



# Trends in Media and Communication Conference '21

## Theme

**Africa's Digital Youth:**  
Exploring Media and Information  
Literacy Competencies and Practices

**19-20th**

**OCTOBER, 2021**



Trends in Media and

and Communication Conference '21

Theme

# PROGRAMME

**Africa's Digital Youth:**  
Exploring media and information  
literacy competencies and practices

## 19 October | Opening Ceremony

9:30-9:45

**Welcome remarks:**

Dr Abena A. Yeboah-Banin  
Convenor

9:45-9:55

**Remarks by:**

Prof Martin Oteng-Ababio,  
Provost, UG College of Education

9:55-10:10

**Remarks by:**

Mad. Juliet Amoah,  
Exec.Dir., Penplusbytes

10:10-10:50

**Keynote Address:** Prof Janet  
Kwami, Associate Professor of  
Communication Studies,  
Furman University, USA

10:50-11:20

**Plenary discussion on Keynote**

**Address:** Dr. Theodora Dame  
Adjin-Tettey, UPSA/Rhodes  
University

11:20-11:30

**Announcements and  
Closing**

## Sessions

11:40-01:10pm

**Session ID:** Youth and Social  
Media Activism (1)  
**Session ID:** Access, Use and  
Trends (1)

1:30-3:00pm

**Session ID:** Youth digital  
media and democracy  
**Session ID:** Competencies and  
knowledge gaps

3:30-5:00pm

**Session ID:** Access, Use and  
Trends (2)

## 20 October | Day 2

10:00-11:30am

**Session ID:** Youth and Social  
Media Activism (2)  
**Session ID:** Ethics, Privacy and  
Security (1)

12:00-1:30pm

**Session ID:** Ethics, Privacy and  
Security (2)  
**Session ID:** Education, youth  
and digital media (1)

2:00-3:30pm

**Session ID:** Access, Use and  
Trends (3)  
**Session ID:** Education, youth  
and digital media (2)

**Closing plenary: 4:00-5:00pm-** Dr. Gilbert Tietaah, Dept. of Comm.Studies, UG

# OPENING CEREMONY LOG IN DETAILS

Date: 19th October, 2021

Time: 9:30-11:30am

Zoom Meeting ID: 646 6907 0597

Passcode: 483592

## PRESENTATION SESSIONS

### Session theme: Youth and Social Media Activism (1)

Time: 11:40-1:10am

Zoom Meeting ID: 646 6907 0597

Passcode: 483592

Moderator: Prof Audrey Gadzekpo, University of Ghana Department of Communication Studies

### Presentations

#### **The Ideology of Social Media Activism in Nigeria: Perspectives from Tweets and Facebook Posts**

By Helen Ugah, Elizade University, Nigeria

#### Abstract

Protest as a form of collective social action is popular in Nigeria; the present democratic administration has witnessed series of protests against it, much of which started in social media spaces. This study investigates the utilization of social media for the expression of dissents against the Nigerian government. It examines the nature of social-media activism against the present democratic administration in Nigeria by investigating the ideological framing of the call for protest. The data for the study comprise Facebook posts of notable Nigerian critics of the President Muhammadu Buhari-led administration, and tweets about the essence of the protests. Thus, the study will analyse the dominant ideological leanings in the tweets and Facebook posts on calls for social actions against the Nigerian government. The data will be analysed using van Dijk's Ideological Square and Categories of Ideological Analysis. The study will demonstrate that beyond using the social media for entertainment, information and fraudulent activities, Nigerian youths are dexterous in creating, processing and sharing social media contents for activism purposes that are geared towards socio-political development.

# **Twittersphere and Digital Activism: Discursive Representations in Nigeria's 2020 #EndSARS Movement**

By Matthew Alugbin, University of Ibadan

## **Abstract**

The #EndSARS hashtag which started in 2017 was one of the tools used to share experiences and advocacy on police brutality in Nigeria on Twitter. Extant works have explored the use of social media for civic engagement, consciousness re-awakening, counter-narratives and societal disruption amongst other uses. Discursive strategies of representing social actors, actions and events which engender these affordances is a worthy scholarly addition to understand how online social movements achieve political goals. This study examines how protesters were able to create and sustain their agitations using Twitter as a mobilizing force of mass movement. The study applies approaches from digital humanities coupled with insights from computer-assisted textual analysis and critical discourse analysis. The study relies on a corpus of 1,000 tweets gathered from the microblogging service, Twitter, with the hashtag #EndSARS. Blame attribution, recontextualisation of events, categorisation, victim positioning are strategies used to sustain solidarity, create bonds and negotiate power among marginalised people. Through these, protesters were able to create defiance and directive acts in the people. The discursive strategies of representations not only create a contest for political power between the government and the masses, but also helped in the creation of a resistant ideology in the people. The study concludes that the social media is not only used to create awareness about events but has become a powerful force for social re-engineering. Hence, new perspectives on social media should consider the paradigm shift which has resulted in how narratives are sustained and negotiated during online social movements.

# **Social media activism and offline campaigns in the fight against domestic violence in Ghana. A study of selected activists on Facebook**

By Bubune Malik, African University College of Communication

## **Abstract**

An emerging area concerning social media is how it can be used to champion a social cause through activism. Social media has demonstrated the potential for mobilising attention and accountability to women's rights and challenging discrimination and stereotypes. Also, social media has proven to be a powerful vehicle for bringing women's rights issues to the attention of a wider public. This study seeks to explore how social media activism and "offline" campaigns can be used in the fight against domestic violence in Ghana. With the use of cyber ethnography, interviews and theories like the social capital, social network theory and the resource mobilisation theory, the usefulness of social media (Facebook) in

amplifying the atrocities of victims of domestic violence was investigated. Purposive sampling and snowballing were the two major types of sampling used to arrive at seven activists who were interviewed and observed on Facebook. Social media was identified as an avenue for victims to vent, this offered them the opportunity to tell the whole world what they are going through. Also, the activists noted that the content of their posts on Facebook has been able to educate people on domestic violence. Facebook offers a ground for activists to network and share ideas on how to assist victims who reach out to them. Funding for activism was one interesting area that emerged in this study. This is when the activists can use SM space to raise money and other resources needed to boost the particular cause they are working on.

