

**UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI,
SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATIONS**

**THE LIBERTARIAN THEORY AND THE IMPACT
OF BLOGGING IN KENYA**

BY

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DECLARATION

This research report has never been presented for examination in institution before.

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to the people who mean the world to me: my dear wife, Nyambura and my daughter Sandrine Wairimu for whom I have strived to see off this endeavour, my mum Rose Ngare and the entire immediate family consisting of the Njokas, Mwaraganiyas, Njengas and the Muriithis for their love as well as support, financial and otherwise, without which this project would not have been realised.

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A man stands a very good chance of becoming enslaved by the very fruits of his own technology, a servo-mechanism of the computer, rather than the computer functioning as a servo-mechanism of man.

-Lewis Mumford

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Page</u>
Abstract	9
1.0 CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	10
1.1 Introduction	10
1.2 Statement of problem	23
1.3 Purpose of Study	23
1.4 Research Questions	26
1.5 Theoretical Framework	27
1.6 Justification of the Study	27
1.7 Limitations	31
1.8 Dissemination	32
1.9 Ethical Considerations	32
1.10 Contributions of the Study	32
1.11 Potential topics	33
1.12 Thesis Structure	34
1.13 Summary	34
2.0 CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	35
2.1 Introduction	35
2.2 The Internet	36
2.2.1 History of Internet	36
2.2.2 Internet as mass medium	37

2.3	Blogging and Libertarian Theory	38
2.4	Blogging	39
2.4.1	History of blogging	39
2.4.2	The blogging revolution	44
3.0	CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	46
3.1	Research Type	46
3.2	Research Paradigm	46
3.3	Research Method	48
3.4	Population of Study	49
3.5	Sampling	49
3.6	Data Collection Techniques	50
3.7	Data Collection Tools	51
3.8	Data Analysis	52
3.9	Data Presentation	52
3.10	Reliability	52
4.0	CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH FINDINGS	54
4.1	Introduction	54
4.2	Demographics	54
4.2.1	Gender Distribution	54
4.2.2	Age Distribution	55
4.2.3	Internet Access	55

4.2.4	Blogs' Believability	56
4.3	Preferences: Blogs vs. Mainstream	56
4.4	Blogging Period	57
4.5	Blogs' boldness	59
4.6	Blogosphere's popular content	60
5.0	CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION	
5.1	Discussions	62
5.2	Conclusion	65
	CHAPTER SIX: RECOMMENDATIONS	67
	Appendices	69
	References	72

ABSTRACT

In a relatively short time, bloggers have achieved an unprecedented position at the forefront of a vast marketplace of ideas that hitherto had only been an ideal in the Libertarian theory of the Press. Through digital technology, bloggers are taking freedom of expression to a new level. Although few are doing original reporting for news stories, the bloggers are strong on the opinion part of journalism and offer a robust diversity of points of view. The bloggers and their readers serve each other, the public and the news media in the self-righting process of libertarian theory –helping to determine the best obtainable version of the truth among conflicting views. Of the four theories of the press, it appears that it's only the Libertarian theory that has thus far accommodated the digital revolution. The 'Libertarian theory' was the most popular theory of the late 18th and 19th centuries: John Locke, Thomas Jefferson, John Milton, and John Stuart Mill advocated the theory. So are bloggers, journalists? Is it mere hearsay? Should we take blogging seriously? While as the theory hinged its maxim on positive tenets, not all blogs serve to inform the public. It's believed many of them are nothing more than personal tantrums against the society or status quo. To elaborate on this aspect, this paper will strive to highlight how the bloggers conduct themselves in Kenya.

1.0 CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Communication is the core of all human interaction. Human beings communicate for survival, understanding, and transacting among other reasons. All this is because we need to live as a society and are constantly socializing. Through communication we get to learn and acquire new behaviour.

Learning is often defined as a change in behaviour (Birkenholz, 1999), which is demonstrated by people implementing knowledge, skills, or practices derived from education. This process of acquiring knowledge, skills, attitudes or values through study, experience or teaching causes a change of behaviour that is persistent, measurable, and specified or allows an individual to formulate a new mental construct or revise a prior one (conceptual knowledge such as attitudes or values). It is a process that depends on experience and leads to long-term changes in behaviour potential. Different scholars define knowledge differently but in all definitions there are three conditions, which are to be met to determine what knowledge is. Knowledge must be justifiable, truthful and believable.

With the technological advancement, communication has been made easy through tools such as Skype, electronic mail and other emerging information and communication technologies (ICTs). ICTs have increased further the reach and speed of communication culminating to what is referred to as a digital revolution. This revolution includes the development of computers and their widespread use, which have become indispensable on data processing, the uptake of telecommunication technologies such as facsimiles, cellular phone, fixed line telephony and the broadcasting of radio and television often through the satellites and the use of fibre optics.

Communication seems to be one of the major beneficiaries of the ICT revolution. ICTs facilitate fast, efficient and convenient analysis, layout, presentation and sharing of information. Various packages enable users to create, mix, remix and present text, audio, video and animations easily. This is even more manifest since most ICTs systems now operate WYSIWYG (what you see is what you get) interfaces, in which users work with representations, which are more or less the same as outputs (Kwanya 2009). This essentially has been the bloggers' paradise. To blog you need not know have any technical web publishing skills such as code writing or scripting. It is more or less a touch and go operation for bloggers with many templates on how to set up a blog readily available.

It is human nature to possess the need to communicate. This need explains the many developments in the history of human communication involving myriad tools and techniques. Each phase of communication development relied on the prevailing technologies. Consequently, milestones in technological advancements have meant that human beings are now able to exchange information in a less tedious manner than the generations of the past centuries. While technology has continued to develop to ease communication, on the other hand people as a society have also continued to enjoy increased democratic spaces. Naturally, people have utilized the development of ICTs to exercise and enjoy their democratic rights. This has invariably led to the proliferation of blogging as a practice in the world today; an ideal that possibly early proponents of the Libertarian Theory would be proud of.

In the early days of the news media, the press was more interested in views than news (Berlin 2005). Today, due to technological advances, we may be returning to this earlier era and the

resuscitation of the marketplace of ideas idealized in the Libertarian Theory of the press.

Libertarian theorists argue that anyone wishing to give an opinion on anything ought to be granted that opportunity. It is the test of time as the truth supersedes that, which would vindicate the individual in the long run.

The Libertarian Theory provides a philosophical basis for an on-going, three-way relationship between the news media, government and society. The theory seeks to maximize freedom of the press for both the news media and the public. "Basically," Siebert wrote, "the underlying purpose of the media is to discover the truth, to assist in the process of solving political and social problems by presenting all manner of evidence and opinion as the basis for decisions" (Siebert 1956).

Sandman (1997) argues that "all manner of evidence and opinion" was standard fair in the newspapers of much of the 1700s and 1800s in the United States and adds that beginning in the 1700s, broadsheets, pamphlets and the first few newspapers constituted the media. From the late 1700's to the 1800's, newspapers were more "viewpapers", which were more interested in philosophy, politics, literary works and social history. News was a political weapon – often biased and distorted. It was not until the later part of the 19th Century that news began to be treated more objectively, with less opinion by the writer and with other sides provided in the news accounts. Opinions began to be treated separately; an editorial page was set aside for opinions (Sandman 1977).

Last-forwarding to today, bloggers may be pulling us back to the "all manner of evidence and

opinion" era and essentially to a version of Libertarian Theory on speed. Both truth and falsehoods now grapple before hundreds of thousands or millions rather than the small audiences of yester years.

Blogging has been described as 'the latest, somewhat dehashed, manifestation of the old art of political pamphleteering. Packer (2002) argued that bloggers open 'a vast market place of competitors reminiscent of earlier ages of pamphleteering'.

The rebirth of a robust diffusion of wide-ranging views – a communication ideal forged in the Libertarian Theory of the press – began with the dawn of the digital age. At its start, the 'promised land' was desktop publishing. Everyone could be a publisher, it was promised. Unfortunately, not everyone could be a distributor. One's writing, once printed, had to be distributed the old-fashioned way. Now, an era of personal publishing is blossoming with bloggers leading the way (Berlin 2005).

Then, with the advent of the Internet and the Web, bulletin boards, chat rooms, and e-mail, individual views and responses could be published. Yet, it pales now in the burgeoning blogosphere, - the vast, online community of bloggers and their readers (Berlin 2005).

Some theories in opposition to the 'free press theory' consist of the Authoritarian Theory, which states that the government has controls (often negative) over the press to stop criticism and to maintain power. Another is the Communist Theory, which holds that the means of communication should exist to transmit social policy and not to aid in searching for the truth

And lastly is Social Responsibility Theory, which is similar to the Libertarian Theory but, places, many moral and ethical restrictions on the press (Siebert 1974).

In the pre-digital era, Ham Radios had its logs or personal diaries (Berlin 2005). Although a ham radio does broadcast in all directions, hams generally do not use their radios in a broadcast kind of way as a disk jockey would at a radio station. In normal AM or FM radio, one disk jockey transmits and thousands of people listen. Hams, on the other hand, conduct two way conversations, often with another ham or with a group of hams in an informal roundtable. The roundtable of hams may be in the same town, country or continent or may consist of a mix of countries, depending on the frequency and the time of the day.

In the digital era that followed, there was the development of the aforementioned bulletin boards and e-mails, among other tools. By the late 1990s weblogs were born. Mostly run by individuals (as opposed to organisations) they vary greatly in that each individual may specifically treat and design his or her own blog in a particular way. Weblogs resemble an online journal or diary or columns with hypertext links to topics the Weblog owner is interested in. Many also encourage responses/reader comments. Some Weblogs or blogs, as they are fondly described, are devoted to a particular topic ranging from pets to politics. Many are devoted to personal opinions and musings and feedback is often central (Berlin 2005).

As the rise of bloggers comes concurrently with the rise of citizen journalism, questions ensue about the relationship of bloggers and mainstream journalism. For example, since bloggers provide a diverse marketplace of information and opinions as journalists do, are bloggers

journalists?

Citizen journalism describes more of a powerful delivery system than proscribing content. The technological development provides hypertextuality, interactivity, non-linearity, multimedia presentation, convergence as well as personalisation (Berlin 2005). Bloggers are part of this development, however, the question remains: are bloggers journalists and is what they say, journalism?

Citizen journalism (also known as 'public', 'participatory', 'democratic' or 'street journalism') is the concept of members of the public playing an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analyzing and disseminating news and information. According to Bowman and Willis (2003) the intent of this participation is to provide independent, reliable, accurate, wide-ranging and relevant information that a democracy requires. Citizen journalism should not be confused with community journalism or civic journalism, which is practised by professional journalists, or collaborative journalism, which is practised by professional and non-professional journalists working together.

