

Media Convergence: A Paradigm Shift in Journalism Education in Nigeria

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Abstract

The mass departure of consumers from newspapers and broadcast television media to web media is not limited to the developed world but also has become a visible trend in developing countries like Nigeria. In Nigeria, Journalism/Mass Communication educators struggle with the challenge of ever-increasing innovations and try to incorporate such realities in the curriculum. After over one hundred and fifty two years of journalism practice in Nigeria, the concerns of journalism and mass communication educators remain how to ensure an effective blend of journalism curriculum with the constantly changing needs of the media industry. The speed of the adoption and diffusion of innovations in the contemporary media industry is posing a great challenge to media educators as the newsroom appears to be constantly ahead of the classroom, especially in the developing world. This paper therefore looked at how the journalism educators can adequately prepare and assist young and prospective journalists to become pro-active in order to meet with the new professional challenges generated by media convergence. The paper also made modest recommendations to this effect.

Keyword: Media Convergence, Journalism Education, Technology, Traditional Media

1. Introduction

The Web and its related technologies have significantly influenced not only the ways in which news is consumed, but also how journalism education and the ongoing training of news professionals are undertaken.

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How relevant is journalism curriculum in preparing the students to meet new challenges posed by the emergence of new media?

The pressures of communication revolution and the information revolution in the mid nineties compelled the journalism educators to debate alternate models of curriculum. They found the answer in convergence. There are different connotations of the term, "Convergence" and the term is defined and interpreted here within realms of journalism. Convergence in journalism is referred to as, 'multiple-platform publishing' or as 'integrated journalism' (Quinn, 2005).

In media, convergence has given new content generating and delivery platforms. In journalism education, convergence is perceived as imparting education and training across print, broadcast, and online media platforms. Today television, broadband, cell phone and radio have converged to give news round the clock for different readers/listeners/viewers signalling the varied ways the news is delivered at the convenience of the audience. Like a web page convergence curriculum is dynamic requiring constant upgrading bridging the void between theory and practice (Usharani, 2010).

The coming of technology in media operations has altered in a positive way, the ecology of mass communication across the world. The speed of the adoption and diffusion of innovations in the contemporary media industry is posing a great challenge to media educators as the newsroom appears to be constantly ahead of the classroom, especially in the developing world (Odunlami, 2014).

In Nigeria, like other developing nations, Mass Communication educators grapple with the challenge of ever-increasing innovations and try to incorporate such in the curriculum.

While it is difficult as Seelig (2010) points out, to provide a journalism and mass communication curriculum that is all things to all students, the dynamism and psychology of media audiences have become so intricate and complex such that no media professional that is worth his salt can afford to ignore.

As Hartman said "*Because readers' likes and dislikes keep changing, we, too, must keep changing. That is why readership research, focus groups and listening exercises are such important tools to use as we reshape and rebuild the newspaper (1995)*". Hence, while the aim of media practitioners remains how to stay afloat in the competitive media market through the constant creation and design of sophisticated media product/cutting edge content, both educators and professionals need to work together to re-invent journalism and mass communication education. Seelig (2010) has this to say,

The mindset should not be about creating new forms of journalism or mass communication, but about new ways of reaching and engaging audiences. The same holds true for educators. Just as the media look to innovative techniques to reach audiences, educators should be asking themselves if they are doing everything possible to reach and engage their students.

1.1 Background of Journalism Education in Nigeria

It is pertinent to note that Nigerian journalism took off much earlier than the inauguration of the Nigerian nation. Evidently, Nigerian journalism was not guided at inception by any law or regulations. Precisely, there was none in place to define the requirements, composition and operations of the players in the industry.