## **Session theme: Access, Use and Trends (1)**

Time: 11:40-1:10am

Zoom Meeting ID: 610 6381 5433

Passcode: 099851

Moderator: Dr Gilbert Tietaah, University of Ghana Department of Communication Studies

### **Presentations**

#### **Enactment of MIL through participation in Community Radio: A case study of Radio Royals in Wenchi**

By Annie Oye, Univeristy of Ghana

##### **Abstract**

Media and information literacy has become critical in the world today. It leads to inclusive development and also ensures that ordinary citizens take full advantage of the benefits that an information age presents. There are several avenues for the infusion of media and information literacy competencies. One of such is the community radio, an alternative sphere that offers ordinary members of society the opportunity to engage with media not merely as audiences but also as producers. In this study, the case study approach is used to investigate how young volunteers in Radio Royals, a community radio station in Wenchi, acquire and display their media and information literacy skills via their work at the station. Data for the study was collected through in-depth interviews with selected volunteers, and ethnographic observations of their activities. Findings from this study show that that avenues for the acquisition of media and information literacy skills include orientations given to new volunteers, observations on the part of volunteers and also practice on the job. The findings also indicate that through participation in the community radio, the youth are enhancing their media and information literacy skills such as information management skills, content creation skills and digital literacy skills. It was also found that the youth are taking the experiences they are gaining beyond the radio station into their communities.

# Broadcast Media Usage in the Digital Era: A survey on the Ugandan Youths

Rajab Idd Muyingo, Islamic University in Uganda

## Abstract

The digital technologies have radically changed the radio and television industry and its impact is felt on the audiences globally and particularly in Africa. This research majorly examined the practices of radio and TV usage in the age of new media technologies among the Ugandan youths. I combined both quantitative and qualitative research approaches. I used questionnaires and interviews tools in data collection. In this study 58.2% were male participants whereas 41.8% were female respondents. Both qualitative and quantitative results confirmed mobile phones as the most used device for accessing radio programs. Alike, 52.7% of the participants spent more than 7 hours daily while using mobile phones. The research results confirmed that 92.8% of the study participants owned at least one mobile phone set and listened to radio through it. Respondents preferred watching TV via television set and the majority spent 1 to 3 hours watching daily. Equally, majority of the respondents used smartphones for the reception of radio and TV programs. Few respondents used laptops and desktop to access radio and TV programs. Possession of media devices was strongly correlated with the monthly income of the respondents, both at value  $r = .004$  and  $P = .000$  respectively. Findings indicated motivations for using traditional radio and TV, were, information, education, entertainment and for leisure. Whereas the majority used social TV, for social interaction, entertainment, companionship and information purposes. The study concluded that with the emergence of digital media technologies, especially social media, has caused a paradigm shift in the usage of radio and TV ranging from devices used, program preferences and motivations for reception.

# Emerging Digital News Consumption Patterns Among Young People In Kenya

By Edwim Tallam, Moi University

## Abstract

Internet-enabled mobile devices are widely believed to intensify and amplify young people's creative potential and agency in myriad ways. Undoubtedly, there has been considerable optimism, particularly in African states where young people form over 70% of the population (Ndemo & Weiss, 2017), on their creative potential in seizing online opportunities. However, the over the celebration of the socio-technical skills of young people (Livingstone, 2009) has obfuscated the daily realities on the nature and form of young people's agency, particularly on news consumption and the broader implications on democracy. With this in mind, this study explores how a contingent of young people from two different universities in Kenya access news and how high levels of mobile phone penetration are shaping that news consumption. Specifically, it discusses the understanding of news by analyzing

the various themes that emerged from Focus group discussions (FGDs): news as a window to the differentiated social world, news as politics, news as a reinforcement of time, news as Knowledge of the self and others. These emerging themes position news consumption as a complex, multilayered process. The relatively new epochs—Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp— among other platforms have significantly altered how young people access and consume news. They afford young users spaces where they acquire, produce, and negotiate meanings. However, rather than offering a consistent experience in Kenya, different social media and messaging platforms are used to access different types of information and facilitate different types of interactions and sociability among young people.

## **How can I know how to use it when I don't own one? An assessment of media access and literacy among Ghanaian youth**

By Abena A. Yeboah-Banin, University of Ghana

### Abstract

Across Africa, media access among the youth has expanded significantly over the last decade. Increased availability of mobile devices and internet connectivity means that more African youth can access media and participate in its creation and sharing. Yet, existing evidence shows that media access and use is not universal across the continent and within countries. This raises questions about the capacity of unserved African youth to effectively use media given extant scholarly suggestions that frequent media use enhances capacity. Yet the growing scholarship on media and information literacy in Africa fails to adequately address such questions. The lacuna means that efforts at building capacity of African youth to use media will continue in the one-size-fits-all approach that fails to address their differentiated needs. To address this, the study tests this assumption by comparing media and information literacy levels of youths with and without extensive media access. Using a sample of senior high students in Ghana and guidance from the inoculation theory and the message interpretation process model as theoretical lenses, the study explores MIL levels of youths of difference access-based demographics to find patterns that emanate from their media access.

## **Session theme: Youth digital media and democracy**

Time: 1:30-3:00pm

Zoom Meeting ID: 646 6907 0597

Passcode: 483592

Moderator: Dr Etse Sikanku, Ghana Institute of Journalism

## **Presentations**

# **Political Digital Literacy: Misinformation and citizens' participation in electoral processes on Social Media in Namibia**

By Sadrag Panduleni Shihomeka, University of Namibia

## **Abstract**

The 2019 Presidential and National Assembly Elections in Namibia are characterized by high participation of citizens in pre-elections campaigns and rallies such as: drive-through, e-campaigns, extensive spread of Fake News about political parties and their presidential candidates as well as their members in the party list for the National Assembly. Not only Fake News, but deliberate act of citizens to misinform citizens about Presidential candidates and due to political digital literacy level of some citizens, shared some of these misleading and political deceptive messages, videos or audios on various social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp and Twitter. Through a digital ethnography that was conducted from 1st of October 2019 to a post-election results announcements in January 2020, this chapter will look at the extent to political misinformation have an effect on political participation of you citizens in the Presidential and National Assembly elections in Namibia. The chapter will further highlight the motives for spreading these misinforming messages as well as the effect it has on digital democratic values of our citizens. Furthermore, the chapter will focus on the political digital literacy and how it can further fuel the spread of misinforming news as well as disinforming citizens about their preferred political candidates. Conclusions and recommendations from this chapter will be used to neutralize and minimize the spread of misinformation. The chapter will serve as a basis for encountering political deception especially in the global south and counter-balance the political atmosphere especially with regards to the use of social media as political advocacy and mobilization tools during elections in Africa.

