Journal of Community & Communication Research
ISSN: 2635-3318
Volume 10, Number 1, June 2025
Accessible at: https://jccr.sccdr.org

MEDIA, DIGITAL COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES AND GOVERNANCE IN SOUTH-SOUTH, NIGERIA: AN OVERVIEW

Jammy S. G[1], and Oke E E[2]
[1]Department of Mass Communication,
University of Africa, Toru-Orua, Bayelsa State, Nigeria
Emails: jammyguanah@yahoo.com & jammy.guanah@uat.edu.ng
Tel: +2348032133664
[2]Department of Journalism and Media Studies
Delta State University of Science and Technology,
Ozoro, Delta State, Nigeria
E-mail: okeedherue@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study evaluated the use of digital communication technologies by the mass media in monitoring governance in Nigeria. The objectives of the research were to confirm whether the media employed digital communication technologies in monitoring governance in Nigeria, determine the extent to which the media deployed these technologies in this pursuit, and identify the challenges the media encountered in utilizing them. The study adopted a quantitative approach and utilized the Technological Determinism Theory (TDT). The population consisted of registered members of the Nigerian Union of Journalists in Delta, Edo, and Bayelsa States. Results showed that the media minimally employed digital communication technologies for monitoring governance in Nigeria. Furthermore, it was discovered that the media implemented these technologies to a low extent in this context. Additional findings revealed that the media faced significant challenges in effectively utilizing digital communication technologies. The study concluded that the effective use of digital communication technologies by the mass media can enhance their ability to monitor governance in Nigeria. However, the identified issues, such as inadequate digital infrastructure, limited digital literacy among journalists, regulatory complexities, and financial constraints, must be addressed before this potential can be fully realized. It is recommended that the government invest more in digital infrastructure, implement digital literacy programs for media professionals, and streamline regulatory processes to facilitate the effective use of digital communication technologies in the media.

Keywords: Digital Literacy, Infrastructure, Internet, Media, Monitoring, Regulation

INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary digital era, the intersection of mass media, digital communication technologies, and governance has become increasingly pivotal in shaping political landscapes and public discourse (Castells, 2013). In Nigeria, a country with a vibrant but often challenged media environment, this intersection holds significant implications for democratic governance and civic engagement (Ojebode, 2018).

Media refers to both the conventional and Internet-enabled media. It is expected of these media to employ digital communication tools like social media platforms, online news portals, and data analytics tools to gauge and measure the way governance is carried out by monitoring the activities of those in government.

The Nigerian media landscape has undergone significant transformation in recent years, largely driven by the proliferation of digital communication technologies. This shift has had profound implications for governance in Africa's most populous nation. The interplay between media, digital technologies, and governance in Nigeria is characterised by both opportunities and challenges. Nigeria has a rich history of media involvement in governance, dating back to the colonial era. The media were very active in fighting for the independence of Nigeria, thereby enhancing the democratic structure of Nigeria. However, the advent of digital technologies has dramatically altered the media ecosystem.

The rapid adoption of digital communication technologies in Nigeria has led to a diversification of media platforms. Nigeria`s Internet penetration rate is around 45%, while the number of Internet users is around 159.5 million. Nigeria is said to have over 86.2% of Internet traffic in Nigeria generated by mobile devices (TS2 Space, 2025; Priori Data, 2025). This digital shift has given rise to online news platforms, blogs, and social media as significant sources of information and public discourse.

To a great extent, it can be said that digital transformation has democratised information dissemination, this is so because it allows for a more diverse range of voices in the public sphere. Research highlights that "citizen journalism … has emerged as a powerful force in shaping contemporary media dynamics," driven by digital technology and social media (Segun, 2024).

The proliferation of digital media has had several impacts on governance in Nigeria. Digital platforms have made it easier to disseminate information about government activities. Akinwumi (2019) notes that many government agencies now have active social media presence, facilitating direct communication with citizens. Social media, in particular, have become tools for holding public officials accountable. Instances of corruption or misconduct often go viral, putting pressure on the government to respond (Olabamiji, 2014).

Digital platforms have provided new avenues for citizen's participation in governance. The #EndSARS protests of 2020 and the #EndBad Governance protests of 2024, largely organised through social media, demonstrated the potential of digital technologies in mobilising citizens for political action (Onapajo, 2021). Also, during elections, digital technologies have been used to report irregularities and monitor the voting process in real-time, contributing to more transparent electoral processes (Alhassan, 2018).