However, Okunna (1987) reveals that the University of Nigeria, Nsukka pioneered journalism in 1961 at the Bachelor of Arts (B.A) degree level; the department of mass communication, University of Lagos started in 1967 which was supported by UNESCO, while the Institute of Management and Technology (IMT) in Enugu state was the first to start mass communication department at the polytechnic level as it commenced lectures in 1978. Aside University and polytechnic level journalism education, records show that varying stages of training had existed in Nigeria. Akinfeleye (2007) includes the Daily Times Training School established in 1965 formerly referred to as Times Journalism Institute (TJI). The Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) Training School commenced in 1959 primarily to provide on-the-job training for journalists and other broadcasting staff.

As events in the world became more complex, a need also arose for better skills to enable information gatherers and disseminators in the media reflect an accurate picture of circumstances. Azikiwe included journalism in the curriculum profiles of the University of Nigeria in 1960.

Thus, the Jackson College of Journalism named in honour of the late John Payne Jackson, became the pioneer department of journalism in a university in West Africa. As at 1985, only the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, the University of Lagos and the University of Maiduguri and few polytechnics and media organizations offered training in journalism, but as at today, almost all polytechnics, monotechnics, colleges and several other institutions including universities offer training in journalism or mass communication as this has become one of the most popular jobs in our age.

According to Oso (2012), early Nigerian journalists acquired their professional training while on the job, while most of Nigeria's education in terms of structure, philosophy and curricula was inherited from Britain, it was ironical that this was not so with mass communication education because the British (the country's colonial masters) had no communication education model to offer. Early Nigerian journalists turned to liberal British ideas and opinion in their pungent anti-colonial writings, the model of Mass Communication education came from America (Odunlami, 2014).

The Nigeria Institute of Journalism (NIJ) started in 1971, while the International Institute of Journalism (IIJ) run by the Nigerian Union of Journalist (NUJ) was opened in 1995. These two offer diplomas and postgraduate diploma in mass communication. According to a Nigerian journalism educator, Professor Ralph Akinfeleye in the pre-independence period for instance, some resemblance of journalism training has been witnessed in Nigeria. In 1954, a two week journalism programme was packaged for working journalists by the University College of Ibadan.

The decades of the 90s up to the present have thrown up more requests for journalists and journalism education. The provision of the work force to man the high number of media organizations gave rise to the number of journalism schools in Nigeria. The quest for journalism education has resulted in different types of journalism training. The universities offer first degree, masters, and PhD and the polytechnics and monotechnics offer diploma, while the on-the-job training programme offers some in-house certification and promotion privileges.

Akinfeleye (2003), while summarizing the general aims and objectives of journalism education in Nigeria has this to say;

... to train journalists, educate them and make them responsible and useful citizens of Nigeria as they use journalistic expertise to build a new Nigeria especially in our developmental efforts in which the role of mass media had been recognised by government as a necessary but not sufficient social force towards nation-building and maturity.

2. An Overview of the Concept: Media Convergence

Scholars have studied media convergence since the introduction of satellite communications in the 1970's (Carrey, 2009). Different authors have defined the term in different ways.

Since the inception of convergence, media practitioners, media owners, journalism educators, student of mass communication about it., and members of the information consuming public have had mixed feelings. People have used a number of metaphors to describe the phenomenon.

The ongoing merger of media enterprises as well as between media production and consumption signals the emergence of a global convergence culture, based on an increasingly participatory and interactive engagement between people and their media as a business, as well as between professional and amateur media makers (Jenkins, 2006). Convergence is both a top-down corporate-driven process and a bottom-up consumer-driven process. Media companies are learning how to accelerate the flow of media content across delivery channels to expand revenue opportunities, broaden markets and reinforce viewer commitments.

