

User-Generated Contents and Professional Journalism Practices in Nigeria: Perception of Journalists in Selected Media Houses in Abuja and Lagos

Barikui Nnaane¹, Festus Olise²



AMCAP - Journal of Emerging Social Scientist

Vol. 01, No. 01, 01-14, January 2020

<http://amcapjess.net/index.php/jess>

Abstract

One of the trends redefining and reshaping the landscape of the mass media not only in Nigeria, but also globally is the integration of User-Generated Contents (UGC) in professional journalism practice. This trend which is driven by the social media has engendered citizen and participatory journalism. However, in spite of the seeming contributions of UGCs to the expansion of the public sphere, there are genuine concerns and fears about the erosion of gatekeeping and factual verification of information. To this end, this research is anchored on the Public Sphere Theory and Technological Determinism Theory. The focus of this study therefore was on User-Generated Contents (UGC) and professional journalism practice in Nigeria, and how journalists in select media houses in Abuja and Lagos perceived and used this phenomenon. The research design was survey; the sampling technique was accidental or convenience sampling, while the research instrument was questionnaire. Some key findings of the research amongst others were that Twitter UGCs were the most used, followed by those from YouTube; and that the use of UGCs contributes to the expansion of the public sphere and participatory journalism. The authors recommended that social media UGCs should be used in news reports on policy issues so that a bottom-up approach to the public sphere can be entrenched in Nigeria's democracy and also to engender participatory journalism.

Keywords: User-Generated Contents, Professional Journalism Practice, Nigeria, Journalists, Select Media Houses

¹ Senior Lecturer, Department Of Mass Communication, Akwa Ibom State University, Obio Akpa Campus, Nigeria.

² Senior Lecturer, Department Of Mass Communication, University Of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria.

Introduction

Among the various trends which have redefined and reshaped the landscape of the mass media in the 21st Century is User-Generated Contents (UGC). UGC has emerged as a part of the technological disruptions which digital technologies, especially the social media have engendered in journalism to the extent that it is no longer business as usual. UGC, also known as User-Created Content (UCC) refers to any kind of content such as audio, graphics, picture, text, and video that is posted and/or uploaded online using social media platforms especially. According to Dominick (2012), one phenomenon which has enabled UGC is Web 2.0, which refers to the Second Generation of Web-based services such as Social Networking Sites, Wikis, and other communication tools; and that Web 2.0 actually encourages collaboration, connection, linkage, networking, and sharing, among others.

Alejandro (2010:5) Expatriated On The Web 2.0 Phenomenon As Follows:

Web 2.0 allows for openness, organization and community. Web publishers are creating platforms instead of content. Users are creating the content. Wikipedia, MySpace, Facebook and YouTube most illustrate the power of Web 2.0 especially for ordinary Web users. An approach of creating and distributing Web content that is characterized by open communication, decentralization of authority, freedom to share and re-use, and the idea of “the market as a conversation” (many to many). In comparison with the Web 1.0 model, a Web publisher (whether a news site or a personal site) would upload content to a Web site for many others to read and the communication transaction would end there. The 2.0 model not only allows those “many others” to comment and add to the content posted by the publisher, but the audience can also add original content themselves. Supporting the above, Haak, Parks, and Castells (2012), argued that in a technology-driven process of social change, journalism is being transformed in the ways that it is produced, distributed, and used; and that globally, people are witnessing the emergence of new digital tools, practices, and phenomena that are leading to a flurry of new ways of information-production as well as transformation of professional journalism practice in the digital media ecology.

UGC entered into the lexicon of contemporary journalism in the mid-2000s, having been used in Web publishing and digital media content production circles. In fact, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) adopted a UGC platform for its Website in 2005, while TIME Magazine “Person of the Year” in 2006 was “You”. This was in recognition of the surge in the production of UGC on some social media platforms, especially Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, WhatsApp, and YouTube, among others. Also the Cable News Network (CNN) was to follow by developing a UGC platform called “iReport”. Today in Nigeria, Channels Television has its UGC platform known as “iReport”, the Benin-based Independent Television (ITV) has its UGC platform called “iWitness”, while other media houses (print, broadcast, and online) use their different social media accounts as UGC platforms. Moreover, Channels Television programme on politics entitled: “Politics Today” uses UGCs more from Twitter often, while Africa Independent Television’s (AIT) programme on politics entitled: “Democracy Today” also uses a lot of Twitter UGCs in the presentation.

