents said websites enhanced their work as broadcast media practitioners, while minority 7(7.69%) of the respondents said You Tube enhanced their work as a broadcast media practitioner. The study also find out that challenges encountered by broadcast media practitioners while using the internet include; erratic power supply, lack of access to internet, low internet connectivity and hash weather conditions. The study recommended among other things that media owners should provide computers for their organizations and also provide same to their staff as loan to enable them access internet not only in office but also at home. The study then concluded that broadcast media practitioners in Nigeria can not afford to be left behind in the use of internet, if they must perform their duties of informing, educating and entertaining their listeners and viewers.

Keyword: Broadcasting, Broadcast media, Electronic Communication, Internet, New media Technology

1.   Introduction

The invention of the internet has revolutionized the way things are done all over the world. The coming of the internet not only brought improvement, but also quality and speed in the way people communicate around the globe. The application of the internet can be seen in almost every aspect of human endeavour. The internet is a new media technology that uses interconnected computers and software protocol to share information, news and entertainment and to communicate with people around the world. It is faster and is accessible 24/7. Professor Martin Irvine described internet and quoted by Akinfeleye, (2011:58) as "a worldwide (electronic) computer using a common means of linking hardware and transmitting digital information;…a community of people using a common electronic communication technology;…a global distributed system of electronic communication." Akinfeleye, went further to say that "the internet among other things, is a twenty- four hour non-stop global electronic form of communication, an online library and international communication; a business and corporate global communication medium; a distance and remote education systems; a multimedia and commercial delivery communication system for news and entertainment; and all of the above working simultaneously as one of the dominant new electronic media."

Individuals or organizations can be connected to the internet through an internet service provider and through an online service provider. Once an individual or an organization is hooked to the internet, a variety of tools like the e-mail, newsgroups and the World Wide Web can be used for obtaining information, for entertainment and communication. (Dominick, 2009)

The internet has brought a lot of improvement in the way news is gathered, and news, entertainment and other programmes are presented on both Radio and Television across the globe. With the help of the search engines like Google and Yahoo many broadcast media practitioners of major broadcasting stations around the world have been able to gather news and send such news to their stations via the internet, from the comfort of their home or office. This has helped to reduce the cost of operations. Broadcasting houses do not need to send correspondents to every scene to cover an event. The availability of news sources like Yahoo, Google, Blog, You tube, Twitter, Face book and web sites has made news gathering much easier than before. According to Dominick (2009:304) "Today's reporters can sit at his or her desk and instantly access documents, databases, government records and expert sources. In short, journalists can now bring to their desks information they previously went out to look for."

The broadcast media houses in Nigeria as part of the global media system, can not afford to be left behind in the way news is gathered and reported with the aid of the internet. This paper therefore intents to examine the usage of internet among broadcast media practitioners in Nigeria.

2.   Statement Of Problem

Internet is an important component of today's broadcasting. In Nigeria challenges facing the use of internet by broadcast media practitioners are numerous. Erratic electricity supply witnessed daily by Nigerians in all sectors of the economy, coupled with cost of internet subscription, has made the cost of operating a broadcasting station to be very expensive. For example three months subscription for bandwidth cost N3, 000,000, which is equivalent to 18,750 US dollars. According to Agbenson (2012) "Voice of Nigeria…pay as much as N3 million for its bandwidth and internet access for its online broadcast for three months service" Apart from this, internet speed is sometimes very slow, resulting in the lost of man hours which could have been used to do other productive activities in the broadcasting station. Internet providers like the MTN, AIRTEL, ETISALAT, VISAFONE, and GLO mobile all operates with the G3 internet facilities, instead of the G4 which is faster. As a result connecting to the internet server is sometimes difficult.

3.   Research Objective

To find out whether broadcast media practitioners in Nigeria use the internet.
To find out the aspect of internet that broadcasting practitioners used in carrying out their duties
To find out the internet tools that is used by broadcast media practitioners in carrying out their duties
To find out whether there are challenges faced by broadcast media practitioners in the use of internet while performing their duties.

