Organisation Effectiveness: Determining New Media Choices

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Abstract

This work examined the factors considered in determining new media choices for organisational effectiveness. What is considered as new media is constantly changing, so what is considered new today may become old fashioned in time to come. This means that organisations need to keep up to trends by adopting new media in order to effectively communicate within and outside the organisation. However, new media adoption in organizations is not done haphazardly. For an organisation to bring in new media technologies to be used by its employees, different factors have to be considered such as the benefit that the new media can bring to the organisation; environmental factors; cost of maintenance; the organisation's mode of operation, etc. The factors may vary for different and an organisation has to be cautious to know what will work for them. The benefits of new media to organisations are numerous, new media provides avenue to explore new markets for growth; it increases the capacity of the business; new it improves communication within an organisation; it technologies eases the task of the workers, etc. Organisations need new media to effectively carry on and manage tasks within the organization, to communicate within the organization and to ease the work process. The work recommends that organisations should have contingency plans prepared in case of issues arising in their communication system. Also, organisations need to embark on measures to protect their data by enhancing the security of their online accounts.

Keywords: Organisation, effectiveness, new media, media choices, technology adoption

Introduction

Over the years, there has been a widespread integration of new media into the operations and activities of organisations due to advancement in modern technologies and the resultant of digitalisation. The phenomenon has been recurrent as more recent technologies are being introduced on a regular basis leading to the abandonment of the former technologies and adoption of the more recent ones. Human beings have a tendency to want to use new media technologies as they emerge and this has resulted to the diffusion of technology in different aspects of our lives.

New media has had a great impact on the workforce since various tasks have become more automated. It has had a tremendous influence on virtually every organisation, business and discipline. Today, there is a large dependency on new media in different professions like advertising, public relations, engineering, banking, etc. A lot of organisations have identified new media as needful for growth and productivity and are seriously investing in it. With the current societal trends, new media is inevitable to improve on the diversity of links across organisations (Cilliers, 2013).

Owing to the wave of technological spread and adoption by different organisations in the 21ˢᵗ century, it may be nearly impossible for an organisation to effectively run without the involvement of new media technologies. No matter the size of the organisation, whether big or small, it is pertinent to consider the ways in which adoption of new media can ease the organisation's activities and enhance productivity. However, new media adoption is not done haphazardly. A lot of factors have to be considered before adopting new media in an organisation.

The Meaning of New Media

The new media is also referred to as web 2.0. It refers to a wide variety of Internet enabled communication technologies. New media comprises any media in form of websites, blogs, email, social media networks, music and television streaming services, and virtual and augmented reality (Cote, 2020). New media are computational and they rely on the computer for redistribution. Voithofer (2005) describes the newness of the new media in terms of changes in production due to convergence of technology and media, storage (digitisation and indexing), presentation (in a video display of sorts), and distribution over telecommunication networks. Examples of new media include wikis, online versions of magazines and newspapers, social networking, blogs, virtual worlds and other social media forms.

Any internet-related form of communication can be considered new media ranging from a website or email to mobile phones and streaming apps. Manovich (2002) defines new media as cultural objects that use digital computer technology for distribution and exhibition. The characteristics of new media technologies are evident in the 5'Cs which are: communication, collaboration, community, creativity and convergence (Friedman & Friedman, 2008).

Nowadays, we see that new media serves to supplement the old media, eg. print and online versions of a newspaper. They are used side by side to achieve organisational goals. Castells, (1996) asserts that the Internet's "integration of print, oral and audio visual modalities into a single system promises an impact on society comparable to that of the alphabet" (p. 382), creating new forms of identity and inequality, submerging power in decentered flows, establishing new forms of social organisations.

The thing about new media is that they are constantly changing. What is considered new today may become old fashioned in time to come. This underscores the declaration of Marshall McLuhan that 'the medium is the message'. The technology in use today determines our mode of communication. The technology of the day determines the behaviour of societal members and society by extension. In order words, everything that happens in the society has been revolutionised by the introduction and adoption of new media technologies. Technology then becomes the major determinant of lifestyles and patterns in the society.

The Need for New Media Adoption for Organisational Effectiveness

New media technologies are used in organisations in several ways. Blogs and podcasts are used for public relations purposes. Viral videos especially on social media platforms are useful to stimulate word-of-mouth (i.e. buzz marketing). Online advertising is used to create awareness about an organisation's product or service. Other ways through which new media is used in organisations include wikis for collaboration; creating a collaborative, learning-organisation type of corporate environment (Smith, 2007); social networking and collaboration done within and outside the organisation with consumers (Hathi, 2007); monitoring the blogosphere to collate information about customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction (Gillin, 2007); participating and learning from brand-related social media networking (Murray, 2007); relationship marketing that enhances customer loyalty.