Consumers are learning how to use these different media technologies to bring the flow of media more fully under their control and to interact with other users (Jenkins, 2004). Convergence is a very polysemous (that is several meanings for a word) concept that has been used to describe various trends in journalism that have something in common; the blurring of the limits between different media, professional skills and roles strategies. (Dupagne & Garrison, 2006; Silcock & Keith, 2006)

However, in communication terms, convergence is a coming together of two or more distinct entities or phenomena, thereby removing entry barriers across the IT, telecoms, media and consumer electronic industries. It is increasingly common in the IT world; in this context, the term refers to the combination of two or more different technologies in a single device. For instance, taking pictures with a cell phone and surfing the Web on a television are two of the most common examples of this trend, and also the recent innovation of an I-phone being used to shoot a video film in some countries.

The term "convergence" is often used to describe the synergies between technology, media and information that are changing societies worldwide. The word is used in conjunction with journalism and media to help us understand how the internet and broadband wireless devices have shifted control from the source to the receiver. This means that the power to decide what is seen, read or heard is increasingly in the hands of the consumer (Boriss, 2007). Convergence is defined as, 'multiple-platform publishing' or as 'integrated journalism' (Quinn, 2005), or is seen as how individual consumers interact with others on a social level and use various media platforms to create new experiences, new forms of media and content that connect us socially and not just to other consumers, but to the corporate producers of media in ways that have not been as readily accessible in the past (Lisa, 2014).

Media convergence is defined as 'a movement in the field of mass communications undertaken in the late twentieth century and now moving quickly in the early twenty-first century, that weds previously competitive media delivery formats (platforms) to one another'(Killebrew, 2005). 'Convergence is using the resources at a newspaper to bolster the product on other media' says Keith Wheeler (Ibid).

"From the technological side..... the general concept has been to bring the platforms together to provide information to the public through shared multiple technical resources or pipelines.....On the information or content delivery side of convergence, the founding idea was to ensure relatively equal distribution of information through each platform, thus creating a partnering of equal information providers"(Ibid).

'Convergence is what takes place in the newsroom as the editorial staff work together to produce multiple products for multiple platforms to reach a mass audience with interactive content on a 24/7 basis. Anything less is not journalism convergence' (Quinn, 2005).

'...convergence is a process whereby media companies break out of their traditional forms and formats to deliver richer news and information services more in concert with the way that consumers are choosing to access and use such resources' says Kerry Northrup (Ibid). 'Convergence is generally seen in terms of increasing co-operation and collaboration between formerly distinct media newsrooms' thinks Mark Deuze (Ibid). Endeavours have been made not only to understand convergence but also to categorize it based on its functions. Rich Gordon of Medill, Northwestern University has identified five forms of media convergence namely, ownership convergence, tactical convergence, structural convergence, information-gathering convergence and storytelling convergence (Gordon, 2003).

'Convergence is all about creating super-journalists capable of doing everything' says Andrew Nicholson, the Director of the American Press Institute's Media. Howard wonders whether 'convergence efforts might be more about finding ways to blend those different currents than about creating a single information stream that serves all readers-viewers-listeners'(Birge, 2004).

Today, all serious news organizations have a Web presence and a "Web-first" strategy. Although live broadcasts are still preferred for major events, it is becoming more common for stories to first appear on the website, then repurposed for either broadcast or print. Traditional media now compete with blogs and YouTube with mixed result (State of the media, 2007).

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on Technological Determination theory. The theory states that media technologies shape how we as individuals in a society think, feel, act and how a society operates as we move from one technology age to another (Tribal – literate -print -electronic). Griffin (2000) elaborates McLuhan's theory of 1963 that we learn, feel and think the way we do because of the message we receive through the current technology that is available.

McLuhan (1964), *The Gutenberg Galaxy: the making of typographic man*, explains that the radio required us to only listen and develop our sense of hearing. On the other hand, television engages both our hearing and visual senses. We then transfer those developed senses into our everyday lives and we want to use them again. With the development of technology, the profession of journalism after testing the effects of latest medium then explores its potentials to reach the audience. Today internet is the latest through which journalism thrives (McQuail, 2005).