There is no gainsaying the fact that the integration or embedding of UGCs in conventional journalism is accentuated by the exponential growth in the development and deployment of smart communication devices as well as the capabilities of computing and telecommunication technologies. According to Ntalakas, Dimoulas, Kalliris, and Veglis (2017), smart phones, tablets, and other digital communication tools offer inherent networking capabilities along with increased multimedia capturing, editing, and sharing utilities. UGC has no doubt contributed to the emergence and popularity of reverse agenda-setting, citizen journalism, and networked digital journalism, among others. Excerpt 1 below is a UGC culled from Twitter and embedded in the online news reports of The Punch newspaper of Nigeria (April 15, 2019):

Excerpt. 1

WAEC certificate: Nigerians react to Keyamo’s statement

Nigerians have responded to Festus Keyamo’s (SAN) statement that anyone running as president or governor in Nigeria does not need a WAEC certificate.

Keyamo had argued, “Yes. Section 318 of the 1999 Constitution defines ‘School Certificate or its equivalent’ to mean Primary 6 School Leaving Certificate plus the ability to just speak, write, understand and communicate in English language to the satisfaction of INEC. No WAEC certificate is needed.”

Meanwhile, the statement has set Twitter agog, as it has so far become a trending topic, with 4,622 tweets as of the time of collating these reactions.

See some of the responses:

@renoomokri: @OfficialAPCNg took Senator Adeleke to Court, alleging that he had no certificate, now a shameless Festus (Stephanie Oto) @FKeyamo is arguing that @MBuhari DOES NOT need a WAEC certificate to be President. It’s like saying you need a certificate to be gateman but not to be MD!

@chosensomto: When Buhari hires 13 SANS to defend his WAEC certificate, I knew he didn’t sit for the exam.

@MuhammadBello49: He quoted the Constitution, you should attack the Constitution rather than ad hominem. We didn’t see this same enthusiasm from you with respect to Adeleke forged waec certificate.

@delaw: Festus Keyamo that worked under the great Gani Fawehinmi and should have learnt a thing or two about honesty and the bond in the words of his mouth is saying you don’t need waec to become President?

@mrboboskie: Now that WAEC isn’t even needed to contest for any post in my country, it’s safe to say the ones in schools are not the leaders of tomorrow.

@ebubec1: What about your good friend Obono Obla, WAEC denied authenticity of his certificate, yet you are still hobnobbing with him. Kemi Adeosun, you allowed her escape to UK.

@AOlaosebikan: If you carry out analysis of some corporations, some senior officer will not qualify in modern reality but are allowed such positions because of experience and capacity developed over the years. You do not need WAEC to be elected officials. Pry school with 10yrs public service is ok.

@Menschinfotech: Now that we have confirmed Buhari doesn’t have a WAEC certificate ... Can they now charge him for forgery and misleading the public with fake results.

From these news sample, the newspaper house wrote the leads of the story only and thereafter, the following paragraphs were basically UGCs from the Twitter handles of the selected users of the micro-blogging site. By embedding UGCs with professional news reports, the subliminal message is that citizen journalism now complements professional journalism. Following the above, the focus of this research therefore is on the use of UGCs in professional journalism practice in Nigeria and

how professional journalists perceive and use this phenomenon. Abuja was specifically selected for the research because Premium Times, Leadership and Daily Trust newspapers (all national newspapers), are based there, while Lagos was chosen, because the headquarters of all other national newspapers are based there. It is important to note that apart from Premium Times and The Cable newspapers, which are purely online newspapers, all others have both online and print versions.

Statement Of The Problem

Journalism, especially news reporting is undergoing a transition in contemporary times, leading to participatory journalism. One of the key drivers of this brand of journalism is UGC. According to Ntalakas, Dimoulas, Kalliris, and Veglis (2017), the embedding and integration of UGCs in journalism, enabled by the social media, has contributed significantly to news and other infotainment services that are produced; and that this tends to underscore the place of the citizen in modern journalism business. However, Tolmie et al (2017) argue that the use of UGCs in contemporary journalism could pose major challenges because most of the contents on the social media have not gone through the gatekeeping process and therefore are not fit for use in news reporting. Hermida (2012) tends to support Tolmie et al, by arguing that the acceleration and proliferation of news have raised concerns about the erosion of the discipline of verification, and that major international news organisations have disseminated live updates from unverified social media UGCs. So how do the journalists in the select media houses in Abuja and Lagos, Nigeria, perceive and use UGCs in news reporting. This constitutes the problem of the study.