New media technologies enable communication and interactivity on digital platforms and they are inevitable in organisations nowadays. Castells (1996) asserts that the world is entering an information age

in which digital information technology provides material basis for the pervasive expansion of the networking form of organisation in every realm of social structure (p. 468). Most of the organisations in Nigeria have long automated their operations, meaning that they have for a long time employed the use of computer systems to reduce manual work in the course of their operations (Dike, 2016). A lot has been said about new technology adoption affecting human jobs but their importance to organisational productivity far outweighs this assertion. Modern technology reduces the cost of running an organisation as well as production.

New media is very important in an organisation as its digital character allows for producing extra copies of digital products at no marginal cost. Organisations can also connect to a global audience without having to pass through the traditional gatekeepers. New media allows for a range of connectivity, including automation and virtual communication that eases the work process and allows for efficiency and better output.

Any organisation that seeks to optimise output and increase efficiency must move with the technological trends. The technologies of yester years are ever changing and there is a tendency that the technology of today will no longer be in use in years to come, or better still, it may have been improved upon. Not conforming to trends in new media adoption will keep an organisation stuck in the past and this may make them loose opportunities. Organisations therefore need to adopt new media technologies in time for better productivity.

Factors to Consider in New Media Technology Adoption

The availability of new media technology does not necessarily mean that it is the right choice for an organisation. There are a lot of technologies that solve different problems. Determining the type of new media to be adopted by an organisation has to be done with consideration to several factors.

1. **The organisation's mode of operation**

It is important to consider the activities of an organisation and how an organisation operates before deciding on the new media technology to adopt. The function of the new media technology must be such that it will be beneficial to the efficiency of the organisation. The capacity of the members of the organisation to use the new media has to be put into consideration, and any new media technology to be adopted must meet the organisation's goal and strategy to be able to achieve success.

2. **Stakeholders of the organisation must be in alignment with the adoption process**

The interest of both the internal (management and employees) and external (audience, customers, consumers, viewers) stakeholders of an organisation must be taken into consideration for new media technology adoption to be meaningful. The employees of an organisation must be put into consideration before adopting a new technology. The employees have to be trained to use the technology in the first place. In a situation where a lot of them have little knowledge of the way new technology works, it is better to hire the services of a trainer that will assess and train them properly. If the employees are not properly trained on how to use these technologies, they may tend to go back to their old ways of performing tasks thereby rendering the new technologies useless. In the same vein, external stakeholders have to be informed about the new developments that would affect them. It is important that the organisation is communicative about the new strategies adopted.

3. **Cost of Maintenance**

Adopting new media may require spending money to buy the asset, but more importantly, usage of the new media may come at extra cost. Any organisation that wishes to acquire a new media technology must

consider the cost of maintaining the media before making the move to adopt it. Some media technologies may require software upgrade from time to time because technologies keep upgrading as times goes on.

Some of the technologies may require the user to spend money to be able to continue using them. Some forms of new media may also be expensive to maintain. In Nigeria, Internet access is paid for so Internet users need to pay for Internet network subscription from time to time.

4.   Environmental Factors

The geography and ecology of the terrain have to be put into consideration as well. Some technologies may not perform well in harsh weather conditions, while there are those that can withstand it. The organisation will have to make a choice as to which one to operate with.

In more advanced nations, journalists report in harsh weather conditions like rain, or in a stormy area using well suited and weather resistant equipments. They operate with new media technologies that are created to withstand such harsh weather conditions. This way, they are able to get news and content in rainy or stormy weather, or even accuracy in long distance shots for volatile terrains.

5.   Power Supply

The type of technology to be used by an organisation may be determined by the power source that the organisation uses. Some new media technologies can only work when there is a constant supply of power while some can retain power to be used for a few hours even after the power source has been cut off e.g. desktop computers work with power supply but if the power supply is cut off, it automatically goes off, except there is a device to retain power a little longer. On the other hand, laptop computers uses electric power supply to start off, and it can also function properly even when the power source is cut off. Technologies come in different types, functions and capacities, so the organisation will have to decide on the right technology that suits their strategy.

Poor power supply has been an age long issue in Nigeria which has not been fully resolved until today. Most of the organisations in Nigeria have had to depend partly or fully on an alternative source of power to do business. This has been a major challenge because the cost of buying diesel or fuel to power generators will have to be included in their operational cost. An organisation that depends to a large extent on public power supply may face instances when there is power failure.