Citizen journalism is a specific form of citizen media as well as user generated content. According to Jay R. (2006) citizen journalists are those people who "were on the receiving end of a media system that ran one way, in a broadcasting pattern, with high entry fees and a few firms competing to speak very loudly while the rest of the population listened in isolation from one another - and who today are not in a situation like that at all. ... The people formerly known as the audience are simply the public made realer, less fictional, more able, less predictable."

According to media experts, blogs are blurring the line between who is a journalist and who is not. If one defines journalism as both news and opinion (which should be independent of one another), bloggers are strong on opinion but short on news (Berlin 2005). Even where there is original reporting there are issues of objectivity, quality of writing or videos and newsworthiness (Berlin 2005). Citizen journalists run the risk of over-sensationalising news, besides the odd flaws of inappropriate news packaging due to lack of adequate training in news gathering and broadcasting. With no one to help in the 'gate-keeping process' a lone blogger will probably capture the few hard facts and since breaking the news is always a fierce race, experienced bloggers (but with little or no journalistic training) will quickly knit together whatever bit of information is available and beef it up with his or her own opinions or biases. This is not to say there are no blogs that dwell largely on news and devoid of opinion, they are there and somehow most are managed by media practitioners or former journalists. This again takes us back to the aspect of journalism training which many citizen journalists substitute with enthusiasm.

However, bloggers nonetheless are having a significant influence on newsgathering, news creation, presentation and overall journalism practice. For instance, they can alert the mainstream news media to potential stories, like a tipster. Blogs have become a valuable service for the media, a sort of early alert system to detect news, trends and opinions (Allen 2005).

Technology and Journalism have always gone hand in hand. From Johann Gutenberg's invention of the printing press in the 15th century, via an abundance of technological advances in the fields of communication, printing, database and computing technology, before finally arriving where journalism is today. The last decade has brought some important new technologies for journalists. In 1991, the first usable portable computers were developed. Around the same time, mobile phones started to make their entry in the Western world. In 1994, the Internet became

commercially available. In a couple of years, "everybody in journalism" had heard about the Internet. From being a tool for the American military and educational institutions, the Internet has become a commodity service, freely available to anybody who wants to use it.

Journalists, by nature of their professions, are dependent on communication. Mobile telephony and electronic mail were welcome additions to the array of possibilities. The Internet as a whole, however, presented a whole new range of challenges for journalists.

Before the Internet, most communication has been largely unidirectional. Journalists gather information and bring it back to the news desk. Here it is edited, and returned to the audience. However, audience members are rarely able to use the media to send their own messages. Audience feedback is infrequent, indirect, and delayed.

The internet changed all this: "What distinguishes the Internet from other media is its ability to provide feedback quickly and easily from receivers to senders. The Internet has introduced mass interaction to mass media.

Because of the massive and extraordinary development the Internet has experienced, many media institutions were relatively late making plans for the Internet future. One Norwegian newspaper, for example, tried to arrange audio and video broadcasts over the Internet. The project failed miserably, and cost a significant amount of money.

Most newspapers seem to have chosen one of two approaches to the Internet. The first - and most common - approach is to have selected articles from the newspaper on the Internet. The second approach is the same, but with more focus on adding content exclusive to the Web pages. This

allows the Internet pages to have more news aimed at narrow audiences. The latter approach also offers a better integration with news and user interaction.

Even though interactivity does not come automatically with two-way technology, people's attitude towards the media seem to have changed. As such, the profession of a journalist has changed. The main challenge is that people's needs have changed. A large part of the audience does not settle for the information given by the journalist anymore - information must include hyperlinks to related news stories, allowing the readers to continue research on their own (Osakone2009). In the present dispensation it appears that everyone can be a journalist - for better or worse.

The Internet has changed more than just how the established media profile themselves. Because the Internet is largely uncontrolled, anybody can say anything s/he pleases. This has led to many news pages being set up by the common man. The story of Matt Drudge breaking the story of the Bill Clinton and Monica Lewinsky affair through the Internet focused the world's attention on not only Drudge but also the journalism disseminated via the Internet. Matt Drudge and his "The Drudge Report" have had a substantial impact on the international news worldwide since. He explains "The Drudge Report" in the aftermath of the affair would thousands of readers every day. The fact that so many people read his work proves that something had been missing from the media world; the raw and unfiltered news. Drudge has made many enemies during his years of success; many seem to believe that it is a bad idea to allow anyone to be a journalist online. In particular, the problem of disintermediation is prominent. There is a motion towards migrating to more rushed and unfiltered news coverage. Drudge, on the other hand, believes that this is exactly what the people need. He says: "We get to see the kinds of cuts that are made for all

kinds of reasons; endless layers of editors with endless agendas changing bits and pieces, so by the time the newspaper hits your welcome mat, it had no meaning" Drudge, M (1998). Shapiro (1999) writes about his dislike of what happens when non-journalists voice their opinions. He says: "On television, we see a rise in live spot news coverage and programmes where non-reporter experts speculate about events as they unfold". However, he fails to take into account that this has been common practice for a long time. "To remain detached from the observed and from the readers, journalists routinely rely on experts, who also tend to objectify the public. Every side of an issue has its own experts, and every side tends to overstate its point of view so that public issues often are presented in the media as polarized battles" (Shapiro 1999).

Many media specialists have been pondering whether the trained journalist is indeed an endangered species. There have been concerns if the new, Internet-based Web sites are filled with young journalists that are more concerned with technology than good journalism, and less ethical than their traditional media counterparts. Journalism is not a licensed profession. Strictly, one could argue that Journalism is not a profession at all, certainly when compared to other occupational groups such as physicians, nurses, engineers and lawyers. These groups of professionals cannot practise their profession without a license. If they violate the rules and regulations of their profession, they may have their license suspended. Without their license, they also lose the right to practise their profession. In other words, the definition of a profession includes the ability to regulate who practises the profession, and journalism has no such ability (Aucoin J 1994).

Most Western countries have a constitution with articles protecting freedom of speech. Although there has been a lot of discussion about the fact that one does not need to have a license to

practise journalism, issuing such licenses would be practically impossible. In the USA, for example, introducing licensing on journalism practice would be an infringement on the constitution as in part it reads; in the Bill of Rights: Congress shall make no law abridging the freedom of speech or of the press.

Although the United Kingdom lacks laws defending freedom of expression, the UK has officially agreed to the Human Rights declaration, which states: "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression through any media" (Article 19). This effectively makes it impossible for the UK to introduce licensing on Journalism practice.

Besides it being strictly impossible imposing licensing on Journalism, one could try and consider what makes a good journalist. In other words: does one need a Journalism degree to be a good journalist? The answer is simple. "One lecturer at the university told his students in a class interaction that the engineering degree in itself had no value. It merely proved that you might be able to think as an engineer and understood the minimum required basics".

Matt Drudge is one of the people who have understood this: "I don't maintain that I am licensed or have credentials. I created my own" (Drudge 1998). By virtue of the number of readers Drudge gets for his pages every day, he gains his credentials.

Technology, in particular the Internet, has drastically changed the way journalists do their job. The revolution has not yet stopped, and the next few years will unquestionably bring quite some interesting changes. The main difference is that the means of publishing has shifted from exclusively allowing journalists to speak, to allowing anybody to speak. A journalism education, then, must mean more than getting a degree. A qualitative and creative approach to journalism is

free for everybody. The challenge for journalism students lies in getting the upper hand when it comes to professional and technical skills. Journalists are not professionals with a unique base of knowledge such as professors or electricians. Consequently, the primary economic value of journalism derives not from its own knowledge, but in distributing the knowledge of others. In this process three fundamental functions and related skills have historically created economic value: 1) accessing sources; 2) determining significance of information; and 3) conveying it effectively urged (Picard Robert 2009) in a presentation to Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism titled: *Why journalists deserve low pay*.

Accessing sources is crucial because information and knowledge do not exist as a natural resource that merely has to be harvested. It must be constructed by someone. The journalistic skill of identifying and reaching authorities or others who construct expertise traditionally gave journalists opportunities to report in ways that the general public could not (Picard 2009).

Determining significance has been critical because journalists sort through an enormous amount of information to find the most significant and interesting items for consumers. Effective presentation involves the ability to reduce information to its core to meet space and time requirements and presenting it in an interesting and attractive manner. These are built on linguistic and artistic skills and formatting techniques.

Picard (2009) argues that today all this value is being severely challenged by technology that is “de-skilling” journalists. It is providing individuals – without the support of a journalistic enterprise – the capabilities to access sources, to search through information and determine its significance, and to convey it effectively. To create economic value, journalists and news organisations historically relied on the exclusivity of their access to information and sources, and

their ability to provide immediacy in conveying information. The value of those elements has been stripped off by contemporary communication developments. Today, ordinary people can observe and report news, gather expert knowledge, determine significance, add audio, photography, and video components, and publish this content far and wide (or at least to their social network) with ease. And much of this is done for no pay.

Between broadband Internet access, inexpensive camcorders, simple audio and video editing tools - not to mention YouTube - the power of citizen journalists has increased tremendously in the past couple of years. (Kantor A 2008)

Bloggers have broken major stories and caused the mainstream media to tread more carefully. But, as some would say, with great power comes great responsibility. Bloggers and other amateur journalists have some of the same problems any amateurs do. They make up the rules as they go, and they run the risk of hurting someone. But because blogging is not their day job, they have little risk. For instance, they are not going to be sacked. Professionals are constrained; they cannot just do as they please. If I want to upgrade the electrical service in my house, I can do it myself or call a professional. If I do it myself, I can do what I like and hope it is good enough. If I engage a professional, though, he has to follow detailed building codes. He is constrained, but the end result is likely better. Just as an amateur with a set of power tools can do great work or build a death-trap, amateur journalists can do the same. Having the tools and using them wisely are two different things. In their rush to get the "Big Scoop" something professionals know come few and far between - bloggers and other citizen journalists love, for example, to blow small things out of proportion. After all, they do not have editors to say, "You need more" or "That's not a story."

1.2 Statement of Problem

Complications and potential inconsistencies have arisen to the Libertarian theory when attempts have been made to set limits to its application and to specify the institutional forms in which it can best find expression and protection in particular societies (Siebert et al. 1974). In practice the application of press freedom has been far from straight forward. The question of whether it is an end in itself, a means to an end, or an absolute right has never been settled and there are those, from the time of John Milton - the 17th Century philosopher and thinker - to the present, who have argued that if freedom is abused to the extent of threatening good morals and authority of the state, it must be restrained (Milton 1951). However, with the new information technologies does the proliferation of the blogging mean that the full idealism of the Libertarian Theory may have finally been realized?

This project will conduct an exploratory survey on blogging and how it has affected information and opinions sharing. It will establish how the bloggers treat news and how readers perceive news and opinions on the blogs. Undoubtedly, blogs can be an avenue or catalyst of anti social and/ or pro social behaviour depending on how the information acquired is perceived. This research will also try to establish whether the Internet and blogs in particular, have any role in opinion shaping and socialisation.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the impact of blogging as an alternative and reliable source of information.