Objectives Of The Study

The major objective of this study is to determine the perception and use of UGCs in journalism by journalists in Lagos and Abuja, Nigeria, but specifically, it is to:

- H1. Determine the extent to which the journalists in Abuja and Lagos, Nigeria, use UGCs in news reporting.
- H2. Ascertain how the journalists in Abuja and Lagos, Nigeria, perceive the use of UGCs in news reporting.
- H3. Determine which social media platform UGCs do the journalists in Abuja and Lagos, Nigeria use often in news reporting.
- H4. Ascertain the challenges faced by the journalists in Abuja and Lagos, Nigeria, in their use of UGCs in news reporting

Research Questions

- RQ1. To what extent do the journalists in Abuja and Lagos, Nigeria, use UGCs in news reporting?
- RQ2. How do the journalists in Abuja and Lagos, Nigeria, perceive the use of UGCs in news reporting?
- RQ3. Which social media platform UGCs do the journalists in Abuja and Lagos, Nigeria, use often in news reporting?
- RQ4. What are the challenges faced by the journalists in Abuja and Lagos, Nigeria, in their use of UGCs in news reporting?

Literature Review

User-Generated Contents

Contemporary media ecology has engendered participatory journalism that is why UGCs have become embedded and integrated in news reports by journalists. Underscoring this, Haak, Parks, and Castells (2012), argued that in the digital ecosystem, more audience feedback is being integrated. Paulussen and Ugille (2008), argued that UGCs through citizen journalism phenomenon are creating new challenges and opportunities for mainstream media and this has made some journalists in the mainstream media to show a keen interest in how to integrate UGCs in professional journalistic news-making process. In a series of in-depth ethnographic studies of journalists' work practices, undertaken as part of the requirements for a prototype of social media verification dashboard, Tolmie et al (2017), noted that there were broader implications of UGCs to support professional journalism.

Hermida and Thurman (2014), studied the integration of UGCs by some selected British newspaper Websites. Using survey and in-depth interviews, they found out that the adoption of UGCs by mainstream news organisations indicated a dramatic increase in the opportunities for contributions from readers and that senior news executives corroborated this in spite of the doubts expressed about the quality of contributions from the public. The authors equally found out that the editors of the selected British newspapers were adopting traditional gatekeeping techniques in verifying UGCs. Furthermore, Singer (2014), studied how users have become secondary gatekeepers in a shared media space. She argued that the role of the user has been enabled, expanded and facilitated by digital technologies and this phenomenon was now pervasive on American newspaper Websites. Kaufhold, Valenzuela, and Zuniga (2010), noted that while the contributions of professional journalism to democratic citizenship is not in doubt, the proliferation of UGCs cannot be assumed to play similar role. In their study which sought to determine the relationship between the use and trust of both professional journalism and user-generated journalism, and political knowledge and participation, they discovered that user-generated journalism was negatively related to knowledge of notable political figures, but strongly and positively associated with higher levels of online and offline participation; and that professional journalism produced gains in knowledge and offline participation.

Thurman (2008), in a study on the adoption of UGCs by online news media, using in-depth interviews with the editors of nine major British news Websites, he found out that the journalists were debating their changing roles, as well as the innovations taking place in online news rooms, among others. Nah, Yamamoto, Chung, and Zuercher (2015), studied modeling the adoption and use of citizen journalism by online newspapers in the US, using Web-based survey as its research design. The author discovered that experience as online journalists and online staff size played a role in the adoption and use of UGC. The authors equally discovered that the structurally-plural nature of a community was related to the adoption and use of news stories written together by professional and citizen journalists.

In another study by Singer (2010), on the perceived effects of UGCs on newsroom norms, values and routines, using select local British newspaper journalists as the subjects, she found out among others that, the journalists believed that UGCs can undermine journalistic norms and values, unless carefully monitored, a gatekeeping tasks they fear cannot fit within newsroom routines. Furthermore, Lewis, Kaufhold, and Lasorsa (2010), examined how community newspaper editors

negotiate the professional complexities posed by citizen journalism, a phenomenon that tend to undermine their gatekeeping control over content. Through an interview with 29 newspaper editors in Texas, in the US, they found out that while some editors either approve or disapprove the use of UGCs basically on philosophical grounds, others also either approve or disapprove on practical grounds. Similarly, Susarla, Oh, and Tan (2012), Akinfemisoye (2013), Lewis and Usher (2013), Levina and Arriaga (2014), Khajuria and Khajuria (2017) and Kim and Song (2017) have also discussed the use of UGCs in professional journalism practice and other areas of communication. However, there appears to be a missing link in all these literatures. None of the authors was able to point out that the use of UGCs in news reports was displacing the architecture of traditional news elements; that is the 5Ws and H- Who, What, Where, When, Why, and How. This research will attempt to fill in that gap.

Participatory Journalism

Participatory journalism, also known as “citizen journalism” or “democratic journalism” is premised on the active role of the citizens in the process of collecting, reporting, analysing, and disseminating news and information. In other context, it is seen as an alternative form of journalism as opposed to mainstream journalism. However, one common denominator is that it has been accentuated by the emergence and resurgence of digital technologies, especially the social media. According to Domingo et al (2008), after sampling 16 online newspaper (eight selected countries in Europe and eight in the United States of America), they discovered that the news organisations were interpreting online users’ participation mainly as an opportunity for them (users) to debate current events, while other stages of the news production process were closed to citizen involvement or controlled by professional journalists when participation was allowed.