# **Vlogging truth to power: A postcolonial critique of Ghanaian migrants' political rhetoric**

By Wincharles Coker, University of Cape Coast

## **Abstract**

At least over the last decade, vlogging has proved to be a useful medium through which netizens generally challenge political authority and speak truth to power. This general form of virtual citizen journalism is, however, not without problems. Focusing on the political rhetoric of Ghanaian migrants, this paper draws attention to epistemic challenges at the core of the migrants' public opinions about political leadership in Ghana. The paper does so by engaging in a postcolonial reading of the YouTube posts of three popular Ghanaian migrants in the United States and Europe. The analysis shows that much of the vitriolic rhetoric of the migrants about the quality of life in Ghana takes place within a rigid Eurocentric worldview of governance that, on the contrary, glorifies Western imperialism, and reinforces master narratives that see the subaltern as indolent, psychotic, and inherently malevolent. The paper calls for advocacy in promoting the ethics of constructive criticism

and liberal education for the uneducated.

## **Facebook Party Politics and Citizen Activism: mobilization, campaigns and politics of emotions in Namibia**

By Sadrag Panduleni Shihomeka, University of Namibia

### Abstract

Namibia has seen an increase in the number of mobile phones acquisition and ownership over the last five years. This is arguably necessitated by the availability of affordable mobile phones and mobile data plans from different telecommunication companies in Namibia. As such the political atmosphere and overall democratic discourses are constantly changing to respond to this inclusive developmental change. As a result, Political Parties created Facebook pages and accounts to serve as virtual space to engage citizens on political ideologies and sensitizing them on their political manifestos. Citizens on the other hand are flooding Facebook pages for various political leaders, political parties and government Ministries or agencies to express their (di)satisfaction with the services from the current government. At times, these digital platforms emerge as battle fields for vilifications, character assassination as well as cyberbullying avenues. It is against this background, that the Namibian government on several occasion informed and requested citizens to adhere to digital ethics. This also led to the government proposing a regulation to monitor and control social media activities in Namibia. Using a four months digital ethnography of political parties activities on Facebook that took part in the 2019 Presidential and National Assembly Elections in Namibia, this chapter therefore, will give an account of the nature of digital politics in Namibia; repositioning citizens' understanding of Facebook politics in an African context; Appropriate use of Facebook as an extended digital democracy platform for citizen activism; Factors that necessitate the regulation of Facebook politics; Qualities for a successful digital campaign and relayed political rallies; platform mobilization and advocacy by political parties and their leaders during campaigns, rallies as well as political reactionary measures in Namibia. In addition, the chapter will propose effective ways of using Facebook as a political tool to mobilize, campaign and engage all citizens in political activities in Namibia and other African Context.

### **Session theme: Competencies and knowledge gaps**

Time: 1:30-3:00pm

Zoom Meeting ID: 610 6381 5433

Passcode: 099851

Moderator: Dr Sarah Akrofi-Quarcoo, University of Ghana Department of Communication Studies

## **Presentations**

### **Media and Information Literacy levels in 6 countries on the African continent: the African MIL INDEX study**

By DW Akademie, Ghana

#### Abstract

The proposed session will highlight the key findings of a recently conducted and extensive research into Media and Information Literacy levels in 6 countries on the African continent: the African MIL INDEX study. The session would focus specifically on the state of affairs of MIL in Namibia and the Southern Africa region. Under 35-year-olds make up 77 percent of the population in sub-Saharan Africa. The African MIL INDEX study assesses the level of Media and Information Literacy in this important age group in six African countries: Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Namibia and Uganda. It is based on a mixed methods design and was conducted by DW Akademie 2018 to 2020. The aims of the study were twofold: 1. There is a distinct lack of information on the status quo of Media and Information Literacy among African youth. Some studies exist specifically for ICT-related topics and general media usage of 15- to 35-year-olds. But the MIL INDEX study aims to highlight the challenges facing young people in the new digital and media environment they have to navigate on a day-to-day basis. The specific target group here is MIL practitioners in the six countries mentioned above who can use the insights gained from the study to inform their own MIL tuition and to advocate for more support from governments and donors. 2. Instruments for researching / measuring Media and Information Literacy are also sorely lacking in media development initiatives. This study introduces the MIL INDEX methodology to a wider audience, enabling other organizations and researchers to draw on the experiences provided to conduct their own needs assessments and evaluations. Eight focus groups were conducted in each of the six countries mentioned above to explore how young Africans access, analyze, reflect on, create and engage with media and digital information sources. The mixed-gender focus groups with 15- to 35-year-olds took place in an urban setting and a peri-urban / rural setting and were also differentiated according to age. Additionally, eight key informant interviews were conducted in each of the countries to find out how experts assess them in terms of Media and Information Literacy.

### **Digital literacy competencies and deficits among university students in Ghana**

By Stephen Tindi, Ghana Institute of Journalism

#### Abstract

A high proportion of youth and adults with relevant ICT skills indicates quality education under the Sustainable Development Goals (Goal 4, indicator 4.4.1). Digital literacy is, therefore, just as crucial as traditional literacies, but not much is known about the digital literacy competencies of university students in Ghana. This paper sought to assess digital literacy

among students in two universities in Ghana (one public, one private) that specialize in communication and media education. It further investigates whether gender and age influence the digital literacy levels of students in both universities. A quantitative research methodology and a cross-sectional survey design were used to gather data from a stratified sample of undergraduate students in the two universities. A pre-existing questionnaire was used to collect data, and the data obtained was subject to inferential analysis. Preliminary findings revealed that access to ICTs is high among students, and students possess advanced skills to communicate using ICTs, but they were deficient in using the ICTs for problem-solving. Also, males and younger students demonstrated slightly higher levels of digital literacy, that notwithstanding, gender and age were not statistically significant predictors of digital literacy among university students in Ghana. The paper concludes that although there are moderate categorical differences in digital literacy, consistent with Van Dijk's Resources and Appropriation Theory, media literacy training can improve the digital literacy levels of students and the quality of education in Ghanaian universities.