4.   Research Questions

What is the level of internet usage among broadcast media practitioners in Nigeria.
What aspect of broadcasting is internet used by broadcast media practitioners in carrying out their duties
What are the internet tools used by broadcast media practitioners in performing their duties
What are the challenges encountered by broadcast media practitioners while performing their duties

5.   Litrature Review

The internet is a network of networks, a worldwide assemblage of interconnected computer networks, which connects all manners of commercial, government, private, academic and personal computers and other home appliances (Asemah, 2011:285)
Ibemesi, (2007) explained that, "the internet…technology have equally impacted greatly on broadcast news reporting. In Nigeria, news reporters now rely on the net to file in their reports using e-mail when the hindrance of distance is there. Even sounds and pictures in news reports could be filed in using the internet. The internet technology has equally provided reporters with limitless opportunity for carrying out research on any imaginable area of interest as they cover their news. Even stories of events in different parts of the world would be obtained from the internet. A radio station like the Cosmo FM Enugu in the absence of news correspondents relies on the net for news information."
Gil, (2013) defines internet "as a massive hardware combination of millions of personal, business, and governmental computers, all connected like roads and highways." According to Gil, "the internet started in 1960s" under the original name "Arpanet". Arpanet was originally an experiment on how the US military would maintain communications in case of a possible nuclear strike. With time, Arpanet became a civilian experiment, connecting university mainframe computers for academic purposes. As personal computers become more and more mainstream in the 1980's and 1990's, the internet grew exponentially as more users plugged their computers into the massive network." Gil, went further to say, that, "today the internet has grown into a public spider web of millions of personal, government, and commercial computers, all connected by cables and by wireless signs"
Wikipedia, (2013) was of the view that, "the internet is a global system of interconnected computer networks, that use the standard internet protocol suite (TCP/IP) to serve billions of users worldwide. It is a network of networks that consists of millions of private, public, academic, business, and government networks, of local to global scope, that are linked by a broad array of electronic, wireless and optical networking technologies. The internet carries an extensive range of information resources and services, such as the inter-linked hypertext documents of the world wide-web (www) and the infrastructure to support email."
Enahoro, (2009: 48) sees the internet as "the newest media technology. It is credited, with offering societies with vast opportunities that can stimulate economic growth."
Biagi, (2003:39) defines the internet as a "combination of thousands of computer networks sending and receiving data from all over the world computing interest joined together by a common purpose, but no common owner."
Belch, (2001: 495) observed that "the internet is a worldwide means of exchanging information and communicating through a series of interconnected computers"

Muciano and Kennedy, (2002) were of the opinion that, 'the internet is a worldwide collection of computer networks that share digital information through a common set of networking and software protocols."

Ifeduba,(2009: 73) remarked that, 'the internet has gained popularity as a source of information and this is acknowledged by researchers and non-researchers alike."

Jagboro,(2003) sees the internet "as a tool for researchers to communicate and share project data", Jagboro went further to add that, "It is relatively fast, it is accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and you can use it from your own computer."

Mcquail, (2005: 558) stressed that the internet is a " worldwide system of interconnected networks, using the telecommunication infrastructures that now support a large number of computer-based communication exchanges, including consultation of data-bases, websites and homepages, conventional interactions, email, many kinds of electronic commerce and financial transactions. The internet is gradually taken over many functions of "traditional" mass media (e. g advertising, news and information). Access to the internet is still restricted by costs to the user plus barriers of language, culture and computer literacy."

Cambridge Encyclopaedia (2000) explained that, the internet "is an association of computer networks with common standards which enable messages to be sent from host on one network to another host on any other."

Olorede & Oyewole, (2013) also explained that "the internet offers unique ways in which to interact with people and exchange information in a variety of formats. Pictures, sound, text and video can be combined to present ideas in news, effective ways. Previous technologies limited communication to voice or one-way images. The internet has speed the process of information exchange, this spurring new ideas and growth"

Baran, (2004:300) opined that the internet is "a global network of interconnected computers that communicate freely and share and exchange information"

Vivian, (2002:222) says the internet is the wired infrastructure on which web messages move. It is as a military communication system, which expanded into a government-funded civil research network. Today, the internet is a user-financial system tying institutions of many sorts together into an "information superhighway".