Blogs emerged in cyberspace around 1999 (Kwanya 2009). Blogs provide personal spaces on the

Web, which are filled collaboratively by users to share opinions, thoughts, insights or attitudes with the world. Indeed, some scholars describe blogs as personal memos to the world (Kwanya 2009).

Blogging is having a huge impact on traditional news. It is emerging that bloggers use their posts not only to leak information to the media but also to challenge it directly. This is because the media however resourceful cannot be everywhere every time. Smart editors of mainstream media fervently follow posts on social networking sites since people 'break' the news inadvertently by making newsworthy posts. Such posts act as a tip off for the media houses to swing into action and follow up the story to authenticate.

The growth in blogs is happening at the same time that audiences of the mainstream news media are falling through mass media demassification. The demassification of media simply refers to the restructuring of media industry into smaller independent operating entities (Kesh T 2007). This of course cuts across the major mass media: print (newspapers, books, magazines), film (commercial film), and broadcast media (radio and television.) The print media, especially newspapers and magazines have suffered a progressive decline in circulation over the years in most countries worldwide with the advent of the Internet (OECD Report 2010). No doubt, newspapers are facing a crisis of both leadership and credibility. Subsequently, as their audience migrates in droves, so do their advertisers. Not many people bother to read dailies any more, opting instead to get their news from the Internet or other sources. In addition, young people, especially, are tuning out altogether, preferring the more visual and entertaining distractions offered by TV and the interactivity that is inherent in the Internet. They perceive newspapers as old, tiring - boring, predictable and as "preachy" as their parents are (OECD Report 2010). This

is reflected in the growing popularity of sites like MySpace, Facebook, and blogging platforms such as Blogger Livejournal.

Popular blogs have been at hand to take up the adverts that were hitherto the mainstay of mainstream media. By just perusing these sites one is bombarded by all sorts adverts which is indicative that blogs mean business; and businesses are beginning to believe in blogs.

When the Indian Ocean tsunami hit on December 26, 2004 the mainstream media was largely caught off guard. It was Christmas, when many newsrooms and newspaper publishers were staffed with skeleton teams, and few Western media outlets had foreign correspondents already in position to report on the disaster according (Curran 2007). As the scale of this disaster began to emerge to the world, people were shuffling between their televisions and computers, seeking information. People began blogging, working in real-time with real people revealing the latest, and sometimes the only updated information (Curran 2007). The idea that a normal person in the middle of a chaotic situation can tell the world what is happening is very appealing, and that is something blogs can do very well. When it comes to coverage of unfolding news dramas, like the tsunami tragedy, a simple eyewitness can be a far more compelling source of information than a conventional journalist or reporter (Curran 2007).

A century and half ago, journalists were much closer to the market and more clearly understood as sellers of labour in the market. Before professionalism of journalism, many journalists not only wrote the news, but went to the streets to distribute and sell it and few journalists had regular employment in the news and information business. Journalists and social observers

debated whether practising journalism for a news entity was desirable. Even Karl Marx (1842) argued that the first freedom of the press consists in it not being a trade.

Objectives

The general objective of this study is to investigate whether there is any communicative impact of the blogging practice, in Kenya, as envisaged many years back by the proponents of the Libertarian Theory. The Libertarians maxim was to have 'a marketplace of ideas', so have the uptake of blogging vindicated the Libertarian theorists? The specific objectives are to:

- a) Investigate whether blogging in Kenya is living up to Libertarianism;
- b) Establish if blogging could in future affect the way media houses operate;
- c) Ascertain whether blogging poses a significant threat to mainstream journalism;
- d) Recommend appropriate approaches for applying blogging in mainstream media.

1.4 Research Questions

This study will seek to get answers to the following questions:

- Do blogs commentating on Kenyan issues uphold the tenets of Libertarian Theory?
- Could blogging force the established media houses to change tact?
- Does the blogging practice pose significant threat to traditional mainstream journalism in Kenya?
- What is the best approach to adopt for mainstream media in handling blogging?

1.5 Theoretical Framework

The technological advancements have revolutionised information sharing on the Internet. Its ability to link people and business is tied to both our present and future. Indeed, its capacity to mobilize and disseminate a wealth of news and information stands unrivalled. In fact the transformation has brought significant changes within many homes and offices (Berlin 2005).

The Libertarian Theory

The core of Libertarian theorists argue that anyone wishing to give an opinion on anything ought to be granted that opportunity. No controls whatsoever should be directed to the Press, as this would be in itself an affront to the right to information and knowledge. The argument incorporates a view of knowledge as the product of competition between opposing opinions in a 'market of ideas' (Gibbons, 1998).

The crucial and perplexing problem of freedom, control and responsibility in the mass media looms ever larger in the context of a radically changing society. At the heart of the matter is not only the question of responsibility which, in turn, involves a weighing of ends and means, but also the fundamental problem of the degree to which media reflect society and are affected by social change (Steinberg 1972).

Basic to any consideration of the effect of mass media, and central to the question of freedom for mass communication is the determination of how and to what extent the mass media reflect the society in which they function and serve. It is clear that mass communication is influenced by its social environment and in turn, absorbs and delineates the goals, tension and aspirations of that environment (Steinberg 1972).

John Locke in his 1689 essay titled "*An essay concerning the understanding, knowledge, opinion and assent*" that expressed the view that man, as a rational being, must not be denied freedom of expression as his natural right. In a *laissez faire* economy, in a society where the Government that governed least is best, nature's laws could operate without restraint. Government had no business, in this society, either operating the press or controlling it. Newspapers were to function freely in securing larger circulation, reaching the greatest number of readers in a free mercantile economy. The press is, of course accountable to its readers - the public - but to no one else (Steinberg 1972).

The onset of blogs and podcasting has virtually enabled many interested individuals to publish to the global audience their own opinions and ideas covering all sectors of the world economy with minimal bureaucratic hindrance. This is a key component that the Libertarian theorists vehemently advocated (Berlin 2005).

As far as the Libertarian theory go, the World Wide Web has proved that it is indeed possible for anyone to own and operate a media institution and propagate any information he or she fancies without any hindrance. The WWW is just ungovernable and so cannot be easily regulated or censored (Kwanya 2009).

Unlike the large media organisations, bloggers are unhindered by the normal journalistic standards of objectivity, balance and accuracy. This output is raw, often subjective and honest.

Bloggers are increasingly engaging in random acts of journalism whenever they report on events they witness first-hand or when they offer analysis, background or commentary on a newsworthy topic. Those who publish rumour and present it as fact are burned fairly quickly.

For those who don't bother to check their facts, reputation filters and circles of trust in the blogosphere help weed out the nonsense. This is exactly what the fathers of Libertarian Theory espoused. A journalist and blogger Ken Layne on blogging masses famously remarked: "We can fact-check your ass". (Reynolds G 2006). These are the very ethos at the heart of Libertarian Theory.

The blogs that have gained huge followings have done so on the basis of becoming an authority on a particular subject, or breaking news that has subsequently proved true. Authors of blogs are given authoritative status by the very readers who have trusted them over time or share the same perspective.

The Libertarianism ideals as espoused by early enthusiasts would not have been fully realised, were it not for the development and uptake of ICT tools. Today, virtually anyone with a computer and connectivity can publish and have the world as the audience.

With the number of blogs pegged at 126 million globally – as tracked by BlogPulse and 27.3 million tweets on Twitter per day (November, 2009) and 350 million People on Facebook, (Pingdom 2010) it's safe to state the Libertarians appear to be vindicated by these statistics.

So how Internet users consume the information afforded to them by the Web ought to be a matter of not only intelligent but diligent discerning of the content—a dispensation well envisaged by the Libertarian Theory.

1.5 Justification of the Study

The world has been touted to be tilting towards an ICT-oriented economy. Though the Agrarian economy still remains the mainstay of many developing nations, these nations are however

bringing forth a generation that in the years to come may heavily rely on technological development to survive in a knowledge economy.

Blogging, in Kenya, is the new kid on the media block. If you are part of the blogging community, you are also part of the blogosphere - presumably with its own weather system.

A blog is simply a series of updated posts on a web page in the form of a diary or journal, often including commentary on, and hypertext links to, other web sites. Posts are in chronological order and can contain anything from simple text, to music, images and even streamed video.

Blogs tend to be highly personalised - an online stream of consciousness. Nothing particularly unusual about that when you consider the rise of the personal home pages, for example. But the phenomenon is that so many people are interested in what bloggers have to say.

Perhaps one attraction of blogging lies in its unmediated and dynamic quality. Without an agenda, editorial stance or pedantic sub-editor standing between the writer and reader, blogging can provide reportage in a raw and exciting form.

However, little research has been done in Kenya to establish what makes some blogs become instant hits attracting thousands of hits and links where others don't seem to even take off.

The study will assess the values that blog readers hold dear in a blog as they navigate the blogosphere.

The study will also identify popular topics that many Kenyans actively engage in the blogosphere. This could be useful, especially to advertisers who ordinarily would want to advertise their products and/or services in those blogs most likely to attract many hits in a given period. If one was to start blogging today with the intention of reaping commercially from the blogs how would one settle on the topics to blog? Unless this is established most bloggers will continue to blog blindly very much akin to groping in the darkness!

Once the study has established what motivates blog readers to visit specific blogs, it will then be possible for potential or even existing bloggers to design and improve their blogs in line with many people and advertisers' preferences thereby guaranteeing themselves not only popularity of the blogs but also possible income as well.

1.7 Limitations

The study will carry out an exploratory survey on the Internet to establish the impact of blogging in Kenya on the freedom of the Press as touted by the Libertarianism.

The research will not delve into the intricacies or dynamics of socialization rather it will look at what influences people to read particular blogs.

Though the Government of Kenya has removed tax on computers and their accessories, the current Internet connectivity ratios are still very low in many parts of the country. Thus, the other major limitation is the lack of Internet access in most rural areas. This means that most sampled blog sites will be by bloggers in urban centres with the bulk of them possibly residing in the County of Nairobi. This has a unique challenge in that in many democratic societies the urbanites tend to be more informed and consequently more opinionated than their rural counterparts.

The findings of the study may end up reflecting on just a small segment of Kenyans who are able to access Internet on a daily basis either at work or by incurring an expense to access the information superhighway.

This being the case this project's sample could very easily be limited to particular segment as far as social stratification is concerned. This means that the research will focus on a less varied

number of respondents than desired, thus leaving out a huge chunk of subjects that could have given more insight into the topic under study. However, the methodologies being applied will ensure that the research yields the best results possible even with these constraints.

1.8 Dissemination

The research findings of this project will be disseminated in the academic circles through library placements, seminars and workshop presentations, journal articles, public debates as well as stakeholders' meetings.

