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CONVERGENCE OF TRADITIONAL AND NEW MEDIA OF COMMUNICATION

Angela Nkiru Nwammuo* Ph.D. & Gideon Uchechukwu Nwafor**

Introduction

Convergence is a term used by various academic disciplines to describe and analyze manifold processes of change toward uniformity. Its application in the communication sector is often referred to as media convergence. It also encompasses or involves valuable approaches to describe, characterize, analyze and understand the digital creative economy. It overlaps with some sub-sectors between communication and digital creative industries such as publishing, music, broadcasting, advertising, film and games. These subsectors are even growing because of convergence. Beyond that, the consequences of media convergence are also witnessed in other parts of innovative industries, such as museums, libraries and design in particular. New digital media technology and services are considered as central drivers of creative industries. Altogether, this makes the study of media convergence, both its approaches and results, highly important for the understanding of the digital creative economy.

This chapter therefore, discusses in details how traditional and new media forms of communication converged to produce the level of media effect and experience in today's world. But before we proceed, it is pertinent to point out that by traditional media, this study means older media forms like radio, television, newspaper, magazine, cinema and books. New media forms on the other hand refer to all internet-enabled platforms signaled by the emergence of new information and communication technologies. Such new media forms include cell phones, social networking sites like Facebook, YouTube, Whatsapp, and 2go etc. wikis, blogs, E-books, online newspapers, webcasts, video streaming and the likes, are also inclusive.

Chapter objectives

This chapter is designed to:

1. give conceptual definitions and explanations about media convergence
2. explain the various elements of media convergence
3. explain the various areas of convergence between traditional and new media of communication
4. discuss the dimensions of media convergence
5. highlight the benefits of media convergence
6. explain the implications of media convergence to the society

What you will learn from this chapter

At the end of this chapter, you expected to learn:

1. the various definitions of media convergence by different scholars
2. various elements of media convergence
3. areas of convergence between traditional and new media
4. dimensions of media convergence
5. the benefits of media convergence
6. the implications of media convergence to the society

Main Discussion

Conceptual Overview of Media Convergence

Convergence is a concept that has been used to describe various trends in journalism. It throws light on the blurring lines between different media forms, professional skills and role strategies (Dupagne & Garrison, 2006; Silcock & Keith, 2006). Jenkins (2006:3) defines convergence as 'flow of content across multiple media platforms'. This suggests that media audiences nowadays play a crucial role in

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as well as technological changes within the society. According to Jenkins, Media convergence is an ongoing process that should not be viewed as a displacement of the old media, but rather as interaction between different media forms and platforms. Supporting this, Deuze cited in Erdal (2011) suggests that media convergence should be viewed as cooperation and collaboration between previously unconnected media forms and platforms. Burnett and Marshall cited in Grant and Wilkinson (2008:5) explain convergence as 'blending of the media, telecommunications and computer industries' or, in other words, as the process of blurring the boundaries between different media platforms and uniting them into one digital form.

Media convergence, as a phenomenon involves the interconnection of information and communications technologies, computer networks, and media content. It brings together the "three C's"—computing, communication, and content—and is a direct result of the digitization of media content and the popularization of the Internet. Media convergence transforms established industries, services, and work practices and enables entirely new forms of content to emerge (Flew, 2005). Nwammuo (2011) explains that existing forms of media evolve when a new one enters, and each form is operating in an ecosystem where its evolution is dependent on the evolution around it giving way for old and new media to coexist rather than old ones dying.

Drawing on the definitions of media convergence outlined above, it can be argued that one of the ways of understanding media convergence is in terms of interaction between old and new forms of media. This concept can be explained more clearly using the example of television industry and its development over the years. The idea of transition from analogue media to digital media stands at the core of media convergence debate. The term 'analogue' is used to describe something 'that resembles something else' (Dewdney & Ride, 2006:227). Signals transmitted through television can be seen as being analogous to the light and sound of the actual scene. In the case of analogue media, each form was separate and independent from the others due to the need to use different 'materials, properties and apparatuses'. With the

introduction of digital code however, the situation changed rapidly and opened new possibilities for media creation and convergence, for example, new forms of interaction between producers and consumers.