Agbenson, (2012) stated that "Apart from using computers for packaging news, accepting materials for news, publishing news on websites and transmitting material between reporters and their bases, Nigerian journalists also employ it for the purpose of online broadcasting popularly referred to as webcasting"

6. Methodology

Purposive research method was used for this study. A structured questionnaire was used in collecting the data with the help of four research assistants. The broadcasting stations are located in Maiduguri, the Borno state capital. These are Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) Zonal centre, Peace FM and Ray Power stations. The choice of these stations is based on the fact that Maiduguri is a cosmopolitan city, where Nigerians from different tribes and religious affiliation can be found. Apart from this, similar stations can be found in other parts of the country. In essence, their structure and organization are the same. All the broadcast media practitioners in the above mentioned broadcasting stations totaling 91 were administered with questionnaires. Response rate was 100%. The questionnaires were then analysed using frequency and simple percentage.

7. Data Analysis

7.1. Table 1 shows that majority 49(53.85%) of the respondents were female, while 42(46.15%) were male. This shows that there are more female than male in broadcast media in Nigeria.

Majority 31(34.07%) of the respondents said they were between the age range 26yrs -35yrs. 26(28.57%) of the respondents said they were between the age range 15yrs- 25yrs. Another 26(28.57%) said they are between the age range 36yrs-46yrs. Minority 8(8.79%) said they were between the age range 46yrs-55yrs. This showed that majority of the broadcast media practitioners are below the age of 40yrs, which is good for the industry. The more experienced they become, the better their performance.

Majority 50(54.94%) of the respondents said first degree was their highest educational qualification. 21(23.08%) of the respondents said diploma was their highest educational qualification, while another 15(16.48%) of the respondents said Higher National Diploma was their highest educational qualification. Minority 5(5.50%) of the respondents said masters and above were their highest educational qualification. This showed that highly qualified broadcast media practitioners are involved in the broadcasting industry in Nigeria.

7.2. Table 2 shows that majority 31(34.07%) of the respondents said they used the internet daily. 20(21.98%) of the respondents said they used the internet weekly, while 18(19.78%) said they used the internet monthly. 10(10.99%) of the respondents said they used the internet twice a week. 6(6.59%) of the respondents said they used the internet fortnightly. Another 6(6.59%) of the respondents said they never used the internet.

7.3. Table 3 shows that majority 32(35.16%) of the respondents said they used the internet for news reporting. 25(27.47%) of the respondents said they used the internet for news gathering. 19(20.88%) of the respondents said they used the internet for entertainment, while another 12(13.19%) of the respondents said they used the

internet for documentary. Minority 3(3.30%) of the respondents said they used the internet for advertising.

7.4. Table 4 above shows that majority 38(41.76%) of the respondents said websites enhanced their work as broadcast media practitioners. 20(21.98%) of the respondents said blog enhanced their work as broadcast media practitioners. 17(18.68%) of the respondents said e-mail enhanced their work as broadcast media practitioners, while 9(9.87%) of the respondents said social media enhanced their work as broadcast media practitioners. Minority 7(7.67%) of the respondents said You Tube enhanced their work as broadcast media practitioners.

7.5. Table 5 shows that majority 41(45.06%) of the respondents said lack of access to internet was a challenge they encountered in the use of internet as a broadcast media practitioner. 30(32.97%) of the respondents said erratic power supply was a challenge they encountered in the use of internet as a broadcast media practitioner. Another 15(16.48%) of the respondents said low internet connectivity was a challenge they encountered in the use of internet as a broadcast media practitioner. Minority 5(5.49%) of the respondents said hash weather conditions was a challenge they encountered in the use of internet as a broadcast media practitioner.

8. Findings and Discussion

The study examined internet usage among broadcast media practitioners in Nigeria.

Table 2 shows that majority 31(34.07%) of the respondents said they used the internet daily, while minority 6(6.59%) of the respondents said they never used the internet. This corroborates the works of Mathew, Ogedebe & Adeniji, (2013) and Uwakwe, (2009) which stated that internet usage is low and expensive in Nigeria compared to those of developed countries.