## **Information literacy development and competencies of high school students in Accra**

By Philip Kwaku Kankam, Univeristy of Ghana

### Abstract

Information literacy (IL) evolves throughout time as the internet continues to evolve, and technology usage improves as people become more technologically savvy. The IL concept could be defined as a set of abilities, attitudes, and experiences that enable people to recognize when they need information to solve an issue. It is important to investigate the IL development and competencies of high school students in order to improve IL training at that level before these students advance to the tertiary level where possession of IL skills is highly critical for success. The study therefore looked into the IL development and competencies of high school students in Accra. To achieve this, the study was conducted via two streams of methods: Information literacy audit and Information literacy assessment. The study employed a survey research design with mixed-methods approach and post-positivist research paradigm. A total of 454 high school students, three librarians and three heads of ICT departments from three senior high schools in Accra participated in the study. The findings revealed that high school students in Accra had low information literacy competencies with IL assessment mean score of 52.2% and median of 54.1%. Again, the study found that, inadequate infrastructure and lack of formalised IL instructions in schools hindered the IL development of students. The study recommends the need to integrate IL in the school curriculum to ensure effective and efficient IL instructions in high schools. Particularly, the outcome from the study is expected to improve teaching and inform curriculum on information literacy.

## Session theme: Access, Use and Trends (2)

Time: 3:30-5:00pm

Zoom Meeting ID: 610 6381 5433

Passcode: 099851

Moderator: Dr Emeka Umejei, University of Ghana Department of Communication Studies

### Presentations

#### **The Role of The Social Media as a platform for the “Voiceless”**

By Ayobolu, Yetunde. O., Koladaisi University, Ibadan; Ojo, T. O. Koladaisi University, Ibadan and Olawore, A. T, Koladaisi University, Ibadan

##### Abstract

The purpose of this research is to determine how social media is used as a tool for the “voiceless” and also to determine if the social media serves as justice system to the “voiceless”. The voiceless in this context are the oppressed in the society who do not have a say. The research question includes: how is social media used as a tool for the “voiceless”, does social media serve as justice system for the “voiceless”, how does social media enable the confidence of the “voiceless” in speaking out against all forms of abuse and what platform of social media is the most used by the “voiceless” when speaking up against abuse? Survey design was used with questionnaire as the instrument for data collection from random respondents. The questionnaire content was validated and its reliability was tested. The questionnaire was distributed to 400 respondents who were the target population of the study, while 396 questionnaires were retrieved back for analysis using the simple percentage method. The findings show that 96% uses social media and 50.8% would speak up on social media if abused. The researcher suggests that social media is a platform where opinion can be freely expressed; hence, social media is a tool for the voiceless.

#### **Youth, Technology and Digital Spaces in Botswana: Exploring Smartphones Use Among Youth in Botswana**

By Tumisang Tsholetso, University of Botswana

##### Abstract

Smartphones have become a significant part of the digital space since the millennial. In fact, the significance of these devices is evidenced through their adoption, usage patterns and socio-cultural appropriation. Using a cross sectional survey, this paper explored the smartphone usage patterns among urban youth students aged between 18 and 35 in Botswana. The target population included youth who have lived in Gaborone for over a year, as it is anticipated that they have a lived experience of the urban lifestyle. The survey of 440 participants indicated widespread usage patterns of smartphones in the four (4)

local universities.

The commonly used mobile app was WhatsApp messenger. The findings focused on: reasons for owning a smartphone, the frequency of use of these smartphones and how they use smartphones to maintain friendships. The results revealed that 33.5% of participants started using smartphones at junior secondary school. The results also showed that 49.3% of the participants have between 3 to 4 social networking accounts. The results on sociality revealed that 75.1% use the smartphone for communication with family, followed closely by friends at 74.3% while only 26.5% considered it for safety or security. In conclusion, smartphones are rapidly becoming the preferred device of choice among the youth. Consequently, this paper shows how smartphone research usage is inevitable and bridges the empirical literature gap found in Botswana and the Sub-Saharan African context.

## **Youth and media consumption in the Covid-19 era in Mauritius**

By Azhagan Chenganna, University of Mauritius

### Abstract

Questions have been raised about the lack of engagement of the youth with regards to news consumption and the likely erosion in civic cultures that this entails. There are critics who have argued that this situation leads to a crisis of democracy and citizenship as the youth is bemoaned for not having civic engagements. Others are much more cautious and find positive elements in the way media is consumed by the youth. Between pessimism and optimism, whither to position Mauritian youth media consumption? How do Mauritian youth consume news in an age of information abundance? To what extent is incidental news consumption and clickbait part of their reality and what are the implications for engagement and citizenship in the Covid-19 era? Through interviews of a group of young students from Mauritius, this paper interrogates youth media practices and experiences in Mauritius and uses the notion of liminality as a toolbox to understand media consumption of Mauritian youth. Liminality refers to a transitional phase whereby one aims to find a place in the story. Critics may argue that the latter is a thin kind of engagement. Yet the paper argues that liminal experiences with news define youth consumption of news and provide possibilities of engagement and citizenship and the implications are discussed. Staying clear of disinformation and misinformation: Fact checking practices of students of two universities in West Africa.

