# THE UTILIZATION OF ONLINE NIGERIAN NEWSPAPERS BY JANET ONOMEH UBOGU (PH.D, CLN) P.M.B 1 DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

## ABRAKA, DELTA STATE, NIGERIA

#### Abstract

The paper is on the utilization of online Nigerian newspapers. The study employed descriptive survey. The population of the study was made up of university students, civil servants and business men and women in Abraka, Delta State Nigeria. Four hundred and twenty structured questionnaires were administered to the respondents, but only four hundred copies were found usable for the study. The analysis was done using frequency counts and percentages. The findings of the study revealed that the majority of the respondents read online newspapers on daily basis; respondents used online newspapers to acquire and update information; most of the respondents preferred online newspapers because of ease of access to news information; the major problem encountered in reading online newspapers were delay in Internet response and difficulties in detecting false stories. The following recommendations were made: publishers of online newspapers should make their publications more visible to encourage more readers; publishers of online newspapers should update their information regularly because readers have flair for current information; readers of online newspapers should be encouraged to read other national newspapers like guardian to enable them authenticate information gathered from Guardian; access to online newspapers should be made more viable than before to encourage ease of access, and bandwidth should be expanded to increase Internet speed.

Keywords: Newspaper Use, Online Newspapers, Readership, Nigerian, Publishers, Internet, Online Version, Online Publications Introduction

Before the present day globalization and communication technology, newspaper was one of the contemporary media of communication and broadcasting of information to the individuals in the world, apart from other ways or media such as radio, cell phone, telegraph, and television which were also accessible.

83

The newspapers is extensively used because it was cheaper to acquire compared to other media (e.g television). Nevertheless, newspapers and other media (television) have some loopholes (Fortunati & Sarvica, 2004). The Internet at present is one of the most successful means of communication as a new mass medium and a dynamic one too, which has become vital element of mass media. It is not only a mass medium, but is also an international medium with possibility to reach every person in the world (Ohiagu, 2011). The Internet has improved rivalry for newspapers and revised the way news is disseminated. Therefore this study seek to investgate the frequency of online n e wp aper use, the purpose, the reasons for preferring online newspapers and the problems encounter in using online newspapers.

# The meaning of online newspaper

The online newspaper mean she new paper in an electronic form. Diffrent scholars have viewed online newspapers in different ways. The definition may not be exactly the same bet there are noticeable explanation that is common to all their definitions. One of the common quality is, the Internet as a means that is mediated by computers, in other words, its ease of access using the computers (Olley & Chile, 2015). According to Fortunati & Sarvica (2004), online newspapers stand for the likelihood to read news from the Internet and at ones expediency without paying. Fortunati and Sarvica perceived online newspapers as the bulletin of news in a digital system or publication that can also have the written edition. Online newspapers make possible message between readers and journaists. Users rather than reporter would cloose what news would bereceived and both user/readers are vital originators of content of information to the location. Deuze (2001) describe online newspaper as online reporting medja which ha she Internet as a main trait which is used to arbitrate and converse with the use of

related computers. In the same vein Sullivan (2005) stated that an online n e wp aper is news information in an electronic format or online edition on the Internet by newspaper publishers. One may explain online newspaper as the contemporary means of signifying newspaper on the Internet, in order to distribute

information and also acquire views from the general community on worldwide, nationwide and neighborhood issues. **Objectives** of the study The study is to investigate utilization of online Nigerian newspapers in Delta State, Nigeria. This will be achieved by focusing on the following objectives:

1. To determine the frequency of online newspapers usage 2. To determine the purpose of using online newspapers 3. To determine the type of online newspaper in use 4. To determine the reasons for the preference for online newspapers 5. To investigate the problems encountered in using online newspapers. **Research Questions** What is the frequency of online newspaper usage? What is the purpose of using online newspapers? What types of online newspapers are in use? What are the reasons for preferring online newspapers? What are the problems encountered in using online newspapers?

#### Literature Review

The users of online news are not only exposed to the current news information but they can explore earlier news stories and back issues. Hyperlinks denote skill in a processor or online setting to shift from one part of a text to another during interior connectivity. Hyperlinks allow users to steer through the records of online newspaper for information (Isyaku, Mohd & Engku, 2015). Since news online is often free and easily available, news organizations are losing their authority over audiences and advertisers. The viewers for news has fragmented and this has a harmful result on publicity income. Some newspaper publishers have tried to recompense for the loss of print publicity by initiation or

taking over successful websites (dating sites, online market places etc.) a substantial part of print newspaper users have moved to online information sources (Leurdijk, Slot, & Nieuwenhuis, 2012).