6.   Benefits that the new media can bring to the organisation

It may not be wise to adopt a new media simply because others are using it. An organisation has to know the benefits that the new media can bring. With the ever increasing online presence in recent times, most organisations now have online presence to keep their organisations trendy and to attract audiences and consumers online. New media technologies are made in different versions and they come in different functions. An organisation has to be sure of the particular technology that is needed to perform a needed function.

These days many new media technologies come in more functions than are being used. Many people do not know the functions of a lot of technologies that they use, making the technology redundant in such areas. It is important that enquiries are made to know the function and capabilities of the technologies before a choice is made as to what type or version of technology to adopt.

7.   Regulatory policies

The government regulatory policies in a region or country have to be respected. An organisation must be sure to obey stipulated laws in a region to be able to function with stability. The regulatory policies in some

areas might be difficult to practice but one can only obey the rules while hoping that the regulatory measures would relax in time. An organisation located in such a place will not opt for an online presence to avoid issues with compliance.

8.   Governance structure of the organisation

Adopting new technologies may require organisational changes and restructuring. Adopting new technology in an organisation may require shifting the already existing structure. Technology adoption has always been linked with staff reduction. This is because one machine can do the job of a number of workers efficiently, thereby rendering some workers redundant in the system. In a lot or private organisations, such workers will be compulsorily dropped since they have been rendered redundant. In such a situation, reducing the number of people in a particular section will cause a change in the way an organisation operates. The organisation may require the supervisory efforts of good management officials to effectively manage the changes that accompany new media technology adoption.

9.   Training approach

Depending on the employees' levels of usage and awareness of digital technologies, the management need to train the employees to be able to use the new media technologies. In organisations where they have been using analogue systems, the organisation needs to ensure that the training process begins early enough so that the employees can quickly adapt to the new changes in operation. It is important to develop a training approach early enough so that the workers would adapt quickly.

10.   Security

There have been a lot of cybercrime lately rendering the Internet platform unsafe. Various new media platforms eg. social media are being used to defraud unsuspecting victims. This is done using false information to lure their victims to give them money. There are also instances of diverting money from one's bank account using the account holder's personal information on some forms of Internet applications. Some organisations' registration platforms require clients to put it their personal details like password, emails, Bank Verification Number and so on. The organisation must be careful to devise ways to secure such personal details. They need to ensure that websites are secure for people to put in their details.

11.   Employing change management consultants

It is beneficial for organisations that wish to make changes in their system of operations to employ the services of change management consultants. Such consultants can oversee and help to organise change in strategies and programmes. They can be useful to determine long and short term strategies for positive changes. Change management consultants provide avenues for organisations to make the most out of opportunities for growth. Consultants can be instrumental to creating and conducting training sessions for e-learning for the various stakeholders of the organisation. They can establish change in organisations by concentrating on worker's development behavioural and culture change through training (Changeboard, 2018). Change management consultants monitor the change process so that the purpose of the process is achieved.

Positive Effect of New Media on Organisational Effectiveness

New media can help an organisation transform positively. The technologies improve on organisational productivity and allows for innovation. The following as some of the ways in which new media technology can benefit the work place for organisational efficiency.

1. New technology improves on an organisation's communication with customers and within an organisation

With the massive audience on the social media and online platforms, organisations have extended their activities to include online communication. This improves on the communication with their customers as well as among their employees. New media has also enabled better communication in organisations with the use of instant messaging, e-mail and social media platforms like Whatsapp, Facebook, etc. A lot of organisations in Nigeria have long automated their operations to include the use of computer systems to reduce the manual work (Dike, 2016). These new communication technologies have impacted and changed the way organisations run their daily activities.

It is common now to send email of documents or to pass on information to a colleague within an organisation of which before now, one would have to walk from one office to another to perform to so. Some organisations now adopt virtual communication such as Skype, Zoom, video conferencing, etc.

2. New media technologies eases the task of the workers

Technology allows for flexibility and reduces the work load and stress level of the employees. Communication technologies allow employees to telecommunicate while working, and allow them to collaborate with each other in sharing files and essential documents (Suleman, 2019). The use of email and telephones for communication enables workers to control the pace of their response and thus it facilitates multitasking.

3. Technology improves efficiency in the work process

These days, workers expect their employers to provide them with the latest technology in innovation that will ease the work process. Using new media in an organisation saves effort, time and increases efficiency and agility. It has the capability to boost efficiency, making workers more productive. Using the latest new media technology can give an organisation competitive advantage. This can go a long way to improve the overall reputation of the brand and enhance its perception among customers.