## **Staying clear of Disinformation and Misinformation: Fact-checking practices of students of two universities in Africa**

By Francis Amenaghawon, North-West University, South Africa and Theodora Dame Adjinn-Tettey, Rhodes University/University of professional Studies, Accra

## Abstract

We live in a time that has been besieged by overabundance of information – infodemic – and many heavily relying on digital media for information and entertainment. Although disinformation and misinformation are not new, the democratisation and expanding range of digital media platforms, coupled with the speed with which information travels in contemporary times has made them much more widespread. Thus, in this ecology of overabundance of information is also evidence for a rising occurrence of disinformation and misinformation among African media consumers. Misinformation and disinformation must be of great concern because they pose a threat to security, public health, and democracy in Africa and calls for capacity building of the African news and information consumers in the areas of factchecking and media literacy. In this study, we use the survey method to assess the factchecking practices of students in two universities in Ghana and Nigeria and to ascertain the extent to which they factcheck information before resending or reposting messages, their levels of knowledge of fact checkers as well as the types of fact checkers that they use. It is expected that findings from this study will provide empirical data on fact-checking practices of students in both countries which can inform policy and educational directions on making accurate information available to citizens across the two countries.

# Day 2: 20th October, 2021

## Session theme: Youth and Social Media Activism (2)

Time: 10:00-11:30am

Zoom Meeting ID: 646 6907 0597

Passcode: 483592

Moderator: Dr Kobby Mensah, University of Ghana Business School

## Presentations

### **Social Media and Youth Activism in Ghana: Insights from #Fixthecountry Campaign**

By Auelia Ayisi, University of Ghana

## Abstract

In the last decade, there has been an exponential growth in the influence of new media on politics and on political discourse. Scholars have equally been busy investigating and answering questions about whether the internet and related digital media will enhance democracy, or 'kill' democracy? (Bartlett, 2018). Scholarship has long established the importance of investigating digital activism under a distinctive lens, contending that digital activism lowers participation costs, enabling more people to participate (Olson 1965, McCarthy and Zald 1977).

There is also a growing body of empirical work that addresses digital activism in the Global South. This study contributes to scholarship by using in-depth interviews to explore the ways in which the youth in Ghana used social media and the hashtag #fixthecountry as a tool for activism and citizen participation, its implications for governance and challenges that may arise. The findings will have implications for understanding youth activism online in Ghana and suggestions for appropriately engaging youth activists as well as contributing to scholarly works on online activism.

## **Social media activism: an exploratory study of radical use of social platforms by Nigeria youths**

By Abdulroqeeb Opeyemi Arówólò, Kwara State University, Nigeria

### Abstract

Since the influx of new media in the technological space, most Nigerian youths have gravitated from the old media to consume any kind of content thereby using social media as a tool to propagate evils, disseminate hate speech or fight for freedom and good governance in a decayed society. This paper presents an overview of the use of some social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, and how the youths have used them as a means of agitating for good governance and unearthing hidden facts that may be of sine qua non benefits to the general public. Having remonstrated and demonstrated their dissatisfaction against some government's policies such as inflation, higher taxes, unemployment etc., or speak vehemently about the grievances afflicting the citizenry; this research work then explores the other avenues utilized by the youths within Nigeria to ensure good governance in the political carapace by taking extreme advantage of social media. Using qualitative and thematic approach as research methodology, this paper thus selects the activities such as #ENDSARS on selected social media platforms including Facebook and Twitter between January and February 2020. This paper also uses social theory of language change as a theoretical framework to dwell on the boom of social media platform as delineated in the case study. This study concludes that youths can be and have used social media to attain good governance to a large extent.

## **From streets to tweets: A reflection on youth social media activism in selected African countries**

By Toyin Adinlewa and Alero Aderonke Benson, Adekunle Ajasin University

### Abstract

Youth have protested against repressions, the extension of presidential term limits, lack of electoral accountability and unpopular socio-economic initiatives across Africa, mostly since the Arab Spring. However, the uncivilized treatment of youth during protests has resulted in a social media activism movement, which has been used to great success over the last six years. With this development, African youth are forced to steer a new information ecosystem in which consumers, who lack gatekeeping abilities, double as information producers and disseminators, which often times leads to destruction of monumental pro

portion. Through a qualitative research design that surveyed relevant literature, this study reflects on youth social media activism in selected African countries. The research is built on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Technological Determinism theory. According to the findings, youth social media activism has increased in Africa. Young people are mobilizing and organizing activities to challenge state authorities who have previously ruled them with an iron fist, using technology (blogging and popular social media platforms). This trend is not unique to Sub-Saharan Africa; it has spread throughout the northern hemisphere; leading to the conclusion that if African governments continue to be unmindful of the youth, which evidence has shown is the most affected by the socio-economic and political structures in Africa, social media could be used to cause mayhem, as witnessed in Nigeria, where properties worth millions of dollars were destroyed and innocent lives lost. It is recommended, among other things, that African political leaders should provide responsible and responsive leadership aimed at improving the continent's political and socio-economic status.

## **Session theme: Ethics, Privacy and Security (1)**

Time: 10:00-11:30am

Zoom Meeting ID: 610 6381 5433

Passcode: 099851

Moderator: Rev Dr Dominic M. Ofori, University of Ghana Department of Communication Studies

### **Presentations**

#### **The ethics of social media use and digital media literacy among young people in Uganda**

By Dr. Florence Namasinga Selnes, Oslo Metropolitan University, Uganda

##### **Abstract**

This paper is concerned with ethical issues associated with young people's appropriation of social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, among others. Drawing on theory about young people, social media and digital literacy, the paper specifically interrogates ethical dilemmas and challenges that young people experience as they navigate various online environments and the implications thereof for digital literacy in Uganda. Research indicates that young people widely use social media for networking, to find information, communication and entertainment. At the same time, social media have been proven to amplify problems that relate to hate, privacy, abuse, rumourmongering and misinformation. While most of these studies are conducted in contexts with high rates of internet access, similar conclusions have been drawn in Africa in general and Uganda in particular. This leads to two questions that this paper seeks to address: a) What ethical issues do young people experience as they appropriate social

media? b) What are the implications for digital literacy training? The data to address these questions is collected through interviewing of a purposively selected sample of university students between the age of 20 and 23. The finding of this paper expands the debate about young people and social media from the Ugandan perspective and contribute to a discussion on the role of digital literacy vis-à-vis ethical social media appropriation among the youth.