Noor (2017) in a survey conducted among journalists in Kashmir region discovered that citizen journalism does not pose any imminent threat to mainstream journalism since it (citizen journalism) does not enjoy wide acceptability like mainstream journalism; and that rather, participatory journalism holds potential benefits as a source of news to mainstream journalism. Karlsson, Bergstrom, Clerwall, and Fast (2015) assessed the long-term viability of participatory journalism using Swedish content and user data. They discovered that inclusion of blog-links on the Websites of these newspapers increased from 2007 to 2010, and decreased dramatically from 2011 onwards. They attributed this decline to loss of value and little appeal to the Swedes. Furthermore, Frohlich, Quiring, and Engesser (2012) conducted a standardised quantitative online survey of participatory journalists at a German-language Website- Myheimat, known for its participatory journalism bent, with about 37,000 contributors. The results from the authors’ research were able to contribute to the understanding of the participatory journalism system in general and of the forces behind the huge popularity of this brand of journalism as well as future development.

Holton, Coddington, and Zuniga (2013) examined citizen journalism and journalistic values through the lens of content creators and consumers, using a nationally-representative survey of adults in the US. They discovered that consumers of citizen journalism hold more positive attitudes towards this brand of journalism, but do not show a significant identification with professional journalistic values. They further hypothesised that compared with consumption, content creation played a relatively insignificant role in predicting attitudes toward citizen journalism as well as the professional tenets of good journalism. Other scholars who have written on this citizen or

participatory journalism phenomenon are: Simons (2016), Luo and Harrison (2019), Ritonga (2019), Sibanda (2019), as well as Zeng, Jain, Nguyen, and Allan (2019).

Theoretical Framework

This research is anchored on the Public Sphere Theory and Technological Determinism Theory. The public sphere ordinarily as a concept refers to an area in social life where individuals come together to identify and discuss societal problem freely; and that through discussions, influence political actions. Originally coined by Jurgen Habermas, the German philosopher, contemporary public sphere takes place through the mass media and other digital media platforms. Habermas (1989), argues that the public sphere requires specific means for disseminating information and influencing those who receive it. Some other scholars such as Janssen and Kies (2005) as well as Edgerly, Vraga, Fung, Moon, and Yoo (2015), argue that digital technologies serve as an online public sphere because of easy access and interactivity. So the embedding and integration of UGCs into professional journal practice has not only democratised the public sphere, it has also expanded and empowered the public to contribute to the public sphere.

The Technological Determinism Theory on the other hand, is often traced to Thorstein Veblen, an American sociologist. However, Marshall McLuhan, popularised it in his groundbreaking work, entitled: *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, where he noted the way technology was shaping how individuals in the society think, feel, act, and how the society was moving from one technological epoch to another (tribal, literate/print, electronic and digital). Since the social media are products of the digital revolution, the patterns and dimensions of communication among some people in the society are also changing. In other words, technological devices are now driving socio-cultural and political change in the society. For instance, before the evolution of the Internet, particularly the Web 2.0 component, journalism was basically for professionals, but because of the Internet and specifically the social media, non-professionals have entered the business of journalism. So social media UGCs as products of the digital revolution are expanding the frontiers of professional journalism practice thereby engendering socio-cultural change.

Methodology

The research design for this study was survey. According to Brown, Cozby, Kee, and Worden (2018), survey research design is quite appropriate in eliciting people's views on an issue, because it employs careful sampling techniques to obtain an accurate description of an entire population. The population of the study was 491, consisting of journalists in Daily Trust, Leadership and Premium Times newspapers (for Abuja), and The Cable, The Punch, and Vanguard newspapers (for Lagos). It is important to note that this population also comprised the correspondents. However, only those available in the head office of each newspaper organisation were used as the respondents. The sample size was 75, while convenience sampling technique was used. Although it is a non-probability sampling technique, it is usually used when the sample of a population can be easy to contact or reached (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012). The determination of the sample size followed Glen (1992) sample size determination table, cited by Singh and Masuku (2014), which states that at + or - 5 precision levels, where confidence level is 95% and $P=0.5$, a population that is less than 1000, should have a sample size of 75. The method of data collection was questionnaire, while the method of analysis was frequency table, charts and Likert scale.