85

Thus, the online news utilization has radically improved in these current years. The appearance of the online news media has dazed the roles of print journalists in serving as the sources of information, and it has brought ino view problems towards the printewspapers production. Individuals are inclined to depend more on online newspape r instead of the print new paper, and there are questions raised about the substitute of online information media on print (Liew, 2014).

- Okoro & Diri (2010), maintain that the online newpaper, basically, is no longer notable by the fact that it appears every morning as different to the incessant flow of the broadcasters or the weekly and monthly periodicity of the magazines. Moreover, all of the se diverse media now exist in exactly the same space. The geographic distances that formerly segmented the market so strongly have now more or less, been eradicated. The online patron can have contact to any newspaper from anywhere in the globe, at any time he/she wants. Oblak (2005) stated that the online setting patrons have much straight result on the news, from a qualitative bound in the strength of their connections with journalism via e-mail, to the staging of their individual views of journalist authored stories on online paper forums and to the periodical of individual newspaper with the online newspaper. Lule (2013) observes that with deteriorating readership and mounting rivalry from blogs, most newpapers have embraced the traditions shift and have moved to online newspaper journalism. A lot of newspapers, created an online version of their printed paper that readers will haveright of entry from any location, at all times of the day. By 2010, over 10,000 newspapers had gone online. But some lesser papers-chiefly those in twopaper communities—have not only begin websites but have also stop publication of their printed paper completely. Sullivan (2005) view online newspapers as online reporting. That is,
  - publishing newspaper in an electronic type and also using Information

Communication Technology (ICT) services to relate and converse with users

on the net.

The internet news also known as online newspapers has some aspect that distinguishes it from the print newspaper. These include; the pace for updating information, multimedia level sharing, accessibility and additional substance and interactivity. There are some extra services of online newspaper outside the main information services. In truth, online newspapers services do make diversity from anyone who uses online news and visit the location of online newspapers because

they have outstanding value services. According to Cowen (2001), online newspapers proffer detail information, slogan stories and news stories on daily activities. It also relates affair of a particular area and notify members of the community about progress in the areas of parliamentary division, economy, communal, health, educational, and technical facet in the country. It also give breaking news of recent and unexpected event which is earlier than the print edition. Benefits of Online Newspaper

The Internet is one of the most effective means of communication as a new mass Medium and a powerful one too, which has become an essential part of mass media. It is not only a mass medium, but is also a worldwide medium with the possibility to reach everyone on the sphere. The Internet has increased rivalry for newspapers and revised the way news is disseminated. Circuitously, it has prejudiced advertising trends, readers' conduct and the rise of unruly technologies. As a result, newspapers have been streamlined with the web and now about 80% of newspaper publishers have included web and print plan (Isyaku, Mohd & Engku, 2015). According to Bardoel (2002) online newspaper can be used in various ways which include: distribution of news information to members of the public. Newspapers users visit the site of online newspapers to search for current

neighbouring, nationwide and international news. Online newspaper is a plausible instrument for findings jobs.

#### NIGERBIBLIOS VOL 26 NOS 1 & 2 JAN-DEC. 2017

It is mainly excdent for those looking for employment since it is an influential and inexpensive way to carry out a job hunt online. Online newspapers direct you to the place of business, announcing its job and you can circulate your skill online for your potential employers with no physical contact. They are often updated many times a day. Because they are good for making dechration of significant notices, such as, date of conference meeting, gathering, amendment of date and programmes etc.

Anybody who has fold wed the Internet production over the last decade must have seen clain of events. The conversion brought alout by the Internet on the part of the mass media is massive. One of those areas is the newpaper production. The Internet has totally changed the face of the printing production and newspapers have taken the lead. Today, the populaces do not have to stay for 24 hours for newspapers to inform them of events around the globe as newspapers now have 'breaking news. The populace do not have to stay until the purveyor(s) deliver the newsprint before knowing what is in the dailies (Olley & Chile, 2015). The availability of news on the Internet has engineered online readership of newspapers across Nigeria with print media organizations responding by lowering production, reducing the number of hard copies that goes into daily circulation and going online to remain relevant in the scheme of things. This is because of the numerous features and benefits of online newspapers over the print editions: it is che ap, convenient, portable, interactive, spntaneous and onthe-go. Online newpaper reader hip has affected the newpaper revenue in terms of revenue from advertising and sale of printcopies as well as impacted on all stages of the newspaper production routines and processes (Adima, 2015). Likewise, the findings of Brain (2005) noted that in Sweden, the subscribing users of the online versions have increased from one forth to more than a half of the users, while more than 80% of the users believe in print version of the newpaper. Their result also indcated that the users are more involved in a multimedia paper version for the future. This shows that online publication is