However, despite these positive developments, several challenges persist; for instance, Adeleke (2020) highlights that unequal access to digital technologies, particularly between urban and rural areas, limits the reach and impact of digital media on governance. Likewise, the ease of information sharing on digital platforms has also led to the rapid spread of misinformation. This poses significant challenges for governance, as false information can mislead the public and influence political discourse (Apuke and Omar, 2020).

Besides, there have been concerns about government attempts to regulate social media, which some critics view as potential threats to freedom of expression (Oyero and Jegede, 2020). Similarly, the increased reliance on digital platforms has also raised concerns about cybersecurity, with government websites and databases becoming targets for cyberattacks (Chinedu-Okeke and Obi, 2016). Hitherto, Guanah and Guanah (2022) reiterated that some criminal activities take place in cyberspace, which poses threats to man's security in various forms; these crimes are referred to as "cybercrime because they occur in cyberspace, these entails everything one does illegally with computing devices like mobile phones, tablets, and personal computers, and other criminal activities in cyberspace, including spamming" (Guanah & Guanah, p. 65).

Use of Digital Communication Technologies by the Mass Media in Monitoring Governance

Digital communication technologies have revolutionised the way mass media monitor and report on governance. These technologies have enhanced the speed, scope, and depth of media coverage, allowing for more comprehensive scrutiny of government actions and policies. One key aspect is the use of social media platforms. Journalists and media organisations now use platforms like X and Facebook to track real-time updates from government officials and agencies (Hermida, 2010). This immediate access to information allows for quicker reporting and analysis of government activities.

Data journalism has also emerged as a powerful tool in governance monitoring. Media outlets use big data analytics to process large volumes of government data, uncovering patterns and inconsistencies that might otherwise go unnoticed (Coddington, 2015). This approach has been particularly effective in investigating issues like public spending and election integrity.

Therefore, this paper sought to explore and elucidate the role and efficacy of digital communication technologies employed by the media in monitoring governance. The objectives of this study are critical in understanding the current state and potential of digital communication technologies in enhancing the role of the media as a watchdog of governance (McNair, 2009). The paper underscores the critical need for concerted efforts by both the government and media stakeholders to address the barriers hindering the optimal use of digital communication technologies. Such efforts will not only enhance the media's capacity to monitor governance but also strengthen the democratic fabric of Nigeria by ensuring that governance is transparent, accountable, and responsive to the needs of the people (Yina, 2020).

Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study were to:

i. confirm if media employ digital communication technologies in monitoring governance in Nigeria;
ii. determine the extent the media deploy digital communication technologies in monitoring governance in Nigeria, and
iii. identify the challenges the media encounter in utilizing digital communication technologies in monitoring governance in Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative approach, focusing on the registered members of the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ). The south-south region of Nigeria consists of six states; through a random sampling technique, three states (Bayelsa, Delta, and Edo) were selected. Records from the headquarters of the States` branches showed that Delta State had 530 registered members, Edo State had 523 registered members, and Bayelsa State had 603 registered members, as of the time of carrying out this research work. This brought the total number to 1,656, which formed the population of this study.

The sample size of the study is 310. The Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table was used to determine it. The table provides that when a population falls between 1,600 and 1,699, the sample size will be 310. The estimated variance proportion was 0.5 (5%), and the confidence interval was 0.05 (5%). The researchers purposively selected 103 journalists from both Edo and Delta States, and 104 from Bayelsa State, because it had the highest population of registered journalists among the three States.

This study was carried out in the capital cities of the three selected States (Bayelsa- Yenagoa; Delta- Asaba, and Edo- Benin City). A structured questionnaire was used to gather data. Out of the 310 copies of the questionnaire administered to the journalists, only 280 (90.32%) copies were returned and found usable. The data from the field were analysed using simple percentages and tables.