Data Presentation And Analysis

In this study, all the 75 copies of questionnaire administered were answered correctly and returned. This could be attributed to the small size of the sample. According to Ohaja (2003), where the response rate of a research is 70% and above, the findings are valid. However, the respondents' demographic data are presented in the table below:

Table 1:

Respondents' Demographic Data

Variable	Frequency/Percentage
1. Gender	
Male	42 (56%)
Female	33 (44%)
Total	75 (100%)
2. Media House	
Daily Trust	10 (13.3%)
Leadership	10 (13.3%)
Premium Times	10 (13.3%)
The Cable	14 (18.7%)
The Punch	16 (21.4%)
Vanguard	15 (21.4%)
Total	75 (100%)
3. Years of Experience	
1-5	18 (24%)
6-10	30 (40%)
11-15	11 (14.7%)
16 & above	16 (21.3%)
Total	75 (100%)

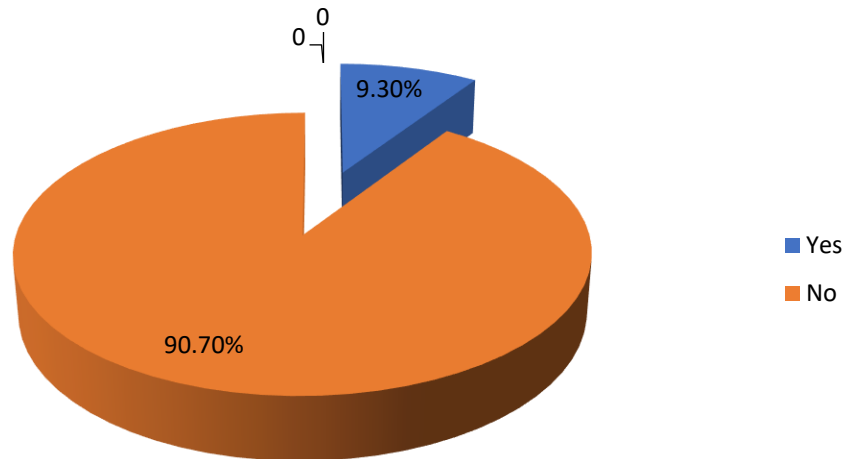
From Table 1 above, concerning the gender of the respondents, it is glaring that print journalism is still a male-dominated area, compared with the number of women in the broadcast segment of the media industry. Secondly, the newspaper houses in Abuja tend to have fewer journalists than those in Lagos. This could be attributed to the fact that Lagos still remains the hub of the media industry in Nigeria. And lastly, from the years of experience of the respondents, it shows that younger people with better education and more digital literacy skills have joined journalism. It is important that The Cable and Premium Times are basically online newspapers. The vibrancy of their journalism tends to indicate that the future of journalism in Nigeria will be online, thereby pointing to the embedding of more UGCs in news reporting.

Research Question 1: To what extent do the journalists in Abuja and Lagos, Nigeria use UGCs in news reporting? Before answering this research question, the respondents were asked two preliminary questions: the first was if the respondents were aware of the use of UGCs in news reporting. All of them (N=75) answered in the affirmative. The second question sought to know

how many of the respondents have integrated UGCs in their news reporting. Below is the presentation of their response:

Figure 1:

Percentage Scores for the Integration of UGCs in News Reporting



From Figure 1 above, a great majority of the respondents have not used UGCs in their news reports. This means that in spite of the emergence of UGCs in the reporting of news in Nigeria, especially on news Websites of professional media houses, its use is still at a rudimentary level. Concerning research question 1, the few respondents who said they have used UGCs in their news reports were further asked the extent of such use. All of them (9.3%), said they have used to “a little extent”. At this juncture, it is important to point out that the respondents were given three options to choose from: (a) A large extent (b) Some extent (c) A little extent. The first option (A large extent) meant using UGCs in news reports at least four times a week; the second option (Some extent) meant using UGCs in news reports at least two times a week; while the third option (A little extent) meant at least once in two weeks. So in choosing the third option, all the respondents underscore the fact that the use of UGCs in news reports is still at a rudimentary level in Nigeria.

Research Question 2: How Do The Journalists In Abuja And Lagos, Nigeria, Perceive The Use Of Ugcs In News Reporting?