gaining reputations in the newspaper invention in the country. Nguyen (2006) found that "those who depend on the Internet mostly for information still used conventional sources considerably". Conventional media will keep on existing to balance the Internet in providing clents' news and information needs.

The Internet is not just for entertainment and the news but is already a crucial part of today's daily work; and a more theatrical reliance on this average is a issue of course in the future. According to the study in the world's most grown-up Internet people, by July 2002, one in five Americans had previously felt that the Web was the "most necessary" intermediate in their daily life — compared to 39 percent signifying television, 26 percent picking radio and only 11 percent choosing newspapers. More importantly, more than one-third of those aged 12-24 saw the Web as the most essential medium (while only 30 percent did so to television and 27 percent to radio); and nearly half of 12-to-34-years-olds took to the Web as "the most cool and exciting" medium. In contrast, only two percent described newspapers in the same fashion (Patel, 2010). Also, users of online newspaper gain lots of profit from the use of online newspapers. Soon (2004), noted that online newspaper gives users improved right to news and information. They have express contact with online newspaper editors via message. It provides researchers with recent and updated information in all facet of life. They are frequently modernized and provide users with up to date and more information, when compared to the print edition. It creates and improve skill of associates and outlets. Most online newspaper are typically free of charge, payment is only made for time used browsing on the net. Users can read numerous newspapers online thereby reading the cost of buying each. Users are provided with CD knowledge (video clips, moving descriptions and sounds are general features of online newspapers). They split facts with diverse persons in participating dialogue forums and converse room. It helps enhanced users Internet ability. Online newspapers allow users to verify breaking news. Problems of Online Newspapers Users In spite of many benefits of online newspapers, some factors hinder its practice and ease of use. The Internet has disrupted the previous conventional information creation routines in that contented construction, creation and sharing of information are no more different processes by diverse people, but a compound, forceful, interactive, consistent and inter-reliant process (European Commission, 2012, p.54). In fact, some electronic newspapers' newsrooms do not have an editor-in-chief to check the daily job. With the information users and customers (and not just skilled reporters) energetic in all phases of the news production process, the Internet has indeed, disrupted the value chain, blurring the difference between news producers and customers: producers are overwhelming and the patrons are also producing (Nnagbo, 2011, p.3). NIGERBIBLIOS VOL 26 NOS 1 & 2 JAN-DEC. 2017

Paulussen & Ugille (2008) have found that in spite of the escalating quest for user-generated contents, most expert newsrooms have been un willing and careful to open up mainly of the information creation procedure to the energetic participation of online patrons in that user-generated contented may not be displayed the way reporter articles are displayed in print. Onebring (2008) found that the only users resource that is given related signifcance to resources fashioned by the news association is users photos of breaking information proceedings. Some newspaper executives are anxious that young people today have so little relationship to newspapers that they will not develop into readers, with dire results for the prospect of the newpapers nationally. Information written for the Newspapers Association of America coneludes that other media are drawing younger persons away from papers to such an extent that there will be no newspaper readers left by 2070, if current trends persist (Kasmi, 2015). Othe r pr blems faced by newspaper readers are irregular power supply. As a result of the above, newpaper users do exprience power outage during browsing online newpaper sites and this results to loss of vital news information rather than aiding users (Adomi, Om deko & Otolo, 2004).

Methodology

The study is on the utilization of online Nigerian newspapers. Survey research design was used to carry out the study. The population comprised of university students, civil servants and business men and women in Abraka, Delta State, Nigeria totaling 420 respondents. The total population was used for the study. Four hundred and twenty copies of structured questionnaire were administered to the respondents; four hundred were returned and found usable. Therefore, the sample size for the study was 400 respondents. Data was analyzed using frequency and simple percentges.

#### Response Rate

# **Table 1: Categories of Online Newspaper Users**

Categories of users	No of Respondents	Percentage
University Students	250	62.5%
Civil Servants	100	25%
Business Men and Women	50	12.5%
Others		
Total	400	100%

The table revealed that 250 (62.5%) of the respondents are university students, while 50 (12.5%) of them were business men and women. This means that majority of the respondents were university students.