3. Integrating Convergence Studies In Mass Communication/Journalism Curriculum: An Antidote

It is inevitable for the journalism schools to retool the curriculum. In light of the convergence trend, how should mass communication educators train their students? Dupagne and Garrison (2009) offer insights after conducting their qualitative study of a converged newsroom in Tampa Florida:

The challenge for faculty and school administrators will be to decide how to adapt their curricula to the new convergence expectations while taking into account the fluctuating economics of higher education. Given the continuous importance of journalism education fundamentals, which was confirmed in this study, adjusting existing curricula rather than designing new ones could be the preferred route of many administrators.

In the case of Puerto Rico we can see various examples on how convergence is affecting the curricula of major universities. Some universities provide an overall coursework on different areas in mass communication. The Inter American University of Puerto Rico is practicing convergence in a very interesting way. The overall courses required in the bachelor's degree have a special focus on the production for broadcast, print and web media. (Universidad Inter Americana, 2007).

On the other hand, there are universities that had implemented convergence from another point of view. In other words, they had decided to give the opportunity for students to decide whether to concentrate on a given type of medium or to combine different types of media. For example, the University of the Sacred Heart has several programs in mass communications.

One of them covers the general media and others specialize in several types of media; whether it is production for radio, public relations, or television among others. (Universidad del Sagrado Corazon, 2007)

Journalistic convergence can also be analyzed from the standpoint of the redefinition of professional roles and skills of reporters and editors. Scholars suggest that current trends can basically be summarized in the idea of flexibility (Boriss, 2007). The ideal multi skilled journalist, as some authors have suggested to label them would be able to produce news for any medium using any technological tool needed in every step of the process. They would be able to adapt the stories to the language of each medium and develop the whole production process.

Besides this, journalists also may need to be flexible in the topics they are to be ready to cover. Research has showed that multi skilled journalism has usually been promoted by media companies to justify job cuts Deacon, et al, 1997).

Studies have shown that journalism education and training in Nigeria is founded on Western pedagogy. Looking critically at the UNESCO model curricula for education which include;

1. Competence of general knowledge and intellectual ability
2. Professional techniques of research, writing, editing, design and production
3. The ability to use the tools of journalism and to adopt new technologies and innovative practices
4. Professional understanding, including ethics
5. Knowledge of journalism's role in society, including journalism's history, the organisation of the news media and laws circumscribing journalism practice
6. Knowledge of best practices in journalism, (UNESCO, 2007).

Taking a cue from the above model, three core issues are distinct, which include professional standards, journalism and society, and lastly knowledge. The professional standards comprise research skills indicating ability to understand, analyse and evaluate unfamiliar material quickly, news judgement and a thoughtful understanding of what makes a good story and a story newsworthy. Other skills in this category include also ability to take accurate notes, techniques for checking and corroborating information, writing skills etc. The second distinct issue is journalism and society competence.

Prospective journalists are to be equipped with the knowledge of the role of journalism in society, including its role in developing and securing democracy including an understanding of how information is collected and managed by political, commercial and other organisations among others. The last leg of the tripod of journalism training core competences knowledge, which has to do with candidate's basic understanding of their countries' systems of government, their constitutions and systems of justice, political processes, economics, social and cultural organisations and their relations with other countries (Odunlami, 2014).

As early as 1996 Joyce Dodd, then Director of School of Mass Communication, Virginia Commonwealth University began efforts to get more funds to establish new media center and said, 'this (center) is what the newspaper industry needs. This is something the Associated Press and newspaper managers think would be very effective as the 21st century demands different news products' (Boriss, Scott ; Petersen, Daniel, 2000), sowing the seeds of convergence in J-Education. The earliest story of teaching convergence refers to the program at Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. 'Early in 1996, the broadcast and print faculty at BYU agreed to bring the Daily Universe(circulation 30,000) and television and radio broadcast into one organization' (Ibid).