This research was meant to highlight perception of UGCs by the respondents in news reports. The respondents' views are presented below using Likert scale:

Table 2:

Likert Scale Result on Respondents' Perception of the Use of UGCs in News Reporting

S/N	Statements	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	Standard Deviation
		F	F	F	F	F		
1	User-generated contents contribute to the expansion of the public sphere.	28	30	12	-	-	3.9	1.19
2	User-generated contents have contributed to participatory journalism	23	37	10	5	-	4.4	1.98
3	User-generated contents may the future of online journalism.	14	36	18	7	-	3.8	1.18
4	User-generated contents may adulterate quality journalism, because of the absence of gatekeeping.	30	32	13	-	-	4.22	1.91

KEY: SA= Strongly Agree; A=Agree; U=Undecided; D=Disagree; SD=Strongly Disagree. Decision Rule: If Mean \leq 1.49 = Undecided; 1.5-2.49= Strongly Disagree; 2.5-3.49= Disagree; 3.5-4.49=Agree; 4.5-5=Strongly Agree

From the responses in Table 2, while the dominant consensus of opinion is that UGCs have come to be a part of contemporary professional journalism, the latent opinion is that UGCs have the potential to erode quality journalism.

Research Question 3: Which Social Media Platform Ugcs Do The Journalists In Abuja And Lagos, Nigeria, Use Often In News Reporting?

This research question was quite imperative because it is the social media through the Web 2.0 phenomenon of the Internet that have made UGCs to be one of the trends that are transforming the landscape of professional journalism. All the respondents, both those who have used UGCs in news reports and those who have not were asked to respond; in addition, they were also asked to rank-order the social media platforms in order of usage. Their views are presented below:

Figure 2:
Percentage Scores for the Most Used Social Media Platform UGCs

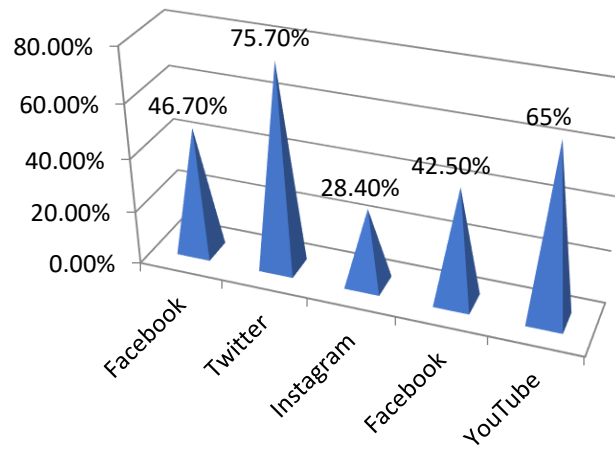


Figure 2 indicates that the micro-blogging social media platform- Twitter got the highest number of selection. This may be as result of the fact that the features of Twitter lend itself more to participatory journalism than other social media platform. YouTube came second because it is often used as amateur videos by television stations and the Websites of the newspapers.

Research Question 4: What are the challenges faced by the journalists in Abuja and Lagos, Nigeria, in their use of UGCs in news reporting? This research question was directed specifically at those journalists (N=7) who have used UGCs in their news reports. In addition, they were asked to choose more than one option where applicable. Below are their views:

Figure 3:
Percentage Scores for Challenges Faced by the Respondents in Their Use of UGCs in News Reporting

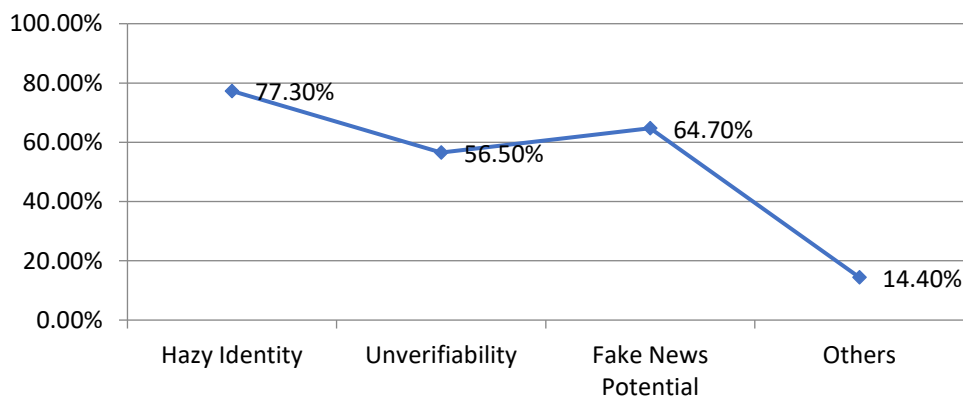


Figure 3 shows that most users of the social media, especially Twitter do not use their real names on their account, as a result their identity will not only be hazy, but can also be cloaked by anonymity, which can sometimes be unethical in professional journalism practice. Moreover, in this

Post-Truth Era hallmarked by fake news, there is the potential this can creep into factual reports by professional journalists.