1.9 Ethical Considerations

The scope of the study is what many civil and human rights activists would call critical in order to ensure that democratic gains made over time are not slowly eroded with the society sliding back to autocratic and dictatorial reigns by politicians. The study will sample blog readers from individuals and organizations but ensuring that as many points of view as possible are represented. By doing this the study will have a more representative sample population. In this light therefore there are no ethical concerns, as the topic does not traverse any sensitive frontiers that the society would ordinarily shirk from. In addition the study aims for a fair and square experimental design and does not in any way target specific findings. However, all general ethical consideration in research such as informed consent and confidentiality of research data will be adhered to.

1.10 Contributions of this Study

The findings in this study will help to establish whether indeed the blogging practice has been a

shot in the arm of the Libertarian Theory. With the technological advancements it appears that virtually anybody with a computer and Internet connection can publish anything and be read worldwide. This essentially is a dream come true for the Libertarian theorists.

1.11 Potential topics for future research

There are a number of potential topics for future researches that can be built on the findings of this study. With the blogging practice becoming more popular in Kenya and with the expected affordable connectivity promised by the recent completion of fibre optic cable network, there is no doubt there will be more blogs popping up regularly in Kenya. The challenge for an 'Internet connoisseur' then would be to determine blogs and bloggers that cannot stand the test of time. Amid a myriad of thousands and potentially millions of bloggers it will be a hard task to determine which blogs can be believable. In future blog readers may need guidelines to determine believable blogs beyond social book-marking. This would become a rich area of research in the near future. Another major topic that can be explored beyond this study's findings is the future prospects of traditional journalism with the advent of widespread blogging. There is the inevitable likelihood that by the time a traditional medium has gone on air to report about a specific issue a huge percentage of people concerned with the same issue will have exchanged notes and dialogued severally rendering the 'breaking news' media not only time barred but also irrelevant. The big research question here would be: with the emerging techno-based communication tools and techniques, what is the place of traditional media institutions and journalists in the new platform?

1.12 Thesis Structure

The thesis will have the following chapters:

1. Chapter One will incorporate the major introduction to the study. Under this chapter there will be several other subtitles namely: problem statement, purpose of the study, research question, theoretical framework, justification of the study and limitations to the study. Others in this section includes mode of dissemination, ethical considerations, contributions of this study, potential topics for future research, thesis structure and the summary.
2. Chapter Two incorporates the literature review and under the review there are other topics that the study explores extensively. These include the History of Blogging, the link between blogging and Libertarianism as well as the revolutionary stance that blogs have adopted vis a vis mainstream media.
3. Chapter Three exclusively deals with the research methodology. Research type, research method, population of study, sampling, data collection techniques, data collection tools, data analysis, data presentation, reliability and validity are all covered.
4. Chapter Four presents the findings of the study.
5. Chapter Five deals with discussions of the findings as well as conclusion.
6. Chapter Six offers the recommendations.

1.13 Summary

The general objective of this study is to investigate whether there is any communicative impact of the blogging practice, in Kenya, as envisaged many years back by the proponents of the Libertarian Theory.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The new information technologies that have revolutionized the way we communicate as well as broadcasting of individual views or opinions largely revolve around the Internet. Information technology can be defined as any equipment, system or subsystem or software application engaged in the automatic creation, acquisition, processing, storage, manipulation, exchange, display and disposal of data or information. The term also encompasses the methods and techniques used in information handling, retrieval and use (Kwanva 2009).

The term IT surfaced in the 1970s; but its basic concept, however, can be traced to the post World War II era collaboration between the military and industry in the research, development and manufacture of electronic computers to facilitate easier information management as well as automation initiatives to replace manpower with machines. Recognizing the edge of machines over human beings in terms of precision, resilience and versatility in accomplishing a myriad of tasks, often simultaneously, more resources were put into researching and deploying machines in the late 1940s. Computers were also great beneficiaries of such initiatives leading to their steady and rapid advancement over the subsequent years.

To date we have already gone through four generations of computers and a fifth one is in the offing (Kwanva 2009). With each emerging generation have been advancements in the capacities of the machines while drastically reducing their sizes, a phenomenon which has been dubbed miniaturization. Another major milestone in the history of the computers is their commercialization over the years. Initially, computers were a preserve of universities and

military barracks. However, in the early 1950s they slowly ventured outside these closets into the business marketplace. For the modern day Libertarian, operating under the aegis of blogging, this development is phenomenal since it has ensured that people of all walks of life from different corners of the world can converge at the 'global village' and exchange information and ideas. Specifically, blogs and lately podcasting have been widely used by enthusiasts of the libertarianism to literally and liberally broadcast information.

2.2 The Internet

The Internet is basically a global network of networks connecting millions of computers and other ICT tools to facilitate fast, convenient and reliable information sharing (Kwanya 2009). Though its component networks are owned by individuals and organisations dispersed all over the world, no particular individual or organisation owns or controls the Internet. Universities, governments, businesses, churches, non-governmental organisations, the military and research institutions are some of the entities that own bits and pieces of the Internet. There are however, organisations that regulate and coordinate activities of the Internet. Besides, there are other organisations that set and enforce standards and protocols for its use. The Internet has no political boundaries.

2.2.1 History of the Internet

The history of the Internet is erroneously pegged to the launching of the Russian satellite Sputnik (the first artificial satellite) in 1957 which awakened the American to the reality of post World War II conflicts and possible devastation of their communication systems (Kwanya 2009). The Americans then initiated research and development of a resilient system, which would survive

even the worst of nuclear attacks. This led to the establishment of the Advanced Research Projects Agency Network (ARPANET), which was the harbinger of the modern day Internet. In 1982, the term 'Internet' was used for the first time. The year also saw the birth of name servers at the University of Wisconsin. This provided the translation services that mapped names to Internet paths and hosts. With this, no one needed to remember the absolute path to any resource on the Internet, they only needed to remember the names, which were friendlier (Kwanya 2009).

As the Internet grew and more institutions got hooked up and it became even harder to remember the long names, Domain Name Servers (DNS), which match resources with the numeric IP addresses, used by computers was developed in 1984. Also, the term 'cyberspace' was used for the first time (Kwanya 2009).

In 1993 Kenya made the all-important footstep and got connected to the Internet. In 1995 Africa Online, African Regional Centre for Computing (ARCC), Form-Net (later Kenyawebe) began operation in Kenya and offered basic Internet services commercially. In 1996 more ISPs emerge in Kenya as both *The Nation* and *The Standard* Newspapers went online (Kwanya 2009).

2.2.2 Internet as a mass medium

It is becoming evident that no one can ignore the Internet in this age. Even the people without Internet access can no longer ignore it any more. In the past communication researchers ignored the Internet as a means of communication. Indeed most of them were blunt to state that there is no way any mass communication paradigm can develop from computers and telephone

connections. They dismissed the possibility of the Internet becoming the fourth mass medium, after the press, radio and TV.

However, there is every reason to consider Internet as a mass medium since the population of people using the Internet has been soaring steadily (Kwanya 2009). For any medium to be considered a mass medium and therefore economically viable to advertisers, a critical mass of adopters must be achieved. Interactive media only become useful as more people adopt it. It is commonly accepted that a critical mass is achieved when about 10 to 20 per cent of the population has adopted the innovation. Statistics show that millions are embracing the Internet and the population of users is a big percentage of the world populace. On the strength of this argument, the Internet is a mass medium.

The Internet is also unique in that it is a conglomeration of mass media. The Internet is composed of bits and pieces of the traditional mass media like radio and TV. Online radio and TV stations abound in their hundreds on the Internet. Similarly, traditional publishing attributes are widely used on the WWW.

In addition, a mass medium must give its audience a variety of services and products to choose from. No other medium meets this criterion like the Internet giving its users millions of options, which are all usable at the same time.

2.3 Blogging and Libertarian theory

In modern times the cost of purchasing space or time on existing media of communication is so enormous that the average citizen has been effectively disenfranchised as a participant. This generates many problems, not the least of which is a narrowing of political discourse, and

homogenization of the message from state run media houses. However with the popularity of new media such as the blogs, the bloggers can reach a substantial number of target audiences online. To reach the same number of people as a blog one has to spend stupendous amounts of money to purchase space in mainstream media. Though in a tacit way, new media has influenced the way people behave in respect to a particular aspect under scrutiny.

Human rights activists have put blogs to very valuable use in their campaigns in a number of countries including Kenya, Zimbabwe and Guinea. Probably the best example to date is the campaign that was launched by supporters of the Iranian opposition leader in Mir Hossein Mousavi during the 2009 presidential polls. Young people mainly college and university students campaigned for Mr. Mousavi against the all-powerful incumbent President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad via face Facebook and Twitter. Even the incumbent himself despite his reign allowing little expression on the Internet had to result resort to YouTube clips to reach the huge chunk of Iranian youthful according to media reports. The ruckus that followed after the announcement of the Iranian presidential results and the subsequent clampdown on independent media – both local and foreign – left blogging as the real alternative medium for the exchange of updates and information.

2.4 Blogging

2.4.1 History of Blogging

The first use of the term weblog in relation to the delivery of content on a website comes from the delivery of a paper titled “Exploiting the World Wide Web for Electronic Meeting Document Analysis and Management” by Gitesh Raikundalia and Michael Rees, two scholars from Bond University, Australia made to a conference in 1995. The paper discussed the use of “a Web

browser to access various meeting document information, such as minutes, tabled documents, reports and document indexes.

Popular use of the term Weblog as it is widely known today came from Jorn Barger of the weblog Robot Wisdom in December 1997. The origins of modern blogging are often contested. Many point to blogs as websites or web pages that provided links and comments to other pages, and it is from this basis that modern blogs emerged.