William Porter and Jay Rush, the faculty members of BYU were the coordinators of the establishment of first of its kind converged newsroom. BYU reacted early to the changes in the industry 'by putting broadcast and print students in the same newsroom and required the class to do all assignments for every media' (Birge, 2004). 'Over five years, students and faculty of Brigham Young University created a converged newsroom that brought together student broadcast, print and online journalism into one organization' (Boriss, Scott C.; Petersen, Daniel, 2000).

BYU's tryst with convergence in 1996 will also be remembered for using strategy-based planning called 'future search' to launch the first ever-converged newsroom that saw merger of print, broadcast and online in the classrooms. In spite of responding early to the call of convergence, BYU reverted to traditional journalism courses in 2005 (Adams, 2007). In 2004 one of the BYU faculty reacted, 'it was just insane trying to put everyone through it. You can't teach everything; some areas get watered down....we are still trying to figure it out' thus revealing the frustration of the academia (Birge, 2004).

James Gentry who served as the Dean of the William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Kansas 'considered by many to be the pioneer in cross media preparation for journalism students, developed a program with the faculty in 1997 (Ibid).

William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Kansas were credited with retooling the program as early as 1997 and an early-adopter of the convergence curriculum. What made the KU program distinct was the instrumental role played by the Freedom Forum fellow Christopher Ryan who built a web database-publishing environment to serve the KU student media and promoted the use of the Internet for classroom management (David, 2002).

Kansas is perhaps considered a leader in convergence plan in education and is hailed as the 'most closely attuned to the converged media environment that is gradually spreading throughout the country' (Ibid). At Kansas, a curriculum committee headed by Max Utsler took a radical decision to give up the method of tweaking the curriculum that was the conventional way of accommodating new subjects but instead developed a new curriculum from the scratch (Utsler, 2007).

The school of Journalism at Indiana University is one of the earliest to envision the concept of multimedia and submitted a proposal to the Knight Foundation to evolve a curriculum that would prepare the students for the 21st century. David Boeyink was the Director of the project and then Dean of the school, Trevor Brown was instrumental in getting funding to the tune of \$1.5 million for the project from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation in 1995.

The school is one of the foremost institutions to implement converged curriculum in Journalism education and to establish multi-media lab combining broadcast, photography and web design technology (David, 2007). They created a CD and launched a website in 2004, the Convergence Forum, <http://convergence.journalism.indiana.edu>, 'to offer a place for educators dealing with convergence and curriculum issues to submit materials and ideas', and to share information about the experience of teaching convergence for more than 10 years (Boeyink, 2007).

Tracing the history of convergence curriculum leads one to the Annenberg School of Journalism at the University of Southern California being one of the earliest to evolve Convergence Core Curriculum (CCC) in 2002 with a motto of keeping the course flexible enough to prepare the students for any media in the professional market.

The Annenberg School adopted its version of convergence curriculum in the Fall of 2002 and replaced the heavily print oriented curriculum (Kappmeyer 2004, Laura, Sheila, Heather 2005).

In 2002, the Ball State University in Muncie, IN adopted a convergence curriculum and created an integrated multi-media lab facility, with a belief that 'regardless of exactly what a newsroom looked like in five or 10 years, they want their students to be familiar with more than one medium'(Birge, 2004). Quoting Papper she adds 'the only thing one is sure of is that in five to 10 years, newsrooms are going to look different than they do now' justifying the preparation of students with broader set of skills (Ibid).

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln's College of Journalism and Mass Communications that started journalism as early as 1894 retooled its curriculum and deviated from the path of traditional journalism. In the year 2004, the College of Journalism and Mass Communication ventured to tread the path of convergence to keep pace with the rapid changes in technology (<http://www.unl.edu>). The School's Dean Will Norton claims that it enabled the school to break walls between the departments. The establishment of the state of art convergence news centre- Newsplex in November 2002 at a cost of \$ 2.5 million by Ifra, renowned as the world's first convergence newsroom facility at the University of South Carolina, Columbia in US gave opportunity for journalism educators to understand how media landscape was changing with multiple delivery platforms.