Discussion Of Findings

From this research it was found that all the respondents (N=75) were aware of the use of UGCs in professional journalism practice; however only very few (9.3%), had ever used UGCs in their news reports. This may share a little agreement with the findings of Karlsson, Bergstrom, Clerwall, and Fast (2015), who discovered in their study the loss of appeal and decline in professional journalistic values as the reasons for low UGC usage in professional journalism practice. It follows therefore that most of the respondents, and by wider implication, a majority of Nigerian professional journalists are yet to come to terms with the use of UGCs in their news reports. Supporting this also is that even the few journalists who have used UGCs in their news reports have done that a few times; that is, once in two weeks.

The research also illuminated the fact that UGCs contribute to the expansion of the public sphere. This tends to justify the views of Janssen and Kies (2005) as well as Edgerly, Vraga, Fung, and Moon (2015), who have noted how digital technologies such as the social media are contributing to the expansion of the public sphere; in addition, it also validates the Public Sphere Theory enunciated by Jurgen Habermas (1989) and used as one of the theoretical anchors of this research. UGCs have contributed to participatory journalism, justifying the views of Simons (2016), Luo and Harrison (2019), Ritonga (2019), Sibanda (2019), as well as Zeng, Jain, Nguyen, and Allan (2019). UGCs may be the future of online journalism. This can be seen in the decline of patronage of the print version of newspapers in Nigeria especially, due to the negative impact of digital technologies. Also, UGCs may adulterate quality journalism, because of the absence of gatekeeping. This tends to validate the views of Hermida (2012) and Tolmes, et al (2017).

On the most used social media platform UGCs, Twitter was ranked the highest by the respondents (77.3%), followed by YouTube (65%). The online newspapers such as Premium Times and The Cable as well as the Websites of other national newspapers often use UGCs from Twitter; followed by YouTube. Apart from Twitter UGCs, television stations use YouTube UGCs more than their newspaper counterparts. The YouTube UGCs are either credited where the source is known or simply called “amateur videos”. Concerning the challenges posed to professional journalism by the use of UGCs, the respondents’ fear of “hazy identity”, “unverifiability” of facts and the potential of fake news are quite germane. This again tends to validate Hermida (2012) and Tolmes, et al (2017).

Conclusion And Recommendations

It is evident that journalism practice in the 21st Century is no longer business as usual. As the revolution engendered by digital technologies continue to transform the landscape of the media, so also will be the emergence of certain trends that will make the media to be in a transition. And one of these trends is UGCs enabled by the social media, because of the latter’s affordances such as participation, conversation, sharing, collaboration, connection, and linkage. Pavlik and McIntosh (2012) support the above by characterising these social media affordances under five Cs as follows: choice, conversation, curation, creation, and collaboration. It is in most of these five Cs that one can locate how UGCs have become a part of the contemporary news architecture, and questioning the

traditional news architecture of 5W and H (What, Who, Where, When, Why, and How). This means that in the current news architecture driven by the integration of social media UGCs in news reports, the traditional news architecture of 5W and H may no longer be sacrosanct. Arising from the above, the authors recommend that social media UGCs should be used in news reports on policy issues so that a bottom-up approach to the public sphere can be entrenched in Nigeria's democracy and also to engender participatory journalism.

References

- Akinfemisoye, M. O. (2014). Negotiating convergence: Alternative journalism and institutional practices of Nigerian journalists. *Digital Journalism*, 2, 62-76.
- Alejandro, J. (2010). *Journalism in the age of the social media*. Oxford: Reuters Institute
- Brown, K.W., Cozby, P.C., Kee, D.W., & Worden, P.E. (2018). *Research methods in human development* (2nd ed.). Mountain View, California: Mayfield Publishing Company
- Domingo, D. et al. (2008). Participatory journalism practices in the media and beyond: An international comparative study of initiatives in online newspapers. *Journalism Practice*, 2 (3), 326-342.
- Dominick, J.R. (2011). *The dynamics of mass communication: Media in transition* (11th ed.), New York: McGraw-Hill Inc.
- Edgerly, S., Vraga, E., Fung, T., Moon, T.J., & Yoo, W.H. (2015). YouTube as a public sphere: The proposition 8 debate. A Paper Presented at the Association of Internet Researchers Conference, October 8-10, Milwaukee
- Frohlich, R., Quiring, O., & Engesser, S. (2012). Between idiosyncratic self-interests and professional standards: A contribution to the understanding of participatory journalism in Web 2.0: Results from an online survey in Germany. *Journalism*, 13 (8), 1041-1063.
- Haak, B.V.D., Parks, M., & Castells, M. (2012). The future of journalism: Networked journalism. *International Journal of Communication*, 6, 2923-2938.
- Habermas, J. (1989). *The structural transformation of the public sphere: An inquiry into a category of bourgeois society*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Hermida, A. (2012). Tweets and truth: Journalism as a discipline of collaborative verification. *Journalism Practice*, 6 (5-6), 659-668.
- Hermida, A., & Thurman, N. (2014). A clash of cultures: The integration of user-generated content within professional journalistic frameworks at British newspaper websites. 343-356.
- Holton, A.E., & Coddington, de Zuniga, H.G. (2013). Whose news? Whose values? Citizen journalism and journalistic values through the lens of content creators and consumers. *Journalism Practice*, 7 (6), 720-737.
- Janssen, D., & Kies, R. (2005). Online forums and deliberative democracy. *Acta Politica*. 40 (3), 317-335.