Tim Berners-Lee, the developer of the WWW, first posted a web page in 1992 at CERN that kept a list of all new web sites as they came online. The National Centre for Supercomputing Applications (NCSA) started a "What's New" list of sites in June 1993. Notably the site provided entries sorted by date and the "What's New" links included commentary. This service was eventually taken over by Netscape in what became one of the more popular web sites of its time. In January 1994, Justin Hall, an American pioneer blogger, launched "Justin's Home Page" which would later become "Links from the Underground". The site included links to and reviews of other sites. Notably in January 1996, Hall commenced writing an online journal—The Blog Herald— with dated daily entries, although each daily post was linked by through an index page. In February 1996, Dave Winer an American software developer and blogger started a weblog titled 24 Hours of Democracy Project, an experiment in collaborative free speech in response to the Communications Decency Act in US. In April the same year, Winer launched a news page for users of Frontier Software, which became Scripting News in 1997, one of the oldest running blogs to date. The company he then headed, Userland went on to release Radio Userland, one of the first blogging software tools. After Jorn Barger, an American blogger and editor of Robot Wisdom, introduced the term weblog-to describe the process of 'logging the web' into popular

use in December 1997, blogging as its known today continued to develop. In November 1998, Cameron Barrett, then an instructor in New Media at Northwestern Michigan College, published the first list of blog sites on Camworld. In early 1999 Peter Merholz, an information consultant, coined the term blog after announcing he was going to pronounce web blogs as "wee-blog" that was then shortened to blog. At this stage, Jesse James Garrett, a computer engineer, maintained a list that recorded that there were 23 known weblogs in existence. As blogging started to grow in 1999, the first portal, Eatonweb, dedicated to listing blogs was launched by Brigitte Eaton, yet another weblog pioneer. Eaton evaluated all submissions by a simple assessment that the site consist of dated entries, one of the criteria we use today in identifying a blog. In May 1999, Scott Rosenberg, an American journalist and author at Salon.com wrote one of the first media articles on the emergence of weblogs and refers to the growing number of "Web Journalists". In August 1999, Pyra Labs, today owned by Google, launched the free Blogger blogging service that for the first time providing an easy set of tools for anyone to set up a blog. Other services launched around the same time include Pitas and Groksoup, neither of which captures the imagination of bloggers in the same way as Blogger did. Over the following 12 months, blogs exploded, new companies and tools entered the market. Since then they have taken the world by storm.

While only a small percentage of blogs are regularly updated, this explosion in growth has had an interesting impact on a variety of facets of daily life according to Robbie Allen (2005) in an essay titled: *The Impact of blogging*.

A blog enables anyone to easily write and instantly publish their thoughts and opinions on literally any topic imaginable for anyone else on the Internet to read. Originally seen as types of online diary or journal, blogs have evolved over the last few years to become powerful communication tools that provide a great environment for engaging in real dialogue with other

people. One of the key features of many blogs is that anyone can comment on what is written, right there and then in another's blog – by just writing their own thoughts in reply, click a submit button, and the comments are instantly published for all to see. Some blogs employ a moderation system; meaning comments are held in a queue for the blog owner to approve before they can appear on the blog (Kwanya 2009). Connecting other people's thoughts and opinions to what one has written (and vice versa) is one of the reasons why blogs have captured the imagination of so many people and, increasingly, companies large and small. Many blogs employ a clever technical device known as track backs, which is a method for Web authors to request notification when somebody links to one of the documents in a blog.

Blogging represents one of the most immediate threats to traditional journalism, to the extent of likely supplanting it completely within the next decade (Allen 2005). A blog consists of a do-it-yourself article published on the Web by means of easy-to-use content management tools. What makes a blog so devastatingly appealing, is that once it is posted, that blog content is syndicated through specialized news feeds, which means that anyone who has subscribed to it will be notified (in one way or another) of every new post (Kwanya 2009). That solved one of the major problems of the Web: knowing when new material was posted to a given site. However, it also had an unintended side effect. The first large news sites on the Web were not radically different from newspapers or magazines, in that competing effectively required a significant investment in infrastructure: servers, content management systems, customized programming and so forth. The investment in printing presses served as a barrier to entry against anyone becoming a publisher in the 1930s, and that looked to be holding increasingly true for the Web in the early 1990s, as large media corporations set up their "Web presence" with multimillion-dollar Web site rollouts (Berlin

2005). Blogging, however, changed the dynamics of publishing on the Web completely. Anyone could set up a blog within an hour and at little to no cost; could post content to it as often as desired; and lay out that content in a way that appeared visually identical to what was being published by the large news organisations or could go the other direction and make the output unique (Berlin 2005).

Early on, most blogs were, ironically, journals that recorded day-to-day personal experiences. Yet over time, different styles of writing emerged as people with different talents, interests and needs-to-communicate started writing. Some bloggers began to treat their entries like news articles, reporting on local events or even on global events as their means permitted. Some began to concentrate on analysis writing - particularly those people interested in areas such as financial services, who could provide their own opinions about trends in the markets; or political analysts, who performed the same service in the halls of power. Some became reviewers and critics of everything from consumer electronics to food to film and theatre, and some concentrated on writing tutorials or technical articles (Berlin 2005).

The upshot of all this has been that a second area of journalism - the creation of 'news' content is increasingly shifting from the domain of the 'professional journalist' to the 'dedicated amateur'. For a relatively short period of time, this arguably reduced the overall quality of news content (Berlin 2005). Certainly, that is the opinion of many dedicated professional journalists, and there is some merit in it. Bloggers have been diligently producing articles - in some cases, several articles a day - since 2003, which means they have had six years of exploration in a completely new medium, finding out what works and what does not, all the while studying the works of

established journalists to compare and contrast. In many cases, what it means is that these dedicated amateurs know their medium - and know its writing styles and limitations - far better than the supposed professionals. Not surprisingly, many of the more forward-thinking professional journalists started blogging on the side. As a consequence, they are now far better placed than many news organizations, particularly those that are undergoing upheavals as they make the transition to 'online' or 'virtual' publishing (Berlin 2005).

2.4.2 The Blogging revolution

Blogs tend to be highly personalised - an online stream of consciousness. They are opinionated, ranting, often incoherent and frequently biased with little regard for accuracy or balance. They are also compellingly addictive and threatening to emerge as a new brand of journalism.

Perhaps one attraction of blogging lies in its unmediated and dynamic quality. Without an agenda, editorial stance or pedantic sub-editor standing between the writer and reader, blogging can provide reportage in a raw and exciting form. It is this kind of reporting that the Libertarians upheld.

At the height of the war in Iraq and the hunt down of Sadaam Hussein, readers were flocking to online news sites by the millions for the latest news about the war, according to Online Journalism Review. But the story doesn't end there.

People streamed to weblogs for sceptical analysis, critical commentary, alternative perspectives rarely seen in mainstream media, [such as] the views of foreigners, and the occasional first-person account. A handful of reporters in the Gulf region maintained weblogs to provide fuller, more personal and colourful reporting of what they are witnessing first-hand according to Journalism.com. Such journalists, by blogging on the side, were taking cognisance that there was

part of their reportage that would not see the light of the day in their respective media houses, an affront of the freedom of expression, at least in the view of the Libertarianism.

In the US the 9/11 terrorist attacks fuelled the public's appetite for information, analysis and news, if only to make sense of the tragedy. Bloggers rose to prominence by feeding this desire. Unlike the large media organisations, bloggers were unhindered by the normal journalistic standards of objectivity, balance and accuracy. This amateur output was raw, subjective and honest as people sought emotions, not detachment - finding solace and expression in the words of the thousands of blogs that sprang up.

Blogger.com took advantage by providing the basic tools needed for anyone to record their thoughts, feelings and views online. Easier than building a web site, these simple web publishing tools promised to democratise the web, allowing anyone with internet access to have a voice online.

Then blogging went mainstream. Established print journalists from outlets such as MSNBC and Guardian Unlimited started to create their own weblogs to sit alongside news and features, blurring the distinction between journalism and blogging still further. And the tools to build blogs became more widespread with internet service providers such as AOL, offering blogging tools to their users and Blogger.com receiving a financial boost from its acquisition by the search engine company Google.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research type

The study will employ qualitative research. This type of research includes designs, techniques and measures that do not produce discrete numerical data (Mugenda & Mugenda 1999). More often the data is in the form of words rather than numbers with these words being grouped into categories. Since the study will seek to explore the blogging practice in Kenya as well as grouping sampled blogs, it is imperative to employ qualitative research. Human behaviour is best explained by using qualitative research (Mugenda & Mugenda 1999). This study endeavours to establish why blog readers prefer specific blogs and the qualitative research is best suited for the exercise.

3.2 Research Paradigm

A paradigm may be viewed as a set of basic beliefs that deals with ultimates or first principles. It represents a worldview that defines for its holder, the nature of the "world", the individual's place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts. The beliefs are basic in the sense that they must be accepted simply on faith (however well argued); there is no way to establish their ultimate truthfulness (Guba and Lincoln, 1994).

There are three research paradigms in communication research: Normative, Interpretive, and Critical theory. Each of those paradigms has advantages and limitations. The normative paradigm is one paradigm which tends to control the research condition such as human behaviours through scientific methods (Douglas, 1973). Because it is controlled, normative paradigm tends to generalize the findings with one truth. The advantage is easy to be objective in normative research because it is very structured and clear. The weakness is that not all

phenomena in communication can be investigated as well as natural phenomena such as behaviour, motivation, values, etc. Normative is related to positivism paradigm because its concern is to find the truth with controlled condition, observable in scientific way.

However, Interpretative paradigm studies an individual with their characteristics considering the fact that humans have different behaviours, opinions, and attitudes (Kohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2001). The advantage of interpretivism is finding meaningful observation of objects. The meaningful will be more valuable than one generalization. However, its weakness is that the results can be more complex to analysis and interpret those objectively. In addition, it is more subjective to interpret the phenomena. However, it is more difficult to be objective in human research than science setting. Therefore, compared to positivism paradigms, it tends to be subjective. Compared to positivism and post positivism paradigms Interpretivism uses many perspectives to study the phenomena. It is very natural research; it can observe the situation with different view to solve the problems. Therefore, it results many solutions and interpretations (Kohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2001).

Finally, critical theory is explicitly prescriptive and normative; entailing a view of what behaviour in a social democracy should entail (Fay, 1987; Morison 1995). It considers the power of social politics and ideology, which influence the communication research. The advantage is the improvement that it has done. In critical theory, finding the issues is important and more subjective. Because the main objective is to improve the practical field, change the situation with the action such as action research. The action can be change every day to improve the quality, change and solve the problems. Therefore, the solutions are constructed by the reality. The weakness is it is also difficult to conclude many interpretations. It is also requires great skills to

be aware about the changes which use as next actions. Related to positivism and post positivism paradigms, critical theory can use both positivism and post positivism paradigms, because it uses positivism to control the environment to observe the change and post positivism to interpret the object (Kohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2001).

Based on the above comparison and bearing in mind the advantages and disadvantages thereof, this study shall utilize the interpretative paradigm. This method will greatly enrich the research findings in a number of ways. The paradigm accommodates the notion that reality is subjective. People experience reality in different ways. Subjective reality is important (i.e. what people think, feel and see). In addition the world is complex and dynamic and is constructed, interpreted and experienced by people differently in their interactions with each other and with wider social systems i.e. fluid definitions of a situation created by human interaction/social construction of reality. This would greatly help to interpret the findings as different people have different reasons why they favour particular blogs or hold certain viewpoints. The paradigm further holds that knowledge is based not only on observable phenomena, but also on subjective beliefs, values, reasons, and understandings; and that knowledge is about the *way* in which people make meaning in their lives, not just *that* they make meaning, and *what* meaning they make.