Elements of Media Convergence

According to Phree (2011), media convergence, however, is an economic strategy in which communications companies seek financial benefit by making the various media properties they own work together. Phree opines that the strategy is a product of three elements which are:

- **corporate concentration**, whereby fewer large companies own more and more media properties;
- **digitization**, whereby media content produced in a universal computer language can be easily adapted for use in any medium; and
- **government deregulation**, which has increasingly allowed media conglomerates to own different kinds of media (e.g., television and radio stations and newspapers) in the same markets, and which has permitted content carriage companies (e.g., cable TV suppliers) to own content producers (e.g., specialty TV channels).

Dimensions of Media Convergence

Deuze (2004) specifically explains that there is a blurring line between the roles of the producer and consumer of media contents in this 21st century due to the emergence of new information technologies. Thus, he proposed to analytically structure convergence into four dimensions that cover different phases of the communication process. These dimensions are:

- Integrated production – Content
- Multi-skilled professionals – Source
- Multiplatform delivery – Medium
- Active audience – Receiver

While explaining the dimensions proposed by Duez, Phree (2011) pointed out that in the first dimension which has to do with **Integrated Production**, the most relevant signs of convergence are to be found in the reformation of newsrooms which is also linked to the redefinition of professional roles, technical

innovation and the development of innovative news formats and languages.

Phree submits that in Nigeria today, most reporters, photojournalist, video-journalism, editors, etc submit their stories, photos or videos through the internet or their mobile phone. Unlike in the last decade when editors and reporters work from personal offices/independent newsrooms which sometimes delays the production of news-stories, they collaborate more and develop forms of integration of all the journalists into one newsroom, in which at the end produces the content for different outlets at the same time. Digitization of the production processes has been the technological innovation that has supported newsroom integration in most media houses across the nation.

Using the convergence of the **multi-skilled professionals** to examine the Nigerian media, it can be observed that Nigerian journalists are not only trained to report news stories but also to report the audios, photos and videos of events using their mobile phones or devices. Various workshops have been organized to train journalists to be skilled and professionally inclined with today's technology (Phree, 2011).

The ideal Multi-skilled journalist, as they are being referred to by some authors (Bromley, 1997), would be able to produce news for any medium using any required technological tool in every step of the production process. This strategy allows companies to minimize labour, administrative and material costs, to use the same media content across several media outlets, to attract increased advertising by providing advertisers with package deals and one-stop shopping for a number of media platforms, and to increase brand recognition and brand loyalty among audiences through cross-promotion and cross-selling (Phree, 2011).

Multi-Platform Delivery of content is a dimension of convergence that developed more visibly in recent years, even though there seems to be a scarcity of journalism research on the implications of the trend. The advancement of technology especially in the areas of mobile communications and data-enabled digital television systems has enlarged the range of options for the citizens to access the news.

Phree (2011) suggests that broadcasting has been changed increasingly by the Internet, giving consumers all over the world the freedom to

access their preferred media content more easily and at a more available rate than ever before. Many Nigerians can now access news information from their mobile phones, or internet, especially with the advent of social networks like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and blog sites such as Linda Ikeji, Nigeria Village Square, Sahara Reporters, Scannews etc. Most Nigerian newspaper organizations now have online version where they publish their stories and update them on intervals. Examples include *The Punch* (www.punchng.com), *The Guardian* (www.ngrguardiannews.com), *Daily Sun* (www.sunnewsonline.com), *ThisDay* (www.thisdaylive.com), *The Nation* (www.thenationliveng.net), etc. Radio stations like, *Freedom Radio* (www.freedomradionig.com), *Radio Lagos* (www.radiolagosekofm.net), *Classic FM* (www.classic97.net), *Brilla FM* (www.brilafm.net), *Dream FM* (www.dreamfm.com) etc cannot but allow their presence to be felt worldwide.

Current media trends do not only seem to blur the differences among the media, but also the distance between producers and audiences (Jenkins, 2004). The origin of this redefinition of the relationship between journalists and citizens can be found in the qualitative changes in the audience habits and attitudes namely fragmentation, specialization and active participation (Livingstone, 1999). Digital distribution technologies allow for the customization of content and ease the production of news that is highly targeted to specific audiences (Tewksbury, 2005). Active participation therefore has a greater influence in the redefinition of professional journalism.