Research Question 1: How often do you use online Newspapers? Table 2: Frequency of online Newspaper use

Frequency

Daily	175	43.7%
Two-Three times a week	15	3.75%
Weekly	126	31.5%
Once in a while	29	7.25%
Never	55	13.7%
Total	400	100%

Frequency Counts

Table 2 shows the frequency of online newspaper use. The table indicated that 175 (43.7%) of the people read online newspaper on daily basis. One hundred and twenty six (31.5%) respondents read online newspaper weekly, while 55 (13.7%) never read online newspapers at any time. This means that a majority of

#### the respondents read newspapers daily.

#### NIGERBIBLIOS VOL 26 NOS 1 & 2 JAN-DEC. 2017

Percentage

Research Question 2: What is your purpose of reading online newspaper?

Table 3: Purpse of Online Newpaper Usage

Purpose For recreation To obain information for academic purposes To acquire current information For business information Ease of access

Freely available	21 400	5.25% 100%
Total Table 3 shows the purposes of online newspaper r		

Frequency

89

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Percentage

22.2%

28.7%

29 2%

11.7%

2.75%

Table 3 shows the purposes of online newspaper reading. The table reveals that 117 (29.2%) of the respondents used online newspapers to acquire current information. One hundred and fifteen (28.7%) agreed that they use it to obtain information for a catemic purposes. Only 89 (22.2%) of the respondents stated that they use it 6 r recreation purpose. The research conbuded that most of the respondents use online new papers to acquire current information.

**Research Question 3:** Which of the following online newpapers do you use most?Research Question 3: Which of the following online new papers do you use most?

# Table 4: Online Newspapers Most Read

Online newspapers	Frequency	Percentage
Guardian	118	29.5%
Vanguard	82	20.5%
Tribune	73	18.2%
Daily Times	70	17.5%
Punch	29	7.25%
Champion	28	7%
Pointer	6	1.5%

Total 400 100%

# NIGERBIBLIOS VOL 26 NOS 1 & 2, JAN-DEC. 2017

Table 4 shows the online newspaper that people used most. The table shows that 118 (29.5%) of the users used the Guardian newspaper. Eighty two (20.5%) mostly used Vanguard newspaper, while 73(18.2%) mostly used of tribune as their choice newspaper. It therefore means that most of the respondents use the guardian newspaper.

**Research Question 4:** What are the reasons for the preference of online newspapers?

# Table 5: Reasons for Preferring Online Newspapers

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Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
Easy access to news information	135	33.7%
Current news information	129	32.2%
Cost less to access/use	45	11.2%
More convenient	31	7.75%
Improve internet skill	14	3.5%
Ease of contributing my opinion to issue of my	25	6.25%
own country		
Able to read multiple news online	21	5.25%



Table 5 shows the reasons for the preference of online newspaper. The table shows that 135 (33.7%) of the respondents prefer reading online newspapers because of easy access to news information. One hundred and twenty nine (32.2%) preferred reading online newspaper because they provide up to date news information. Only 45 (11.2%) indicated that they preferred reading online newspapers because they cost less to access/use. This means that a majority of the respondents use online newspapers because of access to news information.

# Research Question 5: What are problems encountered in online newspaper use?

# Table 6 : Problems of Online Newspaper Us age

Frequency Problem Percentage Difficulties retrieving required information 24.5%98 Delay in Internet response 28.7%Too many navigation control 49 12.2%Diffcuties in detecting false stories 28.2%113 Too many advertisement 15.5% 62

# Total

Table 6 slows problems encounterd in using online newspapers. The table slows that 115 (28.7.%) of the respondents affirmed that delay in Internet response was the major problem they encountered in using online new papers. One hundred and thirteen (28.2%) of them stated that difficulties in detecting false stories was the problem they fac d. Ninety eight (24.5%) of them said difficulties in retrieving required information was the problem they had in using online new papers. The table revealed that most of the respondents experienced delay in Internet response while tryingtoaccessonInenewspapers.

## DiscussionofFindings

Findings are discussed based on the following sub-headings. Frequency of new papers use, purpose of online paper us age, online new paper us al, reasons for the preference of online newspapers and problems encountered in using online newspapers.