3.3 Research method

This study will utilize the survey method. Since the study intends to deal with respondents that are truly conversant with blogging, the researcher will employ the electronic survey method for this specific study. With the growth of the Internet (and in particular the World Wide Web) and the expanded use of electronic mail for business communication, the electronic survey is

becoming a more widely used survey method. This method suits this study as it is cost effective. It is less expensive to send questionnaires online than to pay for postage or for interviewers. It also affords the researcher ease of editing or analysis as it is easier to make changes to questionnaire and to copy and sort data. In addition, this method realizes faster transmission time. Questionnaires can be delivered to recipients in seconds, rather than in days as with traditional mail.

3.4 Population of study

A population refers to an entire group of individuals, events or objects having a common observable characteristic; it is an aggregate of all that conforms to a given specification (Mugenda & Mugenda 1999)

The population of this study will include bloggers and blog readers, who frequently commentate on the topical issues affecting the ordinary Kenyan. Frequency for the purposes of this study will be a blogger who posts, on his blog, at least thrice a week. The study will not go into details of whether a blogger/blog reader is Kenyan or non Kenyan; as long as the blogger dwells with Kenyan issues then the said blogger qualifies to be in the population of the study.

3.5 Sampling

Sampling is the process of selecting a number of individuals for a study in such a way that the individuals selected represent the large group from which they are selected. Sampling enables a study to secure a representative group, which enables the researcher to gain information about the entire population (Mugenda 1999)

The study will utilize purposive sampling. This sampling technique allows a researcher to use

cases that have the required information with respect to the objectives of the study (Loehr 1999).

This technique is appropriate for the study because some bloggers are known to be only concerned about the number of hits in their blogs with the content of the blogs being utterly disregarded. With this in mind, it is important that the study handpicks the most popular and widely read blogs that are not only informative but exhaustive in nature on a single Kenyan topic. To determine the most popular blogs, the study will establish the number of links that points toward each site ("inbound" links). The inbound links are the most important and visible measure of a site's popularity. Bloggers almost never advertise their sites; they don't buy space in media or run blinking messages on electronic billboards. They rely purely on word of mouth. Readers find a link to a specific blog or on a friend's site, and they follow it. A link is, in essence, a vote of confidence that a fan leaves inscribed in cyberspace.

Blogs usually list other blogs that carry similar content. By utilising the listed blogs the study shall be in a good position to purposely determine those blogs that would be useful for the purpose of this study.

3.6 Data collection techniques

The data collection techniques for this study will be through interviewing technique via email for both bloggers and blog readers. The interview technique via email is apt since it has the potential of reaching unlimited number of bloggers and blog readers as well. The email contacts provided in the blogs as well as recommendations by bloggers will determine the sampling frame

Bearing in mind that this study seeks to establish the extent to which new technologies are affecting information sharing, it would be foolhardy to ignore the very instruments that we are studying for data collection. The target population of the study includes people who

predominantly have access to the Internet and as such this study will almost exclusively rely on interview via email as the ultimate technique in data collection. Furthermore, where the researcher feels that a certain respondent could have given more information, then this technique will afford the researcher the opportunity to send follow-up questions immediately thereby providing immediacy in data collection. Furthermore data sent on email in soft copy and this therefore saves the researcher a lot of time that could have otherwise been spent on data entry. The study shall also undertake a documentary analysis of select blogs that the researcher will find most preferred by most respondents of the research questionnaire. This analysis will help to ascertain the views expressed by the interviewees and be useful in demonstrating and supporting the findings of this research.

3.7 Data collection tools

This study will employ the questionnaire tool as the principal data collection tool. The questionnaire via email will be employed to get information among bloggers and readers.

The questionnaire will have both open-ended and closed questions that will provide the research with in-depth data. While the closed questions will encourage uniformity in responses and therefore ease of analysis, open ended questions will harness an important aspect that could have escaped the researcher during the formulation of the questionnaire. Besides, open-ended questions give the respondent some flexibility ensuring every bit of information about the topic under study is captured. By emailing the questionnaire, the study will realize several advantages. The emails can be sent to respondents in far flung areas without losing the immediacy that comes with electronic mail. In addition, very large samples are feasible, making the results statistically

significant even when analyzing multiple variables. In an email, also, many questions can be asked giving considerable flexibility to the analysis.

3.8 Data analysis

As pointed out earlier, this study is a qualitative research and therefore the data obtained will be analysed qualitatively. Qualitative analysis will mainly deal with the content analysis of the respondents' answers as well as some of the blogs mostly visited by the population sample. The researcher will study the blogs and assess whether the said blogs have any communicative impact.

3.9 Data presentation

Once the study is complete data presentation will be in form of both text and descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics enables one to understand data through summary values and graphical presentations. The purpose of putting results of this research into graphs, charts and tables is two-fold. First, it is a visual way to look at the data and see what happened and make interpretations. Second, it is usually the best way to show the data to others. Reading lots of numbers in the text puts people to sleep and does little to convey information.

3.10 Reliability

Although the term 'reliability' is a concept used for testing or evaluating quantitative research, the idea is most often used in all kinds of research. If the idea of testing is viewed as a way of information elicitation then the most important test of any qualitative study is its quality. A good qualitative study can help "understand a situation that would otherwise be enigmatic or confusing" (Eisner, 1991). This relates to the concept of a good quality research when reliability is a concept to evaluate quality in quantitative study with a "purpose of explaining" while quality

concept in qualitative study has the purpose of “generating understanding” (Joppe 2000)

Joppe (2000) defines reliability as:

“The extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study is if the results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered to be reliable”.

Patton (2001) states that validity and reliability are two factors that a qualitative researcher should be concerned about while designing a study, analysing results or judging the quality of the study. This study has been diligently designed to ensure that its findings will be both valid and reliable.

4.0 CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The general objective of this study was to investigate whether there is any communicative impact of the blogging practice, in Kenya, as envisaged many years back by the proponents of the Libertarian Theory. The Libertarians maxim of 'a marketplace of ideas' appears to be vindicated by the robust uptake of blogging practice.

4.2 Demographics

The study had a total of 150 respondents (40 out of those are bloggers) who successfully participated in it. Given that the sampling was purely purposive, then it means that respondents were selected with an emphasis on quality of results expected of this study, as opposed to quantity of respondents.

4.2.1 Gender distribution

Out of the 40 active bloggers polled in this research, 60 percent were male while 40 per cent were female.



Figure 1: Bloggers Gender distribution. Source: Researcher.

4.2.2 Age Distribution

The most active age category as far as blogging is concerned is 25-35, followed by those aged between 36-45. The next biggest chunk of blogging community is mainly the college going and newly graduated people aged 18-24.

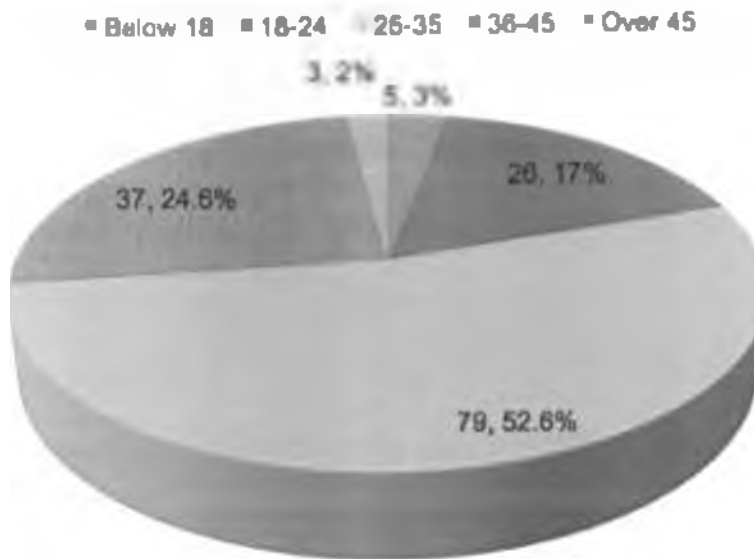


Figure 2: Respondents' age distribution. Source: Researcher.

4.2.3 Internet Access

Of the blog readers interviewed 34 per cent have internet access throughout the day while 60 per cent access internet at least once daily. Bloggers, however, have more time on the internet with 65 per cent of those enjoying internet access throughout the day.



Figure 3: Blog readers' internet access. Source: Researcher

4.2.4 Blogs' Believability

The subjectivity or lack thereof the blogs is a poignant aspect as this study established. Out of the respondents polled only 33 per cent always find the content of blogs believable while double those, at 66 per cent find it 'sometimes not' believable. About just one percent don't know whether to believe the blogs or not. These statistics may not bother any Libertarian proponent, as long as the opportunity for those who want to publish and be read remains intact.

Of the respondents who returned a 'sometimes not' believable verdict, majority were of the opinion that some bloggers' postings lack factual basis. Others felt that since all bloggers are targeting as many hits views as possible, some lack the prerequisite conviction of being committed to the truth of what they post rather in a rush to garner numbers.

If the 33 per cent continually get dissatisfied with what they read on specific blogs, then they would simply stop reading them, thereby vindicating the Libertarian's major tenet.

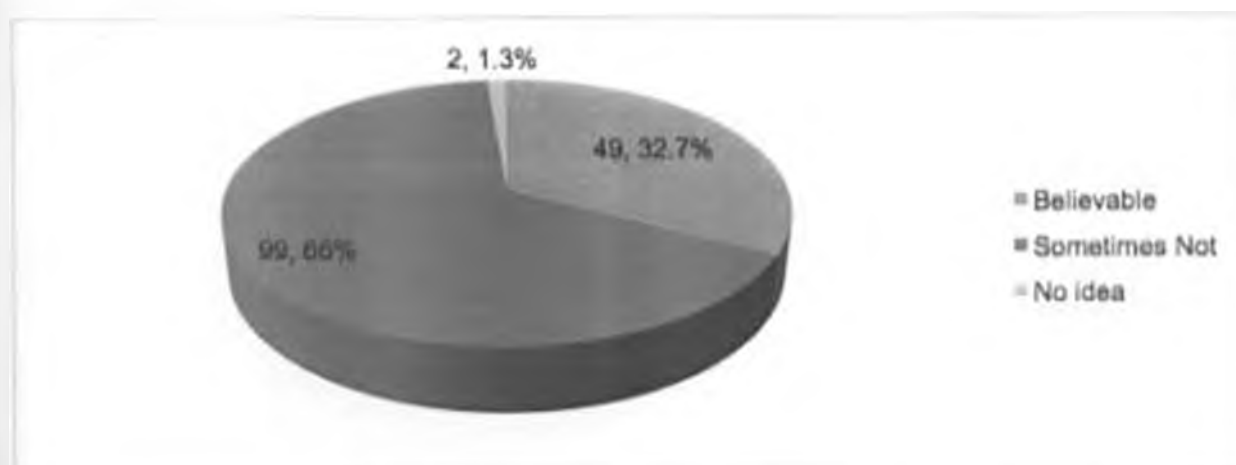


Figure 4: Blogs' believability amongst the readers. Source: Researcher.