For the Nigerian journalist, the mobile phone keeps him or her in close contact with news sources. Besides, most journalists now have in their possessions, multimedia devices that enable them to take instant photographs, record interviews and keep them connected to the internet. Blogs, wikis and other self-publishing tools have eased the ability of the netizens to produce their own content and potentially reach a global audience. Netizens are right thinking members of the society who are non-journalists but contribute on the issues facing the society by commenting and airing their views in forums available on the internet like Facebook, Blogs,

YouTube etc. In the print media, the citizens are given a separate page to publish their opinions about issues that affect them in their immediate society. This is known as *Letter to the Editor* which has limited space to accommodate the numerous comments and views of the citizens. The Broadcast media also have audience participation programs like *One-on-One (NTA)*, *Political Voices (Dream FM)*, etc.

Convergence between New Media and Traditional Media: An Overview

The beginnings of research on media convergence and the subsequent large bulk of the convergence literature concentrate on the process of blurring lines between individual and mass communication (Pool, 1983). Later, it focuses on the convergence of modes of communication and the blurring of boundaries between traditional media and their sub-sectors in the communications sector. Recently, it dwells on the interface between new media and the traditional mass media with particular reference to broadcasting (Latzer, 2013).

Latzer (ibid) explains that from an analytical point of view, it is helpful to conceptualize the blurring of boundaries between new media and mass media narrowly as the core piece and meaning of media convergence. Furthermore, as convergence continues and is even increasingly used as a buzzword for talking about a very wide range of phenomena and changes, its time-dimension should be considered. It is neither an endless nor a steady process, as is sometimes misleadingly implied, but a temporary one. It peaked at the end of the 20th century, even though there are significant offshoots for communication and the digital creative economy well into the 21st century.

Seen historically, the 20th century communication sectors, which were nationally organized and essentially characterized by more or less universal distinctions between new media and traditional media, formed the starting point for media convergence. The commercial use of telegraphy and telephony began in the second half of the 19th century and became known as the telecommunications sector. The broadcasting sector established itself commercially a few decades later and was classified together with the press as part of the media sector. These two sub-sectors – telecommunications and the media –

used different technologies and separate networks. They were run by different companies, there were distinct political competences, separate regulatory agencies and legal foundations and they had different underlying regulatory models (Latzer, 2009).

By the end of the 20th century this technology-oriented subdivision into traditional media and new media, into mass communication and individual communication was disintegrating. Traditional categorizations, analytical frameworks, separate regulatory bodies and regulatory models for telecommunications and the mass media were challenged, driven by a combination of digitization, mobile communications, the Internet and digital television.

Latzer (2013) further explain that as the difficulty of classifying the online communication sector displays, the result of the convergence of telecommunications and broadcasting is more than just the sum of its parts. The way the trend is formulated conceptually and terminologically varies depending on the research perspective. The result of convergence is variously described as multimedia, TIME (telecommunications, information technologies, media, entertainment) or cross-media, emphasizing its media-overlapping character.

From a structural perspective, convergence changes the techno-social, societal communication systems towards mediamatics (Latzer, 1997). It is the computer sector that connects the previously separate sub-sectors of telecommunications and the mass media. This process has gone through two main stages, starting at the end of the 20th century. In a first step, data communication and the digitization of telephony marked the arrival of computer technology (inforMATICS) into TELEcommunications, which was coined as telematics (Nora and Minc, 1978). This was followed by the convergence of the likewise digitized mass MEDIA with teleMATICS toward an integrated societal communications system called mediamatics (ibid). Latzer (2013) note that the convergence process was co-evolutionary, i.e. its direction and pace were determined by the reciprocal interplay of technological innovations, corporate strategies,

political-legal reforms and changes in media reception.

Areas of Convergence between Traditional and New Media of Communication

The under-listed are the common areas of convergence between traditional media and new media of communication.

1. Technological Convergence
2. Economic Convergence
3. Content Convergence

1. Technological convergence

According to Papadakis (2007), the term technological convergence is often defined in a very generalized and simplified terms as a process by which new media powered by information technology and the traditional media, that originally operated largely independent of one another, are growing together. This means that technological convergence has both a technical and a functional side. The technical side refers to the ability of any infrastructure to transport any type of data, while functional side means the consumers may be able to integrate in a seamless way the functions of computation, entertainment, and voice in a unique device able to execute a multiplicity of tasks.

The technological dimension of convergence is the most readily understood. With the World Wide Web, smartphones, tablet computers, smart televisions, and other digital devices, billions of people are now able to access media content that was once tied to traditional communications media (print and broadcast) which are newspapers, magazines, radio, television, books and cinema.