Table 3 shows that majority 32(35.16%) of the respondents said they used the internet for news reporting, while minority 9(9.89%) of the respondents said they used the internet for advertising. This supported the position of Dominick (2009) and Ibemesi (2007) which stated that broadcast media organization use the internet to broadcast news.

Table 4 shows that majority 38(41.76%) of the respondents said websites enhanced their work as broadcast media practitioners. Minority 7(7.69%) of the respondents said You Tubes enhanced their work as broadcast media practitioners. This agreed with Dominick (2009),Ibemesi (2007) and McQuail (2005) who observed that news organisations have websites which generate revenue for them.

Table 5 shows that majority 41(45.06%) of the respondents said lack of access to internet was a challenge they encountered while using the internet in performing their duties. Minority 5(5.49%) of the respondents said hash weather conditions was a challenge they encountered while using the internet to perform their duties. This agreed with Mathew, Ogedebe & Ogedebe (2013) findings which stated that lack of access to internet was a problem confronting Nigerians.

9. Recommendations

From the findings of this study, it shows that every broadcast media practitioner in Nigeria do not have access to internet. The media owners should provide internet for their media outfit. Not only that, individuals who work in the media industry should be provided with laptops in form of loan. This way, they can access the internet not only at work but also at home.

Training and retraining of broadcast media practitioners should be embarked on periodically by media houses. This will make broadcast media practitioners to keep abreast of new development on webcasting and other method of using the internet for broadcasting purpose.

The government should launched communication satellite into orbit. This will help to reduce the cost of bandwidth and also help to eliminate or reduce the problem associated with internet accessibility in Nigeria.

32.97% of the respondents said erratic electricity supply was a challenge encountered by broadcast media practitioners in the use of internet. The Federal Government should invest more on electricity generation and the state government should also be encouraged to do the same. This will help to increase the amount of electricity currently been generated in the country.

The government of Nigeria should reduce the import duties paid on computers and all its accessories, video cameras and other equipments that are useful for broadcasting on the internet.

10. Conclusion

The importance of internet usage in modern broadcasting can not be over emphasized. Internet technology not only brought quality to broadcasting but also introduced a new and better way in which news gathering; news reporting and other programming can be done.

In conclusion, the broadcast media practitioners in Nigeria can not afford to be left behind in the use of internet, if they must accomplished their primary duties of informing, educating and entertaining their listeners and viewers.

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Table 1: Distribution by Gender, Age and Educational Qualification

Distribution	Response	
Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	42	46.15%
Female	49	53.85%
Total	91	100.00
Age Range	Frequency	Percentage
15 – 25years	26	28.57%
26 – 35years	31	34.07%
36 – 45years	26	28.57%
46 –55years	8	8.79%
56yrs & above	-	-
Total	91	100.00
Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
Secondary School Certificate Examination (S.S.C.E)	-	-
Diploma	21	23.08%
Higher National Diploma	15	16.48%
First degree	50	54.94%
Masters & above	5	5.50%
Total	91	100.00

Source: Field Survey 2013

Table 2: Level of internet usage among broadcast media practitioners

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Daily	31	34.07%
Twice a week	10	10.99%
Weekly	20	21.98%
Fortnightly	6	6.59%
Monthly	18	19.78%
Never	6	6.59%
Total	91	100.00

Field Survey 2013

Table 3: Internet usage among broadcast media practitioners.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
News reporting	32	35.16%
News gathering	25	27.47%
Entertainment	19	20.88%
Documentary	12	13.19%
Advertising	3	3.30%
Total	91	100.00

Field Survey 2013

Table 4: Internet tools that enhanced the work of broadcast media practitioners

Response	Frequency	Percentage
E-mail	17	18.68%
Websites	38	41.76%
Blog	20	21.98%
iTunes	-	-
Social media	9	9.87%
You Tube	7	7.69%
Total	91	100.00

Field Survey 2013

Table 5: Challenges encountered in the use of internet as a broadcast media practitioner

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Erratic power supply	30	32.97%
Lack of access to internet	41	45.06%
Low internet connectivity	15	16.48%
Hash weather conditions	5	5.49%
Total	91	100.00

Field Survey 2013

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