4.3 Preferences: Blogs vs. Mainstream

It's no surprise therefore that only 30 percent prefer getting information on the blogs as opposed to 60 percent who would rather get their information from mainstream newspaper websites. The

blogs' modest rating however can be attributed to the fact that it is still a new phenomenon in this part of the world as opposed to the developed nations. If this study is repeated 10 years later, chances are that those trawling the blogosphere for news would have increased due to exposure to the practice. In the same vein, one has to wonder how the traditional media will be performing by then. It appears that some form of rethinking or restructuring news dissemination must be adopted by the traditional media, if they are to stem the blogosphere onslaught. Amazingly, traditional print media should not count the 60 percent vote as theirs wholly as some respondents indicated they prefer reading news online due to ease of navigation (similar stories lumped together) and interactivity web stories afford readers.

However, another aspect worth considering is the content of subject matter. Many people readily turn to blogs for entertainment and gossip while financial and political news is consumed more from the mainstream media.

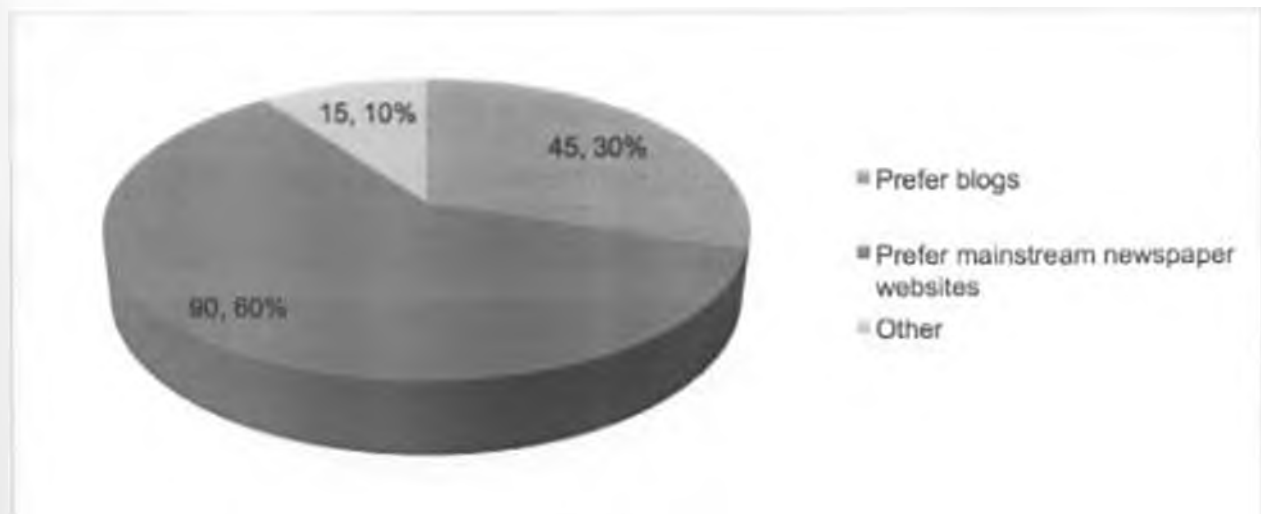


Figure 5: Respondents' preferences as sources of news. Source: Researcher.

4.4 Blogging period

This study, having polled 30 active blog owners, established that blogs that have existed longer

attracts some level of believability as opposed to new ones. The older blogs 'have been tested over time' and passed the test according to one blogger. This notion would seem to uphold the Libertarians ethos. Of the bloggers polled, 10 percent have been blogging for less than one year, while those who have been blogging for up to three years constituted 30 per cent. The bulk of the bloggers at 50 per cent are those that have been at it for 3-5 years. Just a mere 10 per cent have been blogging for over six years. Blogs such as Bankelele, ran by a Nairobi banker on banking, finance and investments is highly respected by those who prefer its content. It's little wonder that it has been in existence since 2004. Blog readers leave interactive comments on the blog forming a robust online discussions. Kumekucha, another popular blog, renowned for its political coverage in a no holds barred approach have been at it since 2005 with regular posts weekly and sometimes even getting more than one posting per day. Just as in Mashada forums, readers of Kumekucha get an opportunity to digest and discern news items posted on the blog with little moderation. There is apparent news segmentation by bloggers just as in mainstream media. White African is yet another blog that almost exclusively targeting telecommunications sector with an emphasis on mobile telephony. This content dichotomy indicates that blogging is beginning to take up shape and focus on specifics that a segment of the audience can appreciate.

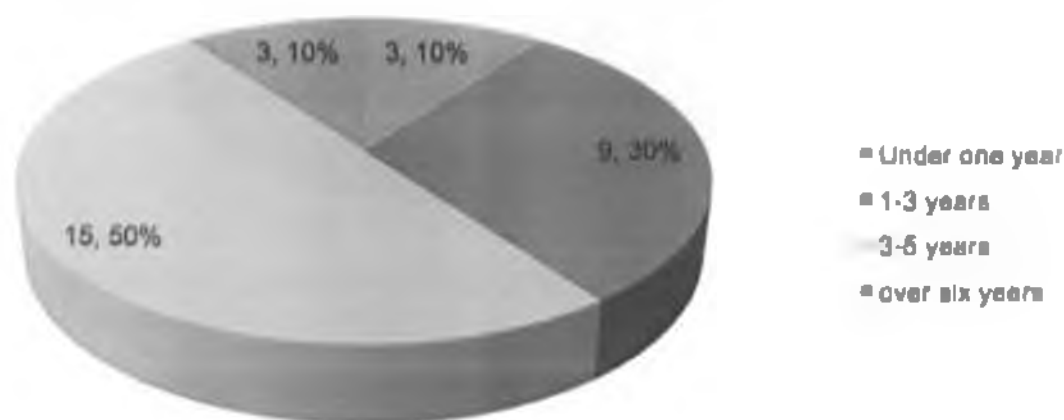


Figure 6: Period of blogging. Source: Researcher.

Additionally, this study established that the blogs with regular postings enjoy more popularity than those with irregular posts. Frequency in posting has a corresponding level of popularity as well as dependability.

Rightly so, the blogs with higher traffic have attracted some form of advertising on their sites, though majority of those adverts are mainly Google AdSense. Comparing with bloggers from developed world, it appears that Kenyan bloggers are in a boom as soon as the blogging practice takes root and advertisers come to appreciate its great potential.

4.5 Blogs' boldness

However, bloggers do have a saving grace in that 60 percent feel blogs are 'relatively bold' than newspaper websites in terms of news content posted. This would appear to suggest that blogs are viewed more candid and ready to deal with a variety of topics that readers find important to them but are not featured by mainstream media for one reason or the other.



Figure 7: The perceived boldness of blogs. Source: Researcher.

A further 16 per cent actually feel the blogs are downright bold in news dissemination.

Cumulatively, 78 per cent of blog readers feel that certain information can only be found in the blogosphere. This is the news that many mainstream media houses wouldn't touch even with ten metre pole. Some of the topics include politics, grand corruption allegations and juicy entertainment gossips that are the hallmark of the Kenyan society. This is an important aspect to the Libertarians as it affords to reader to decide whether to consume or to discard the blogs content.

4.6 Blogosphere's popular content

Of the top 40 blogs according to this study's respondents' ratings, personal musings and politics form the bulk of blogging in Kenya with 30 and 20 per cent respectively. Entertainment, finance, sports among others share between 10-15 per cent each of the blogging practice in Kenya.

Most regular bloggers, according to the study, post twice or thrice per week while there is a small percentage that fervently post daily. However, it was apparent that of those who struggle to daily to post something for their readers, the quantity is usually minimal as opposed to those who post less frequently.

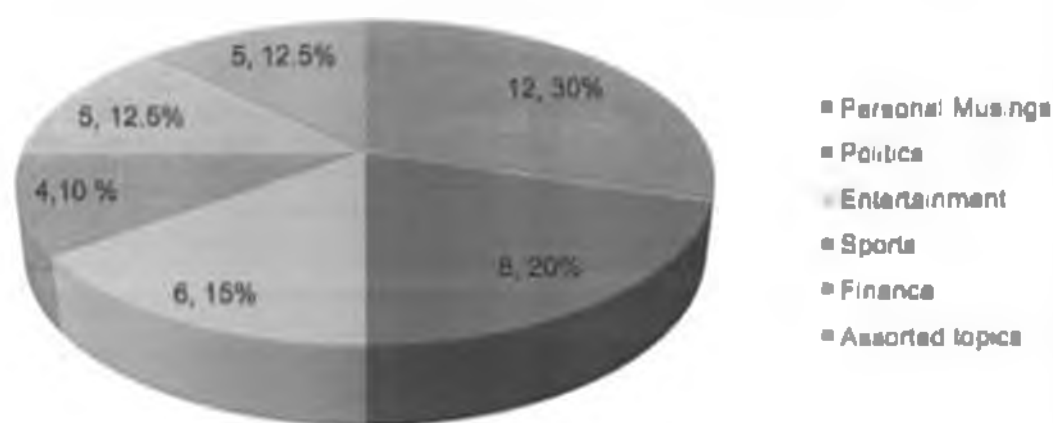


Figure 8: Popular content among blogs. Source: Researcher.

Perhaps of particular interest to bloggers is that 57 per cent of the blog readers became aware of specific blogs through a friend (some form of marketing perhaps?) while just 30 percent stumbles on new blogs randomly with a further 13 percent following links on the blogs.

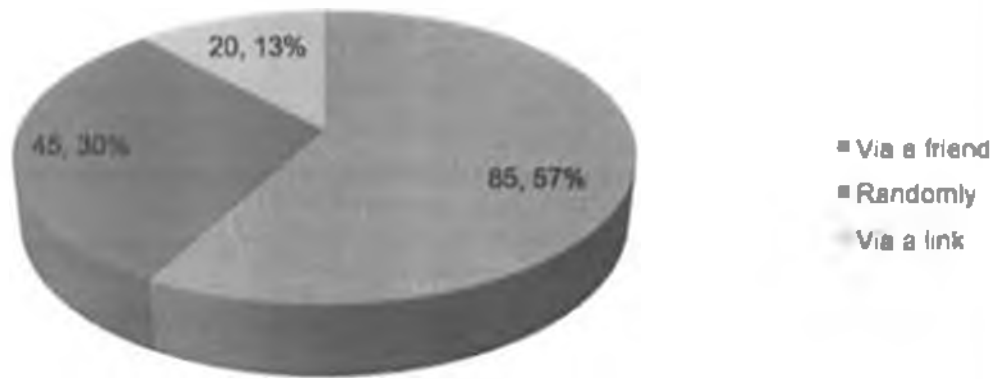


Figure 9: Blog readers' initial contact with blogging. Source: Researcher.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Discussions

While many bloggers believe that a new brand of journalism is emerging, some new media pundits, in mainstream media, remain sceptical. Those in traditional media still maintain dissemination of information is great, but how much of it is trustworthy remains debatable. They may have a point as the chart indicates a majority of blog readers take some of the content on the blogs with a pinch of salt. However, as you would expect with the young, it's them that form the largest bulk of those actively involved in blogging. Whether it is because they are the largest segment of the nation's population or it's down to them being techno savvy could be topics for further research.

