

Term paper on use of traditional v digital media in law and the legal system

[Sociology](#), [Communication](#)



A fundamental and seismic shift has occurred in virtually every field and sector known to mankind due to the emergence digital media. The way national political campaigns are done has changed, the mode of communication has changed, the level of interaction and virtually every activity that man engages in including business has not been spared either by the emergence of digital media. People are now able to receive news in real time and observe and connect with the whole world, a factor that has led to the emergence of the global village. More opportunities such as outsourcing and online education have emerged. Consequently, the rise of digital media has had a profound effect on the law as well as the legal system. It has marked a clear shift from the traditional media which had less impact. Nonetheless, the emergence of digital media has not come without its fair share of harmful effects as shall be discussed in this paper. It is in recognition of this potential that digital media permeates several sectors. This paper seeks to underscore the paradigm shift that has been occasioned by the emergence of digital media to take the place of traditional media. To this end, this paper shall examine the situation as it were prior to the emergence of the digital media so as to visualize the situation when traditional media was in use. Further, this paper shall explore the situation in modern day and the changes that have been brought by digital technology. Finally, this paper shall examine the benefits and challenges of the use of digital media and explore the possible and real harmful effects to both the producer as well as the consumer of the digital media.

It is important to note that digital media has not wholly replaced traditional media in all sectors. Rather, traditional media still plays a significant role in

many sectors of the economy. The best results can be harnessed through synergies and complementarities between traditional and digital media. Around 50 years ago before the onset of digital media, traditional media was at play. Some of the forms of traditional media include radio, newspapers among other forms of mass media. These media platforms have been used with great effect by consumers in advertising and reaching other persons. Traditional media refers to the old way of dissemination of information usually involving only one way communication. It is the type of media that was in use before the advent of the internet and televisions. The situation prevailing during the time traditional media was in use and before the use of digital media is best illustrated by examination of the use of these types of media. Just like modern digital media, traditional media has been used in advertising, public relations, marketing, and sales promotions. Traditional media consists of radio, magazines, books and movies. Several reasons inform the continued use of traditional media in modern day. One of the reasons is that some consumers of the media are yet to migrate or are unable to access digital media. More so, consumers tend to crave for a variety of information as is, reinforcement.

Traditional media was used in various fields. For instance, in political campaigns, lobbying for candidates was done through mass media such as radio and newspapers. People came together to watch current news and listen to candidates seeking their votes. Another alternative used by candidates in national political campaigns was the holding of conferences and convocations or political rallies to forge their agenda. One of the distinguishing features in the use of traditional media was the delay

occasioned in this mode of communication. People would get acquainted with critical information several minutes or hours after it had happened. Since traditional media is marked by the absence of the internet, business opportunities such as outsourcing and online education were not possible. Further, information and news disseminated in a slow pace since geographical distance acted as a hampering factor to the transfer of information.

This situation changed following the emergence of digital media through a process popularly called digital revolution. Digital revolution essentially denotes the change from analog and electronic technology to digital technology. This position changed around 50 years ago though the time varies with different geographical backgrounds. This revolution marked the evolving of the information age and was marked by mass production and use of digital logic circuits and other gadgets such as computers, cell phones and fax machines. As already set out, digital media revolutionized the whole breadth of world economy by shifting the modus operandi. The proliferation of digital technology also owes from the nature of the Internet which tends to decrease in costs in comparison to increase of users. As such, the relatively lower costs as the number of users increase have spurred the spread of digital technology.

The effects of the increased use of digital technology on how communication is done have been tremendous as evidenced in virtually every sector of the economy. First, the education sector has transformed greatly due to digital technology in the sense that teachers are able to communicate using digital devices to illustrate concepts through use of computers and projector

screens. Also, it has enabled online study by students who are far away from class as well as online lecturing by teachers. The media industry has not been left and has experienced the biggest transformation in its conduct of affairs. People are now able to read newspapers online from the comfort of their homes through their cell phones and computers. Social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter have been used by people in sharing information and this has accelerated the spread of information from one part of the world to another.

The internet has fundamentally changed the way communication is conducted in commerce by facilitating online markets and websites for the business entities for purposes of online advertising. The businesses have also taken to social media to do their bidding amongst the people who are their customers. On the same vein, digital technology has seen a revolutionized the political sector as politicians have made use of the social networking sites platform as communication tool to put forward their agenda. More so, politicians have made use of digital technology to reach a larger audience, in faster speeds and with efficiency in resource utility as well in raising funds for their campaigns. Communication between persons in distant areas from each other has been made possible through digital devices such as cell phones and the use of video-conferencing with persons who are far away. Similarly, there has been tremendous increase in speed in communication as the new modes of communication brought about by digital technology such as emails; instant messaging systems and telephone enable one on one communication. The use of computers has also facilitated storage of large volumes of information which has aided communication a

great deal as such information may be used for future reference.

Equally important is the fact that digital technology has improved greatly on the ability of persons to communicate especially in emergency cases or a catastrophe. During such periods of crisis, international aid organizations are able to reach well-wishers to help out with their donations through social networking sites with alacrity. In equal measure, digital technology has substantially changed the operation of interpersonal communications among persons. It has made it easier to keep track of friends and maintain relationships with them through cell phones and social networking sites irrespective of their location; a feat which would not have been possible previously.

Since the emergence of the digital media, there has been divided opinion among scholars as to whether it will contribute to improved democracy by enhancing public participation and dissemination of knowledge in political campaigns. There has been argument that digital media has had positive and strong effects on political participation and knowledge. Research shows that there is a correlation between increased use of digital media and political knowledge and participation more so during election campaigns. For instance, the use of digital media was first felt and noted in the United States in 1992 during the Clinton campaign. During the election campaign in the run up to the election, his campaign team placed campaign information on the Internet despite the fact that internet was then available to only a small fraction of the electorate. This changed by the turn of the new millennium in the year 2000 where the internet had already emerged as a campaign tool and candidates angling for elective seats were already placing campaign

information on their websites. In the year 2008, it went a notch higher and online tools such as social networking and micro blogging gained prominence and were indeed used by President Obama campaign team. It emerged as an effective tool for mobilizing and organizing voters and supporters. Undoubtedly, no candidate can now dare go to election without having an online presence to market his policies. In election campaigns, it is the citizens or the electorates who are usually the consumers of the media or the information disseminated through the digital media. Some of the positive effects on consumers, in this case citizens; include causing changes in people's knowledge and attitudes, and motivating political action by citizens. It is the case that even if the use of digital media does not result in a change in behavior among citizens, it acts as an essential part of the communication process from the perspective of democratic participation.

Nonetheless, the use of digital media is not without its negative effects.

Digital media is constantly viewed as being used predominantly for entertainment purposes as opposed to informative or educative purposes. As such, it is other factors far from technology or digital media, which can act as a catalyst of more public participation and involvement.

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