Since a diverse array of content is now being accessed through the same devices, media organizations have developed cross-media content. For example, news organizations no longer simply provide only print or audiovisual content but are portals that make material available in forms such as text, video, and podcasts, as well as providing links to other relevant resources, online access to their archives, and opportunities for users to comment on the story or provide links to relevant material. These developments have transformed

journalism by breaching longstanding boundaries—between who is and is not a journalist, between deadlines and other time, between journalists and editors, and between content platforms.

It must be pointed out that technological convergence results from transformation from ‘atoms’ to bits, digitization of the whole media content (Negroponte, 1995; Jenkins, 2001). It occurs on the plane of infrastructure and transporting that corresponds to convergence of devices and network convergence. Technological convergence has the following dimensions:

- a. Convergence of Devices
- b. Convergence of Solutions
- c. Network Convergence

a. Convergence of devices

Convergence of devices consists on “bringing together multiple media functions within the same device” (Jenkins, 2006, p.3) that make them become similar. Most of all, it follows the development of the Internet, e-business, multimedia and IT applications, the growth of the computing power and its prices decrease (Kamiński, 2000). It is also specified as terminal convergence considering the role of the terminal: radio set, television set, telephone, computer. According to the devices integration, new definitions that characterize its nature came up, i.e. mixed-media referring to “any medium in which two or more forms of communication are integrated” (Białobłocki & Moroz, 2006; Fidler, 1997).

A mobile phone with radio and MP3 player is an example of a terminal that converges. Around the convergence of devices phenomenon there is a myth called “black box” myth. It is based on the assumption that sooner or later one “box” will be created, where all the media will be integrated; it is also determined as übebox, telecomputer or teleputer (Gilder, 1994). According to Finnemann (1998) “computer becomes a kind of universal medium or meta-medium, which can simulate other media, technologies and systems of expression”. Computer is most often accepted as universal medium or Meta medium. The conceptions on what can serve as a “black box” were changing. At first, a TV set was considered to be the one, especially with set-top box, then personal computer, Internet accessories, smaller and

smaller computers resembling “smart terminals”, with game consoles at the end. According to the development of mobile network a term polymedia has been created for what mobile communication devices are nowadays.

As Noll (2002) notices, similarity of technologies does not have to mean creating one medium mainly because of the fact that they fulfill different objectives. Latter research on convergence point to inability of “black box” realization, “rather, thanks to the proliferation of channels and the increasingly ubiquitous nature of computing and communications, we are entering an era where media will be everywhere, and we will use all kinds of media in relation to one another” (Jenkins, 2001). Undoubtedly, such solutions as PAN (Personal Area Networks), Bluetooth, or “transmitting information through the human body” will contribute to this situation. Simultaneously, Jenkins emphasizes that “history teaches us that old media never die; genres and delivery technologies come and go, but media persist as layers within an ever more complicated information and entertainment system” (Jenkins, 2001).

b. Convergence of solutions

Convergence of solutions consists in standardization of the network access procedures, processes, services, and applications (Białobłocki & Moroz, 2006). Along with the process of digitization and the convergence of devices and networks, there appears service convergence and so-called multimedia services. Service convergence includes both transmission convergence “which means, in other words, providing similar services with the use of different implementation tools belonging to various communication sections” (Fiut & Matuzik, 2006) and diverse solutions resulting from i.e. convergence of devices. In opinion of Budziewicz-Gruźlecka (2008) it is displayed in the migration of services, common services offering and the appearance of services that support network substitution i.e. making it similar.

Convergence of services has economic and cultural dimension. On one hand, it is linked with extension of the offer by the provider of a service (television station, online service, telecom). On the other hand, it changes communication patterns and determines

communication roles. Examples of converged services are: – TriPlay services (television, telephone, Internet), – Multipackage access services (telephone, Internet, interactive television, VOD) via stationary telephony with the use of modem, – Internet and television access services with the use of mobile phone (mobile television, music downloading, online entertainment etc.), – Interactive services on the Internet (interactive television IPTV, VOD) offered via telecomputer connection by traditional providers.

Broadly speaking, telecommunication, data communications and mass communications “are following together in a process called convergence” (van Dijk, 1999). It also contains integration of stationary telephony and mobile network. Of course, the Internet is medium that plays most important role nowadays in the processes of technological convergence. The Web converges various forms of media and network communication (Burnett & Marshall, 2003). Networking constitutes one of the most essential features of convergent strategies.

c. Network convergence

Storsul & Fagerjord (2008) asserts that there is no difference between sound, text, and images in Digital networks, as they are all transmitted as bits and bytes, in contrast to analog signals. There takes place integration of network and communication between networks that were previously destined for other goals. Van Dijk (1999, p. 3) distinguishes broadcasting and networking convergence that he refers to as “second communications revolution”. The old media are redetermined by interactivity and digitization. The second one, according to Flew (2002), makes the platform and its media inter-operable, networkable and enables to separate channel from the content. As an effect, there are new digital technologies and remediated digitalized analogue technologies.