Employment of digital communication technologies

Table 1: Media employ digital communication technologies in monitoring governance in Nigeria

Responses	**Frequency**	**%**
Strongly Agree	49	17.5
Agree	84	30
Can't Tell	9	3.21
Disagree	55	19.64
Strongly Disagree	83	29.65
Total	**280**	**100**

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Mean = (49 x 5) + (84 x 4) + (9 x 3) + (55 x 2) + (83 x 1) ÷ 280

= 245 + 336 + 27 + 110 + 83 ÷ 280 = 801÷280 =approx. 2.86

The mean score of 2.86 falls just below the midpoint (3.0), indicating that respondents are generally uncertain or slightly disagree that the media actively employ digital communication technologies in monitoring governance in Nigeria. From Table 1, it can be interpreted that the media do not fully deploy digital communication technologies in monitoring governance in Nigeria.

Table 2: The extent the media deploy digital communication technologies in monitoring governance in Nigeria

Responses	**Frequency**	**%**
Very Large	65	23.21
Large Extent	58	20.71
Can't Tell	2	0.71
Little Extent	75	26.79
Very Little	80	28.58
Total	**280**	**100**

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Mean = (65 x 5) + (58 x 4) + (2 x 3) + (75 x 2) + (80 x 1) ÷ 280

= 325 + 232 + 6 + 150 + 80 ÷ 280

= 793 x 280 = approx. 2.83

The mean score of 2.83 suggests that the media's (Newspaper, Radio, TV) use of digital communication technologies to monitor governance is perceived as minimal to moderate, with a tendency toward low deployment. The data in Table 2 indicate that the media seldom utilise digital communication technologies in monitoring governance in Nigeria.

Table 3: Challenges the media encounter in utilising digital communication technologies in monitoring governance in Nigeria

Responses	**Frequency**	**%**
Digital divide	48	17.14
Misinformation and fake news	11	3.93
Inadequate digital technologies	40	14.28
Regulatory complexities	59	21.07
Financial constraints	22	7.86
Risk of digital surveillance	25	8.93
Limited digital literacy among journalists	75	26.79
Total	**280**	**100**

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 3 presents a variety of challenges the media encounter in utilising digital communication technologies in monitoring governance in Nigeria. This implies the media barely use digital communication technologies in their operations.

Discussion of Findings

The first finding of this study, as can be seen from Table 1, is that Nigerian media do not fully deploy digital communication technologies in monitoring governance in Nigeria. Data show that 49.29% of the respondents do not think that the media employ digital communication technologies in monitoring governance in Nigeria, while 47.5% agree, and 3.21% are undecided.

The finding revealed a concerning trend where media in Nigeria minimally employ digital communication technologies for monitoring governance. Despite the widespread availability of digital tools such as social media platforms, online news portals, and data analytics tools, their deployment remains minimal within the Nigerian media landscape. Gwani (2023) states that over the past decade, Nigeria has made significant steps in utilising ICT to enhance the efficiency, accessibility, and transparency of government services.

This finding supports the notion of TDT that technology influences and dictates media practices. The theory suggests that adopting advanced digital tools can revolutionise how media organisations operate, thus improving their efficiency and effectiveness in monitoring governance (Veblen, 1921). TDT asserts that technology catalyses societal change, and this study aligns with that assertion by exploring how digital communication technologies have the potential to transform media practices in Nigeria. The minimal and low extent of technology use identified in the study suggests that technological advancement is crucial for enhancing media monitoring capabilities (McLuhan, 1964).

Also, through Table 2, it was discovered that the media deploy digital communication technologies to a low extent (as attested to by 55.37% of the respondents) in monitoring governance in Nigeria, as compared to the 43.92% of the respondents who have a contrary opinion. This limited usage is attributed to various challenges, including inadequate digital infrastructure, lack of digital literacy among media professionals, and regulatory bottlenecks (Yina, 2020). This finding runs contrary to what is expected of the media in a society like Nigeria. The media are inevitable in society because of their consequential roles. They exist for nothing but to keep society going. They are the life wire of the society. If they are not playing their essential role of informing, educating, and entertaining, among many other functions, then all the hype of the media being the fourth estate of the realm is simply a statement without substance. They exist for no more purpose than to serve mankind and society.

The media need to hold those in public offices accountable for what they say and do. There are digital writing and recording pens as well as phone Apps that can record and write out recorded voices. These can help, for instance, to counter denials by interviewees, especially politicians, who do deny what they say, claiming they were misquoted by the press.

To the limited extent that digital communication has been deployed, Gwani (2023) attests that, "the integration of ICT in government processes has fostered transparency and accountability. Digital platforms and e-governance systems provide a centralised repository for information, making it easier to monitor and track government activities. This increased transparency acts as a deterrent to corruption and promotes accountability among public officials" (p.2).