## **Analysis of ethical concerns in social media use among youth in Nigeria**

By Umefien Dakoru Epepe, National Institute for Nigerian Languages

### Abstract

The subject of ethics that prescribe the code of conduct for mass media practitioners is an age-long practice. For decades, established ethical standards have been mostly upheld by professionals in conventional media outfits. However, the emergence of the interactive web, particularly social media have brought new dynamics to media ethics. Starting with the launch of Facebook in 2004, and subsequently Twitter in 2006, the social media space has expanded with lightning speed to bring swift changes to ethical media practices. Without a doubt, social media have introduced the concept of media convergence and made 'everyone' a producer and consumer of news. In most instances, this evolution has consigned the concept of gate-keeping to oblivion. Specifically, the youth being the leading users of social media, their hyperactivity and digital technology adeptness has meant that they are more or less residents of the digital space. Thus, the youth are actively engaged in the business of information sharing on social media. Has this development challenged established minimal conduct expected of media practice? Against this backdrop, this study aims to examine ethical concerns in social media use among youth in Nigeria, using discourse analysis. The study shall conclude and make recommendations for further studies based on the research findings.

## **The Relationship between Competency and Ethical Usage of Social Media of Young Adults**

By Ramatu Mustapha Dadzie, National Film and Television Institute, Ghana

### Abstract

The surge in social media platforms has made everyone a creator of contents on the online space for both the young and old. This follows its amazingly powerful tools that aid in the discovering, editing and sharing of content, at just the tip of a button, as it lacks the check and control mechanisms ascribed to the traditional media. As a result, inappropriate usage of social media, especially by the young people, has sparked a major social and ethical concerns due to the unfettered negative ways of self-expression and acquisition of information that users engage in. This leaves them disempowered and vulnerable and eventually, affecting their social and professional lives, even long after such contents are deleted.

The study unearths social media competency among the young and how such knowledge influences social media usage. A correlation analysis will be used to ascertain the strength in relationship between the variables (social media competency and usage of social media). A regression analysis, shall finally be used to estimate the effects of social media competency on usage. The study expects to observe a positive correlation between the variables (social media competency and critical usage of social media) and a direct effect of social media competency on usage of social media among the youth. To achieve this, the study uses young adolescent (i.e. those age between 17 to 21) in some selected public universities and senior high schools in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. Thus, people with appreciable level of education, hence aware of their actions. A simple random sampling technique is used in the selection of a sample size of 350 respondents. Findings emerging from the study will be very pivotal in understanding the ethical bases that informs young people when communicating on social media with their peers while revealing the relationship between levels of competency and critical usage of social media.

## **Session theme: Ethics, Privacy and Security (2)**

Time: 12:00-1:30pm

Zoom Meeting ID: 646 6907 0597

Passcode: 483592

Moderator: Prof Perpetua Dadzie, University of Ghana Department of Information Studies

## **Presentations**

### **Sensationalism as an Ethical Issue in Citizen Journalism among Undergraduates of Select Universities in Ogun State, Nigeria**

By Oriola, Mufutau Oluwakemi, Tai Solarin University of Education and Agbele Joshua Damilare, Bingham University, Karu, Nasarawa State, Nigeria

#### **Abstract**

The increasing penetration of the internet and new media technologies has created more avenues for participation of people, formerly known as media audiences, in the news production process through a practice termed citizen journalism. The rise of citizen journalism in Nigeria has enhanced the 'marketplace of idea' rationale, supporting the unending advocacy for freedom of speech. Today, news about events, people and places break on-the-go as reported by individuals with smartphones, internet connection and social media accounts. Citizen journalism in Nigeria has broadened people's access to a variety of news. However, the practice has promoted sensationalism – sharing of contents that entice, attract, stimulate, arouse, exaggerate and generally provoke emotional responses in readers without recourse to accuracy and social responsibility.

Market-driven journalism is fast becoming the popular culture on the digital space, posing ethical challenges that call for regulation. This study investigates sensationalism as an ethical issue in citizen journalism among undergraduates in selected universities in Ogun State, Nigeria. The study is anchored on media framing and social responsibility theoretical frameworks. The population of this study comprises undergraduates of Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta; Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun; and Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo (all in Ogun State, Nigeria). Using the simple random sampling technique, a sample size of 400 respondents will be studied using self-structured questionnaire. Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation will be the methods of data analysis for the study.

## **Social Media Ethics during Corona virus among Egyptian Youth**

By Dina Farouk Abou Zeid, International Academy for Engineering and Media Science

### **Abstract**

Social media websites are very popular among Egyptians especially the youth. Facebook, Instagram and Tik Tok are the most popular ones in Egypt. Young generations use social media to be entertained, socialized and informed about national and international news. Also, the global widespread of Corona virus and the lockdown have increased communicating about the virus on social media. But, unethical behavior and attitudes are found on these sites due to the lack of social media code of ethics in general and the lack of social media code of ethics during a pandemic in particular besides the lack of media literacy and digital literacy among Egyptian youth. So, a survey of 200 university students is conducted to examine social media ethics during covid-19 among Egyptian youth. The findings show that the majority of the sample share news about Corona virus without checking the credibility of the information. They share medical information from non medical sources. Moreover, they write their opinions on social media about news and announcements released from World Health Organization and ministry of health even if they do not have medical education. Moreover, they announce that a friend is covid-19 positive without taking his or her permission. Most of the sample share and write posts that can create panic among their friends and family members without being aware of this negative impact of their posts. Infodemic is a problem that they face online and are unable to deal with.

## **Privacy and security in the digital sphere: How netizens in two African countries navigate risks**

By Theodora Dame Adjin-Tettey, Rhodes University/University of Professional Studies, Accra and Desmond Okocha, Bingham University, Nigeria

### **Abstract**

The proliferation of digital technologies and associated social media platforms in Africa has birthed new paradigms of communications and two-way interactions among friends,

family colleagues and business associates. It has equally morphed to become a means for marketing and money generation for many internet users across the continent. Although the advantages associated with internet, by extension social media usage and online transactions, are enormous, it also poses a major security threat and has led to some privacy and security breaches. Anchored on the technological determinism and protection motivation theories, this study investigates cyber risks in the digital media sphere and how these risks are navigated for the purposes of optimal gratification and user safety by internet users in two African countries – Ghana and Nigeria. Online focus group discussions are expected to be conducted over a two-week period to ascertain the kinds of privacy and security threats internet users face, their knowledge about cybersecurity regulations and laws, how they navigate security and privacy risks on digital media and motivations behind choice of security applications. The study will provide data on security and privacy risks that internet users in the two countries face and how concerned and knowledgeable they are about privacy and security issues within the digital sphere. The study will also propose some solutions that speak back to specific cybersecurity risks that are dominant in both countries.