Network convergence is also the integration of cable network, the Internet, intranet, telephone and mobile network (Białobłocki & Moroz, 2006). As Storsul and Fagerjord (2008) note, despite of network digitalization it still performs specialized functions. It is then possible to claim that, as in case of devices, a vision of one network to perform all the functions remains as a variant of the “black box” myth. However, there

are opinions that network convergence will lead to the foundation of uniform infrastructure that is based on IP (Internet Protocol) (Białoblocki & Moroz, 2006, p. 133).

While eliciting the opportunities it offers, Papadakis (2007) note that technological convergence if appropriately managed can play an important role in national economic and social development of every nation. Governments can capitalize on the opportunity to stimulate market development and meet previous unmet society communication needs. He listed benefits of technological convergence as follows:

1. Increased market competition
2. Emergence of new services and applications
3. Convenience and simplicity

i. Increased Market Competition: Convergence has lowered barriers of entry to the market for new operators and service providers. The emergence of new market players intensifies competition, giving consumers an extensive pool of providers and services to choose from and lower communication costs. Additionally in a technological convergent environment industry boundaries become blurred, allowing service providers to offer services in multiple markets. For example, besides access to television, cable operators can also offer voice telephony and internet services. Content providers can now easily access consumers with no need to own the distribution network. For example, a company may produce TV content and distribute it through cable networks without having to own it.

ii. Emergence of New Services and Applications: Established companies will find in convergence an opportunity to operate more efficiently, increase returns on technology investments and realize other business benefits through development of new services and rapid market expansion. Convergence opens up new sales markets for companies, a case observed in mobile operators. As the market saturates, they look to non-voice services, such as video streaming, portals, messaging, information services, and gaming, to drive future revenue growth. New applications have given rise to new ways of entertainment (i.e. online gaming) and socialization (i.e. chat rooms). The convergence of voice, video and data gives consumers new

ways of communication as we can all talk, send text and video over one single network, using one single application at much lower costs than before.

iii. Convenience and Simplicity: At device level, consumers find in convergence an opportunity to enjoy the convenience of having many devices all in one, saving on both size and ownership costs. For example, a single mobile phone device can receive television programmes and play videos, thus enabling simplicity and convenience in device ownership as one device can be used to access multiple services.

1. Economic convergence

This is the second area of media convergence. This strategy is a product of three elements: 1) digitization; 2) corporate concentration, whereby fewer large companies own more media properties; and 3) government deregulation, which has increasingly allowed media conglomerates to own different kinds of media (e.g., television and radio stations, and newspapers) in the same markets, and which has permitted content carriage companies (e.g., cable and satellite TV distributors) to own content producers (e.g., specialty TV channels). Economic convergence has the following dimensions:

- a) Market convergence and regulatory convergence
- b) Corporate convergence

(a) Market convergence and regulatory convergence

The term market convergence means merging of telecommunication, information technology and media markets. It is a two-step process. In the first phase, telecommunication and IT market merge with each other, and both permeate with media market in the second phase (Zerdick, Pickot & Schrape, 2001). Some people add also the fourth market – entertainment market – that integrates with the three mentioned above. This type is sometimes defined as industry convergence. Dawson (2003, p. 126) maintains that “business now exists within a single convergent space, and the very concept of an ‘industry’ is losing meaning borders between

sectors based on information and other sectors are blurring because of emerging one convergent space”.

Regulations concerning communication and audiovisuality are subjected to integration in many countries. Still in some regions, there are separate legal documents that govern services and media content (i.e. telecommunications law, press law or intellectual property rights). It mainly results from the diversity of the social use of particular media, different cultural interactions or performed functions. In the field of Internet communication, researchers observe the trend of “mediatisation” of the regulations concerning content. Combination of particular sectors requires also simultaneous compliance of cartel law, protection of competition, and consumer protection (Belczyński, 2008; Jakubowicz, 2008; Storsul & Fagerjord, 2008). Regulatory convergence is also merging of regulatory authorities whose number, as Jakubowicz (2008) notes, rises, not declines

(b) Corporate convergence

Corporate convergence consists on convergence of interests and the integration of companies in media, computer, telecommunication and entertainment market. Within corporate convergence we can distinguish: proprietary convergence and organizational convergence. The first type results from joint ventures, consortia creation and strategic alliances (Kamiński, 2001). Sometimes it is referred to as “industrial convergence” when companies of different trades merge with each other.