Further findings revealed that the media face significant challenges in effectively utilising digital communication technologies. These challenges include inadequate digital infrastructure, limited digital literacy among journalists, regulatory complexities, and financial constraints. These factors collectively impede the media's ability to leverage digital technologies fully to enhance transparency, accountability, and public engagement in governance issues.

These challenges underscore the need for targeted interventions to enhance the media's capacity to utilise digital communication technologies effectively. Policymakers and media stakeholders need to prioritise addressing these challenges to unlock the full potential of these technologies in governance monitoring. The challenges underscore the determinist view, under TDT, that technological constraints shape societal functions. Addressing these challenges would align with TDT by enabling technology to drive improvements in media governance monitoring (Smith & Marx, 1994).

The study identified a significant gap in digital literacy among media professionals. Many journalists and media practitioners lack the necessary skills and knowledge to leverage digital communication technologies fully. This gap not only limits their ability to use these tools effectively but also affects their capacity to innovate and adapt to the rapidly evolving digital landscape. Addressing this issue requires targeted digital literacy programmes and continuous professional development opportunities for media professionals.

Regulatory barriers and a lack of supportive policies further exacerbate the problem. The current regulatory environment in Nigeria often hinders the effective use of digital communication technologies by imposing restrictions and creating uncertainties. Streamlining regulatory processes and implementing supportive policies are essential steps to create an enabling environment for the media. Such measures will facilitate the adoption of digital tools and enhance the media's ability to monitor governance.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that the media minimally employ digital communication technologies in monitoring governance in Nigeria; that they deploy digital communication technologies in monitoring governance in Nigeria in a low extent, and that the challenges the media encounter in utilising digital communication technologies in monitoring governance in Nigeria include inadequate digital infrastructure, limited digital literacy among journalists, regulatory complexities, and financial constraints.

This study explored the pivotal role of digital technologies in enhancing the media's capacity to monitor governance effectively. It provided valuable insights into the current landscape where Nigerian media, despite some adoption, minimally utilise digital communication technologies for governance monitoring. The findings underscore significant challenges such as inadequate digital infrastructure, limited digital literacy among journalists, regulatory complexities, and financial constraints, which collectively hinder the full potential of digital tools in this context.

The convergence of mass media and digital communication technologies presents unprecedented opportunities for enhancing governance transparency and accountability in Nigeria. However, realising these benefits requires concerted efforts from all stakeholders to overcome existing challenges and maximize the impact of digital innovations in the media sector.

Effective use of digital communication technologies by the mass media has the potential to significantly enhance their ability to monitor governance in Nigeria. This enhanced capability is crucial for promoting transparency, accountability, and public participation in democratic processes. However, the findings indicate that the current utilisation of these technologies by the Nigerian media is limited, thereby undermining their role as a watchdog of governance.

By addressing these challenges, Nigeria can unlock the full potential of digital communication technologies in enhancing media monitoring of governance. This will not only improve the quality and depth of governance monitoring but also strengthen the democratic fabric of the nation. The media, empowered by digital tools, can play a transformative role in promoting transparency, accountability, and public participation in governance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Government, policymakers, media stakeholders, and regulatory bodies should prioritise investments in digital infrastructure, implement targeted digital literacy programmes, streamline regulatory frameworks, and support media organisations financially to enhance their technological capabilities. By doing so, Nigeria can foster a more transparent and accountable governance system, leveraging digital communication technologies to facilitate the effective use of digital communication technologies in the media, and empower its media landscape effectively.

Equally, streamlining regulatory processes and developing supportive policies should be put in place to create a conducive environment for the media to operate and innovate. The government should review and reform existing regulatory frameworks to remove barriers that hinder the effective use of digital communication technologies in the media. This includes simplifying licensing processes, reducing bureaucratic red tape, and ensuring that regulations are conducive to technological innovation.

Furthermore, media organisations, in partnership with educational institutions and professional bodies, should develop and implement comprehensive digital literacy programmes for journalists and media professionals. These programmes should focus on enhancing skills in digital content creation, data analysis, social media management, and cybersecurity. Also, there should be ongoing training and development opportunities to ensure that media professionals stay updated with the latest digital communication technologies and practices.