From the respondents' bio-data, most of the bloggers are trained professionals in their area of expertise. These are the bloggers that opt to share their knowledge with like-minded people. Of course another major category is that just content on 'throwing tantrums' online under the personal musings category.

One major impediment to robust growth of blogging culture is internet access. It was clear from the findings that many respondents find internet access a big challenge, especially the bulk that is not in formal employment as they have to make time in the course of their day to go online.

This impediment greatly affects even would be bloggers as it was apparent there are many creative people out there but the irregularity of posting suggest that internet access is a major issue.

If internet access is a big concern, perhaps blogs' content credibility is a bigger concern.

Without standardization mechanisms in the blogosphere, credibility crises of content posted on the blogs remains a major contestation. With millions of websites abound on the web it becomes a Herculean task to sift through and web sites and determine reliable ones from jokers who may have too much time on their hands to the detriment of themselves as well as the global community. But, as one respondent pointed out you don't grow visitors on your blog by posting lies: it can work for a day or two but soon you will be discovered. This in essence is Libertarianism in practise. For those who don't bother to check their facts, reputation filters and circles of trust in the blogosphere help weed them out, a scenario that was envisaged by Libertarian theorists.

Some blogs credibility issues appear to give the mainstream media websites some breathing space. There is a big group of people as it was demonstrated by the population sample that prefers getting news from newspaper websites. A good number may not fancy the news presentation in the mainstream websites (blogs tend to be persuasive, dramatic and compelling) but still stick to reading those websites as they would not trade news credibility for presentation. The two main things that separate blogging from journalism are the personalisation of the voice of the blogger and the lack of the subbing workflow you would expect to see for any print or mainstream online publication.

Is it the reason why so many readers of online content find blogs irresistible? Looking at the content blogs provides, such as alternative perspective, first-person experiences and interactivity, one might conclude that readers want either a balanced or more personal angle to their news. Besides, presentation, the boldness of the blogs is another attribute that many consumers feel is a fresh breath in news dissemination

One respondent pointed out that blogs such as Mashada.com is ideal as it tackles a number of topics in a no holds barred approach. Members on the Mashada forums are able to express themselves, on a number of sensitive issues such as ethnicity, relationship and others, freely albeit anonymously, without having to worry about what others think of them. Another claimed that blogs will always have juicy content for their readers. This set up no doubt has afforded blog readers more opportunities to express themselves than they would find in mainstream media channels. Traditional media would deem this opportunities too lofty to pursue.

At the heart of no or little censorship on the blogosphere may also be a growing dissatisfaction or distrust of news provided by large media conglomerates. Another responded suggested that 'blogs publish stories that would never see the light of day' in mainstream media. Another said that mainstream media is obsessed with politics and as such, he prefers to get his daily dose of entertainment and finance discussions on the blogosphere. It is apparent that many blog readers are convinced that mainstream media is working too hard in editing itself and to use a respondent's phrase 'editing themselves off readers'.

Bloggers, especially after the death of the so called gutter press have taken in gusto, stories that otherwise the three major newspapers in Kenya, Daily Nation, The Star and The Standard, wouldn't dare touch. All these media houses are also 'guilty' of cross-ownership, owning radio as well as TV stations which in turn gives the audience a raw deal should the management decide not to run a specific story. From the onset, blogs have a clear advantage in that many people expect the blogger to have nothing to hide or anyone to protect hence the transparency in publishing. The same cannot be said of mainstream media.

A corollary of the debate over blogging has highlighted the feeling that many big news and media organisations have lost sight of the fact that no publication or source can automatically command the trust of the reader.

It is apparent that if the mainstream media wants to retain the bulk of youthful readers, then these organisations must be proactive in trying to meet their expectations. Many respondents were of the opinion that mainstream media ought to embark on blogging as a sign that they are moving with the time.

5.2 Conclusion

The reaction towards blogging as a medium recalls that to the New Journalism movement, pioneered by writers such as Hunter S Thompson, Tom Wolfe, Truman Capote and Norman Mailer. The New Journalism movement transformed the conventional wisdom of news writing by presenting stories as features with greater colour, vibrancy and permeated with the personal experiences of the writer. The sense of detachment between the writer and reader disappeared. At the time of the movement the sound of guffaws and sneers from news writers and real journalists resonated just as loudly as they do today towards blogging. Today, most newspaper feature articles are centred on human interest stories, especially those that touch on people's lives and experiences. This is pretty much with what led to the popularity of initial blogs as they were basically personal musings. Some blogs, such as Kenyamoja.com, have gone a notch higher. Kenyamoja.com is a real alternative to hard copy newspapers and TV stations as it assembles the cream of everything that is interesting in both print and electronic and offered to a blog reader to consume at his /her convenience. Not to be ignored, though not part of this study is the Facebook fad. Many people on Facebook have taken to posting 'newsy' statuses on their accounts meaning that for the traditional news media dissemination, their 'breaking news' tag has all but

been 'broken'. This has already forced many news outlets to have online content that they are able to update instantly online to match the bloggers and other social networking sites instantaneity.

The fact that many bloggers nowadays attend press conferences and post stories just like mainstream media, mean that we could be on the edge of journalism revolution. Certain companies, such as Nokia now give newly launched handsets to some bloggers for review and rating in the blogs. This shows that such companies have come to acknowledge the communicative impact of the blogs. In the past, such luxury was only reserved for renowned business writers in the mainstream media. If the mainstream media cannot take this as the proverbial writing on the wall then I don't know what would move them.

Like them or hate them, the bloggers are here to stay and are now an integral part of an online community as far as news gathering and dissemination is concerned.

CHAPTER SIX: RECOMMENDATIONS

Firstly, as it stands Kenya is still under utilising its bandwidth and if ICT, as expected, is to be one of the key drivers in achieving economic growth and the goals stipulated in Kenya's strategic plan dubbed 'Vision 2030', then the Internet should play a greater role.

The fact that a majority of the youth today, especially in urban centres are exposed to some form of internet use can only be a good thing for the country, as it means we are bring forth an 'internet compliant' society for the future. It's a new generational trend that cannot be ignored, so said a respondent.

Blogging is indeed one area of spurring on this growth, generating wealth, creating self employment as in developed world where bloggers are living off their blogging. If information is power as the mantra goes, then blogging should be the next source of power in a knowledge economy.

Secondly, it would be ideal for journalists working in mainstream media to have private blogs where they can publish stories that would otherwise not be published in newspapers either due to ownership interests, editorial policy or any other red tape. Even without the aforementioned handicaps, mainstream media are constantly under pressure over space and time constraints and therefore cannot publish everything that journalists are able to generate and record. Having a

private blog would give a journalist an avenue to entertain and inform even when the stories they have are not accommodated in the mainstream media.

Thirdly, the traditional media houses may have to devise ways to cope with the persuasiveness, vibrancy and tenacity of the modern day blogger. It's expected that as the country continues to grow, so will be the internet use and a tilt towards ICT service industry. What Kenyan bloggers need to ensure is that there is some form of income generation from the blogging practice if it's going to stand the test of time. Perhaps if the community of Kenyan bloggers can hold regular conferences and caucuses, they would be able to focus and forge ahead as a united consortium and reap some benefits off their blogs instead of 'everyone taking a stab in the dark' as correctly put by one of the bloggers.

Finally, it would be ideal for the corporate fraternity to take advantage of the opportunities thrust forward by the blogosphere to brand themselves and advertise their products. Indeed it is not enough to have a website, blogs provide an interactivity channel with the consumer market that needs to be rapidly exploited!

What is not in doubt is that as the uptake of internet via PCs and mobile telephony continues, so will be the blogging practice in Kenya with the potential market for blogs growing exponentially.

Appendix 1

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is for a research project towards the fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Communication Studies at the School of Journalism in the University of Nairobi. Your co-operation is highly appreciated. The information sought in this questionnaire is purely for academic pursuit and shall be treated with utmost confidentiality.

NB: For those questions with multiple choices, simply shade your response in bright red like this to denote your response.

(1) Respondent's Bio data

Name:

Gender: (a) Male _____ (b) Female _____

Occupation:

Age bracket: (i) Below 18 years (ii) 18-24 (iii) 25-35 (iv) 36-45 (v) Over 45 years

Residence / County:

(2) Internet use

(A) How often do you access Internet?

(i) Throughout the day

(ii) Daily

(iii) A few times a week

(iv) Once a week

(B) How often do read blogs (a) daily (b) severally in a week (c) weekly (d) monthly

(3) On Blogging Practice

(i) Are you a blogger (a) Yes ____ (i) if yes, name of your blog _____ (b) No ____

(ii) How long have you been blogging? (a) less than one year (b) 1-3 years (c) 4-6 years (d) over 7 years

(iii) If yes, frequency of posting? (a) Daily (b) A few times a week (c) Weekly (d) A few times a month

(iv) Topic of the blog (a) Personal musings (b) Creative works (c) Finance (d) Politics (e) Sports

(f) Current affairs (g) Any other (specify)

(v) How many hits does the blog get per (a) Day ____ (b) Week ____ (c) Monthly ____

(vi) Do you have adverts on the blog?

(4) On the blogs that you visit, do find those blogs' content believable (a) Very believable (b) believable (c) sometimes not believable (d) never believable

(5) (i) Do you prefer reading media houses websites or other people's blogs?

(a) Strongly prefer newspapers websites

(b) Prefer newspapers websites

(c) Sometimes

(d) Prefer blogs

(e) Strongly prefer blogs

(ii) Why? Please explain _____

(6) Would you recommend newspapers to have blogs as well?

- (a) Strongly recommend
- (b) Recommend
- (c) Maybe
- (d) Never

(7) Are blogs bolder than mainstream media in news dissemination?

- (a) Strongly bold
- (b) Relatively
- (c) Weakly bold
- (d) Not bold

(8) Do the blogs afford you more opportunities (than mainstream media) to exercise your freedom of expression?

- (a) Most Definitely
- (b) Somewhat
- (c) No difference
- (d) Don't

(9)(i) Most popular blog in your opinion? (a) _____ (b) Blog topic _____

(ii) Why do you rate it so highly? Please explain _____

(10) How did you get to know about this blog?

- (a) Randomly
- (b) By following a link
- (c) Via a friend
- (d) Any other way. Please specify

(11) Any other remarks on blogging in Kenya

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