Corporate convergence is accompanied by dynamic and bilateral relation. Corporate convergence is an impulse for media convergence, technological innovation and content supply. However, innovations are one of the reasons of new corporate convergences. That process does not take place in isolation: it is top-down powered by corporations and at the grass roots by the consumers. Corporate convergence co-exists with amateur one (Gordon, 2003).

3. Content convergence

This is the third area of media convergence which refers to a series of processes of convergence, integration and intersecting of the media in the range of its content during the whole process of its creation, starting with

planning, through creating and supplying, to using. Content convergence has the following dimensions:

- a. Media content
- b. Media users

(a) Media content

From the perspective of a producer (a professional) convergence is top-down and corporate driven process. It demands the use of a range of strategies and tactics that make it effective and attractive. On the level of concrete message units, content convergence is about the form and content of the media message. Its example is rhetoric convergence consisting in transformation of kinds as a result of convergence of older elements in new solutions (Storsul & Fagerjord, 2008). Detailed model of rhetoric convergence assumes the existence of four axes of texts that can be replaced independently from each other: “mode of distribution (the balance of amount of material and time between authoring and reading); mode of restrictions (range and detail in space and time); mode of acquisition (the reading process required of the reader); and mode of signification (the particular combination of sign systems)The perceived convergence of media may be viewed as combinations of earlier form, or forms sliding towards each other as variables change” (Storsul & Fagerjord, 2008, p. 8).

At the level of the whole of communication strategies, content convergence is a process that targets creating multi-platform universe of media product or media brand. It is a process which is corporate driven and powered at the grassroots; this is why content convergence stimulated by media industry is accompanied by “grassroots convergence: informal, sometimes unauthorized flow of media content” that is also a process that “paves the way” for corporations (Jenkins, 2008, p.22). Both processes integrate in a specific way for media production.

(b) Media users

For the needs of integration of both dimensions of the phenomena in theoretical reflection Jenkins (2008, p. 3) explains that “convergence is a word that describes technological, industrial, cultural, and social changes in the ways media circulates contents within our culture”. Some common ideas referenced by the term include the

flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, the search for new structures of media financing that fall at the interstices between old and new media, and the migratory behavior of media audiences who would go almost anywhere in search of the kind of entertainment experiences they want. Convergence therefore represents a cultural shift as consumers are encouraged to seek out new information and make connections among dispersed media content. It occurs within the brains of individual consumers and through their social interactions with others. In Jenkins opinion, convergence is not a routine but a continuous process or series of happenings.

Benefits of Media Convergence

The benefits of media convergence can be submerged in the following areas:

- Convergence is beneficial because of the role it can play in national economic and social development growth. It has the potential to impact on all segments of society. It can shape the delivery of government services (education and health included) and redefine the way businesses operate.
- Media Convergence has greatly impacted circulation outreach; this has a great impact on media and contributes to high degree of appreciation of news stories. This has further empowered producers and media entrepreneurs towards reaching out to wider audiences.
- This growing trend of communication has an edge over the previous ways of circulating news and information strictly on hardcopies for an information. Media firms have now gained stronger circulation power. This is made possible as people can assess information by visiting various websites from anywhere in the world.

Implications of Media Convergence

Latzer, (2013) note that convergence is not only used and discussed in academia but also by policy-makers and the industry, however, with differing objectives, interests, definitions and accentuations. For the industry, convergence is predominantly a strategic objective and a

business challenge. For policymakers it is a policy goal and challenge. For academics it is mainly an analytical concept applied to understand and explain important aspects of media change in general and numerous detailed developments in particular.

Media convergence has also thrown up new challenges for policy. For most of the 20th century, media content was delivered through particular platforms, such as books, newspapers, magazines, radio, television, cinema, and video games. These different media were subject to different levels of regulation based upon whether they were distributed in public or consumed in private, whether children could access the content, whether a particular medium may have more impact on its audience, and so on.