REFERENCES

Adeleke, R. (2020). Digital divide in Nigeria: The role of regional differentials. *African Journal of Science, Technology, Innovation and Development*, *13*(3), 333– 346. https://doi.org/10.1080/20421338.2020.1748335.

Alhassan, A. A. (2018). The Role and Use of Social Media in Election Campaigns and Voting Behaviour in Nigeria: An Analysis of the 2015 Presidential Election. *International Journal of Recent Innovations in Academic Research*, 2(6), 117-129.

Apuke, O. D., & Omar, B. (2020). Fake news and COVID-19: Modelling the predictors of fake news sharing among social media users. *Telematics and Informatics,* 56, 101475. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tele.2020.101475.

Bruns, A. (2018). *Gatewatching and news curation: Journalism, social media, and the public sphere.* Peter Lang.

Castells, M. (2013). The new public sphere: Global civil society, communication networks, and global governance. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science,* 616(1), 78-93.

Chinedu-Okeke, C. F., & Obi, I. (2016). Social media as a political platform in Nigeria: A focus on electorates in South-Eastern Nigeria. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science,* 21(11), 06-22.

Coddington, M. (2015). Clarifying journalism's quantitative turn: A typology for evaluating data journalism, computational journalism, and computer-assisted reporting. *Digital Journalism*, 3(3), 331-348.

Deibert, R. J. (2019). The road to digital unfreedom: Three painful truths about social media. *Journal of Democracy*, 30(1), 25-39.

Guanah, J. S**.** & Guanah, J. S. (2022). Mass Media and Cyber Security in the Maritime Industry: Analysing the Threats and Prevention. *Global Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2 (2), 63-73. Available at: https://gsarpublishers.com/gjahss-vol-issue-2/.

Gwani, M. (2023). Awesome Impacts of ICT on E-governance and Government Services in Nigeria. Retrieved from https://webmanager.ng/blog/impact-of-ict-on-e-governance-in-nigeria/.

Hermida, A. (2010). Twittering the news: The emergence of ambient journalism. *Journalism Practice*, 4(3), 297-308.

Ikpe, E. H., & Olise, F. P. (2010). The Era of New Media Technologies and the Challenges of Media Relations Practice in Nigeria. *Journal of Communication*, 1(2), 59-68.

Krejcie, R. V. & Morgan, D. W. (1970). Determining sample size for research activities. *Educational and psychological measurement, 30*(3), 607-610.

McLuhan, M. (1964). *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. McGraw-Hill.

McNair, B. (2009). *News and Journalism in the UK*. New York: Routledge.

Ojebode, A. (2018). Fake news, hate speech, and the 2019 general elections in Nigeria: The strength of platforms. In A. Olukotun (Ed.), *Watchdogs or Captured Media? A Study of the Role of the Media in Nigeria's Emergent Democracy 1999-2016* (pp. 313-336). Diamond Publications.

Priori Data (2025, January 15). *Internet Traffic from Mobile Devices Stats 2025*. "Nigeria has the highest mobile traffic share at 86.2 %."

Segun, K. (2024). Exploring the impact of citizen journalism on traditional media. *International Journal of Human Resources and Social Science Studies,* 1(3), 63-73.

Smith, M. R., & Marx, L. (1994). *Does Technology Drive History? The Dilemma of Technological Determinism*. MIT Press.

Suntai, D. I., & Targema, T. S. (2018). New Media and Democracy in Nigeria: An Appraisal of the Opportunities and Threats in the Terrain.

TS2 Space (2025, March). *Internet Access in Nigeria: A Comprehensive Overview*. TS2 Space. "Nigeria's rate of ~45 % is above the African continental average…"

Ugo, S. U., Odey, B. E., Odey, H. O., & Abu, P. E. (2023). Impact of digital communication technologies on the Nigerian mass media: Implications and insights into disruptions. *Lwati: A Journal of Contemporary Research*, 20(4). Retrieved from AJOL.

Veblen, T. (1921). *The Engineers and the Price System*. B.W. Huebsch.

Williams, R. (1974). *Television: Technology and Cultural Form*. Fontana.

Yina, M. N. (2020). The Challenges of Digital Technologies for Nigeria. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies,* 32(1), 81- 94. https://doi.org/10.5840/jis2020321/25