- Karlsson, M., Bergstrom, A., Clerwall, C., & Fast, K. (2015). Participatory Journalism- the (r)evolution that wasn't: Content and user behaviour in Sweden. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 20 (3), 295-311.
- Kaufhold, K., Valenzuela, S., & de Zuniga, H.G. (2010). Citizen journalism and democracy: How user-generated news use relates to political knowledge and participation. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 87, (3-4), 515-529.
- Khajuria, R., & Khajuria, L. (2017). A study of user-generated content on social networking sites and its impact on consumer-based brand equity constructs. *Global Journal of Management and Business research: E-Marketing*, 7(1), 1-9.
- Kim, M., & Song, D. (2017). When brand-related UGC induces effectiveness on social media: The role of content sponsorship and content type. *International Journal of Advertising*, DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/1080/02650487.2017.1349031>
- Levina, N., & Arriaga, M. (2014). Distinction and status production on user-generated content platforms: Using Bourdieu's theory of cultural production to understand social dynamics in online fields. *Information Systems Research*, 25 (3), 468-488.
- Lewis, S.C., Kaufhold, K., & Lasorsa, D.L. (2010). Thinking about citizen journalism: The philosophical and practical challenges of user-generated content for community newspapers. *Journalism Practice*, 4(2), 163-179.
- Lewis, S.C., & Usher, N. (2013). Open source and journalism: Toward new frameworks for imagining news innovation. *Media, Culture & Society*, 3 (5), 602-619.
- Luo, Y., & Harrison, T.M. (2019). How citizen journalists impact the agendas of traditional media and the government policy-making process in China. *Global Media and China*, 4 (1), 72-93.
- McLuhan, M. (1962). *The Gutenberg galaxy: The making of typographic man*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Nah, S., Yamato, M., Chung, D.S., & Zuercher, R. (2015). Modeling the adoption and use of citizen journalism by online newspapers. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 92 (2), 399-420.
- Noor, R. (2017). Citizen journalism vs mainstream journalism: A study on challenges posed by amateurs. *Athens Journal of Mass Media and Communications*, 3 (1), 55-76.
- Ntalakas, A., Dimoulas, C., Kalliris, G., & Veglis, A. (2017). Drone journalism: Generating immersive experiences. *Journal of Media Critiques*, 3 (11), 186-199.
- Ohaja, E.U. (2003). *Mass communication research and project report writing*. Surulere: John Letterman, Ltd.
- Paulussen, S., & Ugille, P. (2008). User-generated content in the newsroom: Professional and organisational constraints on participatory journalism. *Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture*, 5 (2), 24-40.

- Ritonga, R., & Syahputra, I. (2019). Citizen journalism and public participation in the era of new media in Indonesia: From street to tweet. *Media & Communication*, 7 (3), 79-90
- Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2012). *Research methods for business students*. Harlow: Pearson Education Ltd.
- Sibandana, S. (2019). The influence of citizen journalism in the practice and profession of journalism in Zimbabwe. *International journal of international relations, media and mass communication studies*, 5 (1), 42-51.
- Simons, G. (2016). The impact of social media and citizen journalism on mainstream Russian news. *Russian Journal of Communication*, 8 (1), 33-51.
- Singer, J.B. (2014). User-generated visibility: Secondary gatekeeping in a shared media space. *New Media & Society*, 16(1), 55-73.
- Singh, A.S., & Masuku, M.B. (2014). Sampling techniques and determination of sample size in applied statistics research: An overview. *International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management*, 11 (11), 1-22).
- Susarla, A., J.H., & Tan, Y. (2012). Social networks and the diffusion of user-generated content: Evidence from YouTube. *Information Systems Research*, 23 (1), 23-41.
- Thurman, N. (2008). Forum for citizen journalists? Adoption of user-generated content initiatives by online new media. *New Media & Society*, 10 (1), 139-157.
- Tolmie, P., et al. (2017). Supporting the user-generated content in journalistic practice. A Paper presented at ACM CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems. Denver, Colorado USA, May, 2017.
- Zeng, X., Jain, S., Nguyen, A., & Allan, S. (2019). New perspectives on citizen journalism. *Global Media and China*, 4 (1), 3-12.