## **Session theme: Education, youth and digital media (1)**

Time: 12:00-1:30pm

Zoom Meeting ID: 610 6381 5433

Passcode: 099851

Moderator: Dr Simon-Peter Kafui Aheto, University of Ghana Department of Distance Education.

### **Presentations**

#### **Exploring MIL opportunities in Secondary Schools in Ghana**

By Patience E. Dzandza-Ocloo, University of Ghana

##### **Abstract**

The emergence of the information society has brought a drastic change in the lives of individuals. People now depend heavily on online content and secondary school students in Ghana are no exceptions as they engage in both academic and personal activities online. For this reason, curriculum and extra-curriculum contents across the globe have evolved to include contents that seek to equip students with MIL to position them to become responsible creators and consumers of online content. Though this seems to be the case mostly in the developed world, there seems to be an MIL gap in educational content provision in Ghana. The aim of this study is therefore to explore available opportunities that exist at the secondary school level in Ghana for MIL content provision to students using interviews with selected heads of schools, teachers and librarians in order to make proposals for policy reforms and contribute to existing MIL literature.

# **The use and adoption of social media in teaching: Perspectives of teachers in basic schools in Accra, Ghana**

By Ama Otwiwah Adu-Marfo, University of Ghana

## **Abstract**

In an era where new technologies are emerging and the world is beset with the Covid 19 pandemic, evidence shows that the most sustainable mode of ensuring continued, effective and resourceful teaching is through the use of digital media. Schools in developing countries are left with no other choice than to jump on the online global revolutionary band wagon. In spite of the numerous affordances of digital media in education, there appears to be an equal measure of challenges associated with its use. Wrongful use and adoption ultimately leads to students' mismanagement of information space and subsequent downturns in the realization of their dreams. This study explores teachers' experiences in six basic schools in Accra in the use and adoption of social media in teaching. It highlights the associated merits and demerits in using social media to teach and the role teachers play in mediating i.e. monitoring and controlling negative use of social media in the classroom. By means of a qualitative case study approach and through deviant sampling methods, the study highlights the experiences of thirty-six teachers in public and private school contexts. Data was gathered through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. Findings showed that effective adoption of digital technologies are better enhanced in educational environments that provide mediation and control strategies and systems in addition to understanding the environmental contexts. Recommendations were made for the implementation of regulation policies at the school, institutional and governmental levels.

Keywords: digital media online technologies teaching mediation, social media

# **Digital Pedagogy, Student's Participation, and Academic Performance under Covid-19 Pandemic**

By Eliasu Mumuni, University for Development Studies

## **Abstract**

It is a known fact before the looming of the global pandemic that the closeness between the physical and virtual realities departed long since. While adjusting to the new-old phenomenon, Covid-19 exacerbated the widening gap and compelled the world to move towards a more enhanced virtual space than it was operating. In most African countries and Ghana, this became an inescapable burden considering the weaker infrastructure and the punier digital culture and communities. The academic environment characterizes teaching and learning in universities and other higher educational institutions (HEI) globally, with face-to-face interactions and participation. To cope with the pandemic's insurgence whilst managing academic cycles and calendars, the use of virtual modes (e-learning) for teaching and learning became a no option for teaching and learning for HEIs. E-learning is the use of educational technologies (digital platforms and applications) for teaching and learning online. The study used a mixed-method approach to survey 914 students in 8 Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) in Ghana.

It reveals that most HEIs used zoom (41%), University Online Platforms (38%), WhatsApp (35%), Google Meet (29%), Emails (23%), Moodle (15%) and Google Classroom (12%) for lectures and students' engagements. 72% of the respondents reveal they had their lectures online, both online and face to face (26%), and the only face to face was (2%) for engineering and laboratory-based courses. Most of the students provided their own internet (70%), and only about 20% claim their institutions provided them with internet for these online engagements during the pandemic's peak. However, many of them indicated that they would instead prefer the face-to-face method of lectures if the pandemic were over, as their academic performances with these digital mediums dropped from (53%). The study recommended that more teaching staff be trained on these digital/online teaching methods to improve adaptability and ease of use and improve internet access to students since the pandemic still lingers around.

## **Session theme: Access, Use and Trends (3)**

Time: 2:00-3:30pm

Zoom Meeting ID: 646 6907 0597

Passcode: 483592

Moderator: Dr Theodora Adjin-Tettey, Rhodes University School of Journalism and Media Studies

## **Presentations**

### **Digital literacy among Ghanaian Youth: A focus on the Creation and Sharing Competencies.**

By Miss Annie Oye, University of Ghana

#### **Abstract**

Young people in Ghana increasingly have access to digital media and information platforms for the consumption, creation and sharing of information. This presents them with countless opportunities to get involved in developmental discourse in the country. In the area of education for example, a lot of attention is being paid to ICT education to ensure that the youth have the requisite skills to manoeuvre the digital space. However, in this information age, young people are usually thought of as vulnerable consumers of media products and thus in need of media and information literacy competencies. Yet being media and information literate does not only involve accessing and consuming information but it also includes the ability to create and disseminate information. Using the quantitative approach, this study therefore seeks to explore how young people use selected digital platforms to create and share information. This will be done through a newly developed media and information literacy scale. It is hoped that the findings from this study will throw more light on the creation competencies of young people in this digital age.