Newsplex is a convergence training facility with opulent state of art 12-seat newsroom imparting training to journalists and academicians in convergence. Journalists from different parts of the world visit and receive training in convergence at Newsplex.

Randy Covington, one of the Directors of Newsplex says 'it is a training facility...It is not the physical facility. We are talking about Newsplex in terms of philosophy of convergence. What really important is that the philosophy and the concept behind it. We are not putting out the newspaper, we are not trying to put TV newscast but rather we are trying to figure out how to cover the story for different media in a way that is most effective for each media' (Boriss , 2007).

The arrival of Newsplex brought to the fore the change in the perception of news. 'An understanding of convergence is an understanding that the way people consume news has changed profoundly... news organizations have to realize that their audiences have changed and media consumption pattern have changed....stories are told differently in different media' (Boriss, 2007). These developments had an impact on journalism education as schools realized that they needed new inputs in their news writing courses.

In the age of networking and connecting people, there is increasing pressure on journalism schools in Nigeria (just as some developed/developing countries have done as cited above) to update the curriculum in order to prepare students for the multiple media technology newsroom of tomorrow. The challenging question becomes, how relevant is journalism curriculum in preparing the students to meet new challenges posed by the emergence of new media? Some developed countries' journalism schools have responded to the rapid changes in the media industry by reforming their curriculum but in the process, they may have done it to the great satisfaction of the media professionals. The trend is that whenever the media is in crisis, it is blamed on the journalism educators as not measuring up to the expectations. History has it that whenever there is new arrival of new medium, there is always spread of insecurity in the old media.

When radio came on board, the newspaper (print media) felt insecure, thinking that it would lose readers to the broadcast media. Instead, newspaper continued to grow from strength to strength even after the advent of television and film. Ironically, it is the turn of all the three traditional media to feel apprehensive about the presence and impact of new media (Chukwu, 2014). The conventional media having worked in isolation all these years have suddenly realised the importance of synergy. Technically, print, broadcast/radio and television no longer exist as independent entities as technology has changed their identity (Usharani, 2010).

The coming of technology in media operations has altered in a positive way, the ecology of mass communication across the world. The speed of the adoption and diffusion of innovations in the contemporary media industry is posing a great challenge to media educators as the newsroom appears to be constantly ahead of the classroom, especially in the developing world (Okoroafor, 2014). Journalism/Mass Communication is highly technology driven.

The world is noted for the high adoption and application of technological innovations in journalism and mass communication practice often creates a feeling of inadequacy in media/journalism educators because as they try to incorporate technological innovations into the curricula, several others come in quick succession.

This trend illustrates how and why the “newsroom” appears to be constantly ahead of the “classroom” and raises the relevance of Seelig’s earlier posers on what educators should do to keep up with the technological changes in the media industry; and on whether journalism educators should or need to re-invent themselves every time a newer technology is invented, (Odunlami, 2014).

In Nigeria, for instance, this year 2015 is the approved deadline for digital switch-over from the analogue mode of broadcast transmission/reception. As resources are being mobilized and deployed to upgrade existing hardwares, the developed countries who are drivers of such technological changes are already perfecting their strategies of the next technological agenda beyond digitization (Ogunlami, 2014). In Nigeria, journalism education must be severed from the umbilical cord of Western paradigms and its attendant impacts, practitioners and educators must apply the wisdom revealed in previous studies. Garrison (2003), Kraepelin and Criado (2005) posit that both professionals and educators should keep students with an education that prepares them conceptually as well as giving them the skills required to blend together a mixture of media formats within a digital environment, as Oso would call it multi-skilling.