The nature of media companies has also changed. For example, the computer company *Apple, Inc.*, has become by far the world's largest distributor of music. The search-engine firm *Google, Inc.* plays a key role in making both news and TV content available to global audiences. How to achieve long-established principles of media policy, such as ensuring diversity of ownership and content, regulating access on the basis of community standards, and meeting local content requirements in an age of global media, is a major challenge for policy makers in the age of media convergence.

Summary of the Chapter

The growing trend of convergence of traditional and new media of communication has an edge over the previous ways of circulating news and information. Media firms have now gained stronger circulation power through pluralization of contents. In the 21st century the content and platforms have separated, with content now accessible in digital form across multiple devices. Moreover, users themselves are not just the consumers of content but increasingly, its producers and distributors. This innovation has made information cheap and accessible. It has greatly impacted circulation outreach and contributed to high degree of appreciation of news, entertainment and other information. This has further empowered producers and media entrepreneurs towards reaching out to wider audiences.

Latzer, (2013) observe that in the 1990s, industry, politics and research together made

convergence one of the central buzzwords in the communications field and beyond, alongside and often combined with digitization, liberalization and globalization. With the rapid proliferation of Internet-based services, especially with Web 2.0, digital TV, social media and wireless communication, the convergence phenomenon has attracted even more attention since the beginning of the 21st century.

Fill-in-the Gap Questions Exercise

1. The three C's of Media convergence are _____, _____ and _____
2. Elements of media convergence are _____ and _____
3. Three areas of convergence between traditional media and new media are _____, _____ and _____
4. A mobile phone with radio and MP3 player is an example of terminal that _____
5. _____ is one benefit of technological convergence
6. Convergence of service has _____, _____ and _____ dimensions
7. Three elements of economic convergence are _____
8. Market convergence means _____
9. Corporate convergence is based on three factors namely _____, _____ and _____
10. _____ and _____ are the dimensions of content convergence.

Multiple Choice Questions Exercise

1. The three major areas of media convergence are:
 - (a) Content, Technological and Economic
 - (b) Devices, Content and Technological
 - (c) Economic, Corporate and Content
 - (d) Technological, Network and Content
2. The benefits of Technological convergence are:
 - (a) Increased market competition
 - (b) Emergence of new services and applications
 - (c) Convenience and simplicity
3. The study of media convergence is importance for the understanding of
 - (a) Digital creative economy
 - (b) Mass convergence
 - (c) Digital divergence
 - (d) Electronic economy
4. Media convergence is
 - (a) Displacement of traditional media by new media
 - (b) Interaction between different media forms and platforms
 - (c) Traditional media minus new media
 - (d) New media minus traditional media
5. Digital distribution technologies, allow for
 - (a) Customization of contents
 - (b) Circulation of contents
 - (c) Receiving of contents
 - (d) Distribution of contents
6. Corporate concentration occurs when
 - (a) Few large companies own more media properties
 - (b) More large companies own few media properties
 - (c) Few small companies own small media properties
 - (d) More small companies own more media properties
7. _____ and _____ account for redefinition of relationship between journalists and citizens
 - (a) Audience habits and attitudes
 - (b) Audience readership and viewership
 - (c) Journalists habits and attitudes
 - (d) Journalists readership and viewership
8. _____ keeps most Nigerians journalists in close contact with news sources
 - (a) Mobile phones
 - (b) Laptops
 - (c) Modems
 - (d) Computers
9. Technological area of convergence is the most easily
 - (a) Understood

- (b) Misunderstood
 - (c) Explained
 - (d) Conceptualized
10. The three C's of media convergence are:
- (a) Competition, Content and Consequences
 - (b) Content, Consumers and Competition
 - (c) Computing, Communication and Content
 - (d) Communication, Content and Consumers

Discussion Questions

1. What is media convergence?
2. How is media convergence an economic strategy?
3. List and explain the three basic areas of media convergence
4. What are the benefits of media convergence?
5. Differentiate content convergence from technological convergence using vivid example in the Nigerian media
6. From the perspective of a media producer, explain what content convergence implies.
7. Using five points, briefly outline the implications of media convergence
8. With reference to the convergence of multi-skilled professionals, briefly describe the Nigerian experience of media convergence
9. How do media users contribute to media convergence?
10. Explain how convergence has increased market competition in the world media landscape.

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Related websites and URL

- www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/media-convergence
- <https://mconvergence.wordpress.com/about>
- www.revistacomunicar.com/verpdf.php?numero=44&articulo=44-2015-14

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