# Youth digital identity crisis in Kenya: An assessment during the Covid-19 pandemic

By Caren Jerop, Alupe University, Kenya

## Abstract

The proliferation of Internet and mobile phones has altered the way of life especially for the youth. The youth are actively using social media as a central form of social interaction. Through this social media, autonomy to share; explore and experiment their identities, the youth tend to compare themselves to others and validate their abilities. Through this, peer pressure, limited capacity for self-regulation, their identity and self-esteem is affected thus exposing them to greater risk of developing mental depression. Studies show that there is a creator link between social media comments and youth depression which seemed to have increased during the invasion of COVID-19, where physical interaction were limited. However, there is little research documenting the identity effects of social media in Africa during COVID 19 pandemic. This paper therefore sought to examine how Kenyan youth utilise social media platforms for self-expression, and how these forms of validations have triggered a wave of panic due to the increased number of young people sinking into depression. The study combines document analysis and in-depth interview from mental health therapists. To enrich this study, social comparison theory which suggests that individuals compare themselves with others and to achieve uniformity, individuals alter their behaviour was used. The findings have been classified into time spent on social media, social media identity and addiction. All these correlate with anxiety and psychological depression.

# Gendered dynamics in digital media entrepreneurship in Ghana: a study of the experiences of owners of news websites and YouTube channels

By Gertrude Dzifa A. Zegbla, University of Ghana

## Abstract

Research shows evidence gendered dynamics in traditional media with regard to practices and ownership with little attention to how this replicates or is nuanced in online media. This research applied a purely qualitative methodology to document the motivations and experiences of digital media entrepreneurs in Ghana. In this paper, I engage a purposively selected group of YouTube channel owners in Ghana to identify any gendered undertones to their work as owners and managers of media businesses on this online medium. In particular, I explore, using a gendered lens, their motivations for starting their channels, experiences in starting and managing the business and their thoughts on the challenges and opportunities therein. The findings revealed evidence that some of the gendered dynamics in traditional media ownership have been replicated in digital media space.

Key words: Entrepreneurship, Gender, Digital media, YouTube, Ghana

# Students Motivations for Sharing Misinformation on Social Media in Nigeria

By Emeka Umejei, University of Ghana

## Abstract

This study examines motivations for sharing misinformation on social media in Nigeria. The study uses focus group discussions (N=3) with participants from across three dominant regions of Nigeria including northeast, southwest and southeast. The study expands on the prior scholarship on students' motivations for sharing misinformation on social media in Africa and proposes additional motivations for sharing "fake news" in Nigeria to include 'sharing as patriotism'. However, there is a disagreement between Muslim and Christian students over the regulation of social media in Nigeria. The findings have implications for understanding and containing the spread of misinformation on social media in Nigeria.

## Session theme: Education, Youth and Media(2)

Time: 2:00-3:30pm

Zoom Meeting ID: 610 6381 5433

Passcode: 099851

Moderator: Dr Patience Dzandza, University of Ghana Department of Information Studies

## Presentations

### Tackling MIL knowledge gaps among Ghanaian Youths: Exploring opportunities within current extra-curricular activities.

By Aurelia Ayisi, University of Ghana

## Abstract

Around the world, Media Information Literacy is increasingly becoming one of the core competencies an individual needs in order to navigate the world around them. The Ghanaian youth are no exception. In 2011, as part of the Ghanaian government's efforts to improve learning in ICT and MIL, it came up with the Basic School Computerization policy to incorporate computers and e-learning into the entire educational system. Several years on, although the average Ghanaian youth has access to and consumes multiple forms of media, this has not necessarily resulted in an increase in MIL levels among the youth. Using focus group discussions with teachers in selected Senior High Schools in Ghana, this study explores opportunities within current extra-curricular activities as a tool in tackling the MIL knowledge gap among Ghanaian youth. The study identifies current extra curricula activities as 'creative thinking' opportunities that instructors in SHS can harness to bridge MIL knowledge gaps. Using the Technology Acceptance Model, the study contends that

creatively integrating MIL learning opportunities in the current SHS curriculum will equip Ghanaian youth with MIL competencies that will make them astute consumers of media as well as responsible producers of their own media.

## **Media literacy training in higher education: The case of Ghana Institute of Journalism**

By Theorose Elikplim Dzineku, Ghana Institute of Journalism and Stephen Tindi, Ghana Institute of Journalism

### **Abstract**

Media and Information Literacy (MIL) is crucial for building resilience against misinformation and disinformation, necessitating changes in educational curricula at various levels to include MIL training. In Ghana, there is growing interest in MIL, but there is little research into how MIL is incorporated in higher education. This exploratory study sought to investigate how MIL is integrated into the higher education curriculum using the Ghana Institute of Journalism (GIJ), a public university and the first journalism training institute in the country as a case. The study was underpinned by the cognitive media literacy theory. Employing a qualitative research approach and a single case study design, data was collected through interviews, focus group discussion, and document analysis. Thematically analyzed data showed that MIL is integrated into the curriculum at GIJ, but the current practice is disjointed and less systemic. Aspects of media literacy such as news literacy, digital literacy, and strategies for combating misinformation are taught as part of various courses. As a result, students are aware of online privacy, and they are knowledgeable about how to combat fake news. However, students' appreciation of other dimensions of MIL remains underdeveloped. This paper concludes that media and information literacy must be treated as a complete stand-alone core course to ensure the effectiveness of MIL training in higher education.

## **The value of YouTube videos to distance learning**

By Nancy Owusu, University of Ghana

### **Abstract**

The study aimed to investigate the usage of YouTube videos to learning among distance learning students at the University of Ghana. Underpinned by the Technology Acceptance Model, this study employed a survey of 200 distance education students to explore their YouTube consumption. The results showed that the overwhelming majority (99%) of the students are active users and less than half use the videos for educational purposes to obtain practical skills, for research, assignments and as supplementary lecture notes when studying. However, the study revealed that the use of the internet was constrained by the high cost of data (52%) and poor internet connectivity (31%). The study concludes that distance students watch YouTube videos to seek online assistance when learning; hence, making the technology very useful to their learning process. The study, therefore, recommends that the University of Ghana constantly ensure there is free and reliable internet access to distance education students especially when on campus.

## Closing plenary

Time: 4:00-5:00

Zoom Meeting ID: 646 6907 0597

Passcode: 483592

Moderator: Dr. Gilbert Tietaah, Department of Communication Studies, UG.

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