Technology as some scholars have observed, changes rapidly, hence while it is important to expose students to the latest trends and techniques, it is unrealistic to expose students and media training institutions to all the frequent and never-ending technological advances in delivery methods and presentation techniques (Lisa, 2014). Additionally, it is high time Nigeria adapted converged curricula concept as enunciated by Okunna (1987). This aims to teach journalism/mass communication students critical thinking, reporting and writing across media platform.

Developed by the Northwestern University's School of Journalism, converged curriculum proposes an integrated curriculum which encompasses in the first year, traditional introductory mass communication survey class with content updated to focus on media in the 21st century; reporting and writing across all media platforms; and multimedia storytelling that includes an introduction to Web-based journalism and media.

According to Claussen converged curriculum in the second year includes courses on enterprise reporting in diverse communities and media presentation. At the third year the curriculum includes storytelling, media law and ethics, and a journalism residency. The curriculum also proposes a variety of electives beginning from the second year. These include Literary Journalism, Journalism of Empathy, Documentary, Legal Journalism, Business Journalism, Environmental Journalism, Health and Science Journalism, Military and the Press, Investigative Journalism, Building Interactive Communities, Ad Creativity and Innovation, and Direct and Database Marketing. Other additions could be Citizen Journalism and Entrepreneurial Studies, (Odunlami, 2014).

At this age of globalisation and information society, journalism and mass communication education should transcend traditional print and broadcast journalism. The reality of media convergence makes it imperative and expedient to equip students with a well-rounded education that focuses on developing, writing and story-telling skills, coupled with critical thinking, visual literary skills as well as how to package stories for various media outlets with emphasis on professional values (Lisa, 2014).

After a survey on 200 newspaper publishers worldwide by Stone (2001), the World Association of Newspaper found that “despite a gloomy outlook for wholesale convergence in media companies worldwide in the near term, convergence is already being implemented with varying degrees of enthusiasm and speed among the world’s media companies”. Inevitably, the journalism schools have to respond, as there is a paradigm shift in the world of journalism. The future of journalism education has been a concerned topic for recent discussion throughout Europe, North America and Australia, in the wake of media convergence (Lisa, 2014).

Conclusion

In journalism education, convergence is regarded as 'teaching students to think, report, and write across print, broadcast, and online media platforms'. (Castaneda, Laura; Murphy, Sheila; Heather Jane, 2005) Branded as multi-platform reporting, convergence takes all new kinds of new media ranging from websites to cell phones to blogs and to iPods. From the educator's perspective, convergence is meant to be a blurring of the lines between what have historically been distinct areas of study (i.e. broadcast and print journalism), the outcome of which is a 'converged curriculum' (Lisa, 2014).

Modern technologies have given mass communication media the ability to adopt new forms of publication never explored before. At the present time newspapers have the opportunity to include audio and video on their web publications. Broadcast stations now have the opportunity to include text on their web publications. This approach to new types of unexplored formats is what is called media convergence. Media convergence relies on the fact that the members of a given and particular media will have the capacity to work with different formats (Chuma, 2010).

In a technology-driven media environment, journalism scholars and educators must make time to "stand back from the front line... and develop perspective on the wider field (of contemporary journalism)" for the purpose of better defining journalism education and redesigning its curriculum to keep pace with today's media platforms.

Although there is no guaranteed prescription for the perfect journalism curricula, its educators have a fundamental responsibility to review, evaluate and update how and what they teach so their students are adequately prepared to work in an information age where media convergence and journalistic cross-training is the norm.

Recommendations

1. National Universities Commission/Journalism educators should as a matter of urgency review the mass communication/journalism curriculum to include courses that will equip the students to enter into the synergetic world of media convergence.
2. There is also need for the educators to identify and understand the need for developing students to communicate and navigate within different media options. It is believed that obtaining these skills, while maintaining the basic fundamentals of the profession, is paramount to succeeding in the converged world.
3. Management of journalism/mass communication institutes should provide enabling environment and infrastructure (internet facilities, teaching aids etc) which will help the students understand better what they are taught.

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