# Frequency of Online Newspapers use

The results of the study show that the majority of the respondents used online newpapers on daily basis probably tomeet their information nects in one way or the other. The finding is in support of the finding of Olley & Chile (2015) that readers read Nigerian online newspapers on daily bases with the tendency to keep

abreast with what is happening in the various part of the country and also to meet

94

their personal information needs. Also the study is in line with the study of Isyaku, Mohd & Engku (2015) that users read online newspapers daily because they give certain values to the readers which their print counterparts do not give. Purpose of using online newspapers The findings of the study show that majority of the respondents used online newspapers to acquire up-to-date information. Probably this ensures currency in information acquisition. The finding is in agreement with the findings of Isyaku, Mohd & Engku (2015) that readers are motivated to read online version of newspapers because of its ability to provide timely and current information. The study also revealed that users used online version of newspapers to obtain information for academic purpose. This is also in support of the study of Okoro & Diri (2012) that there is this speculation that contents of online edition of newspaper satisfy readers' need for information and slows down the drive for the print versions. The study is also in consonance with the study of Mathew, Ogedebe & Adeniji (2013) that majority of Nigerians who read newspapers are aware of their motives for information and entertainment, and that people use these motives

#### Type of Nigerian online newspapers

The study shows the major Nigerian newspapers that were mostly read online. The finding shows that 118 (29.5%) of the respondents read the Guardian Newspaper.

This could be as a result of important and current information it carries, or perhaps the site easily responds when clicked for access.

**Reasons for the preferring online newspapers** The study shows that majority of the respondent's preferred online newspapers to print version of the newspapers because of easy access to news information. This finding supports the findings of Salman, Ibrahim, Yusof, Mustaffa & Mahbob (2011) and Isyaka, Mohd & Engku (2015) that the Internet has become a major source of news and information in recent years. However, printed newspapers still remain the main and important reading and informative document for the people to rely on. Despite online reading being free, some good number of readers still

95

prefers reading print newspapers to its online counterpart.

Problems encountered in using online new papers The findings of the study show that delay in Internet response and difficulties in detecting false stories were the major problems encountered in using online version of newspapers. This could be as a result of too many users of the Internet at same time. This study is in line with the study of Olley & Chile (2015) that pages not loading on time and pages not being available are the most prominent pr db ms users encountered while trying to access the Nigerian newspaper on the Internet. The finding is also in conjunction with the study of Adomi, Omodeko & Otolo (2004) that Internet users are usually sensitive to any delay in the Internet response within seconds. Users at times experience delay in logging to site of online

newspapers.

# **Summary of the Findings**

Find ng slows that majority of the respondents read new papers daliy. The study revealed that most of the respondents use online newspapers to acquire current information. Finding also shows that most of the respondents use the guardian newspaper. The indicated that respondents prefer online newspapers because of ease of access

# to news information

The findings of the study revealed that most of the respondents experienced delay in Internet response while trying to access online newspapers.

Recommendation Publisters of online newspapers should make their publications more visible to encourage more reatrs. Publishers of online newpapers should update their information regularly because readers are alw ays go for current information. Readers of online newspapers should be encouraged to read other national newspapers like guard an to enable the m authenticate information gathered from guardian. Access to online newspapers should be made more viable than before to encourage

ease of access.

# Those responsible for the bandwidth should expand Internet bandwidth.

#### Conclusion

The use of Internet in our society today is growing in leaps and bounds. This development has given users of newspaper to read papers of their choice without stress as they can easily access them via Internet. Many Nigerians today have preference for online newspaper than their print counterpart because of easy access to information news as indicated in the study. If newspapers editors are to make good impact in online reading of newspaper, they should strive to develop means of making more Nigerians aware of competitive business amongst themselves and other media houses. The study therefore conclude that the owners of newspaper should put more efforts and go in dept in packaging their services to motivate more users or readers of online newspapers throughout the country.

Recommendation Publishers of online descriptions should make their publications more visible to bookuse eactors around a goaling around we was a field, information result bookuse eactors around a goaling around information destructions are and bookuse eactors around a goaling around information destructions are and bookuse eactors around a goaling around information destructions are and bookuse eactors around a goaling around information destructions are and bookuse eactors around a goaling around information and a solar and bookuse eactors around an each is the around information are around a bookus around a solar around a solar around a solar and a bookus around a bookus around a solar around a solar around a solar and a bookus around a bookus around a solar around around a solar around a bookus around a bookus around around a solar around around a solar around a bookus around a bookus around around a solar around around around around a bookus around a bookus around around a solar around a bookus around aro

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