4. It increases storage capacity

Computers enable organisations to store more information into a central database. Searching for files or documented information in the work place can be hectic and sometimes time consuming. Having a database simplifies information retrieval and better storage for confidential information.

5. Internet technology provides unlimited supply of knowledge

There is no limit to the information that can be gotten from the Internet. The Internet provides avenues for an organisation to embark on research on a variety of topics. It provides a lot of information that can make an organisation to research about the needs of their clients. Online platforms like the social media also provide access to so much information that can be useful to organisations for different purposes. They provide insights that can put an organisation in a position to better deal with its clients. Active use of the social media can enable an organisation to keep an eye on competitors so as to know the areas that they need to improve on.

6. It provides an avenue to explore new markets for growth

A lot of information can be gotten online on ideas for growth so as to extend the organisations' operations and profitability. In this regard, the technology can be used to conduct complex calculations and forecasts with authentic results. The results provide a better picture of management, enabling the organisations to plan strategically. These technologies can assist organisations in their operations, leading to better productivity and growth (Suleman, 2019).

7.   New Media Technology increases the capacity of the business

Adequate use of new media provides a wide opportunity for expansion. One just needs to know how to spot opportunities and use it wisely. Many organisations have expanded their capacity from adopting the right technologies which helps them to achieve numerous tasks. In an organisation where they need to constantly interact with clients, technological innovations have enabled them to attend to more customers than before. The ability to accommodate more information through the computer database is an added advantage.

8.   Mobility and connection advantages

Remote work is becoming increasingly popular with digitalization. Some organisations are becoming flexible to allow remote work, so that their employees can use information technology to connect with their work place from anywhere in the world through virtualization such as in video conferencing and live streaming using the social media applications. For instance, during the period of the Covid-19 lockdown that created the need for less mobility to reduce the spread of the virus, many people had to work from home.

Problems Associated with New Media Technologies

Forwarding emails on collaborative document as an attachment repeatedly at each interaction, to all members of the group is a waste of resources in terms of time, hard drive space, inbox capacity, bandwidth, etc. and it limits the size of the group. There is an increased potential for viruses and other malware that accompany the many forwarding of attachments (Tapscott & Williams, 2006). Information overload is another major problem associated with the Internet and its products. The Internet and social media platforms have the potential to create arenas for more voices and it reduces attention span. Goldhaber (1997) is of the view that information abundance creates attention scarcity. New media may induce anomie and erode social capital by enabling users to retreat into an artificial world (Nie & Erbring, 2000). Also, a breakdown of the communication system can cause multiple issues for the employees which may be harmful to the organisation. Internet users are exposed to cybercrime such as Internet fraud, money laundering, ransomeware, etc. Other wrongs such as stalking and bullying are also common especially on the social media.

Sustaining New Media Usage after the Adoption Process

It is one thing to go through the process of new media adoption, but what happens next after the adoption process? Adopting new media technologies requires that the employees should abandon their former routines and adapt to the new ways of performing tasks. This may be frustrating and there could be resistance in several ways e.g. lack of proficiency in using new media technologies, issues in handling particular aspect of the new media, dogmatic tendencies, etc. These reasons may make some employees to fall back to their former ways of performing tasks. The heads of team and department have a task to ensure that those in their unit concur with the requirements of adopting the new media technology.

The adoption process cannot be said to be fully completed when the new media technology has not been generally accepted by the employees. Training employees to use the new technologies may not be enough to ensure compliance by all of them. If all the employees concerned do not adapt to the use of the acquired new media technologies, it becomes a waste of time and resources and there may lapses in the system of delivery. Adapting to new technology requires commitment especially on the part of the workers. After adoption, employees' adaptation process needs to be closely monitored.

Conclusion

Determining new media choices appropriate for an organisation, however, is done in considerations to several factors which include: the benefit that the new media can bring to the organization; environmental factors; cost of maintenance; the organisation's mode of operation, etc. These factors must be considered so as to make the best choice of new media that will be appropriate, useful and beneficial to an organisation.

New media enhances communication within an organisation; enables the organisation to effectively function and interact in the society; as well as improves on the diversity of links across organisations and within the society. Any organisation that desires to move forward in the contemporary world, must accept new media to enhance its operations and activities within and outside the organisation.

Recommendations

1. Organisations should have contingency plans prepared in case of issues arising in their communication system.
2. Organisations need to embark on measures to protect their data by enhancing the security of their online accounts. For instance, they can encrypt and backup data, use robust firewall and anti-malware software, and invest in cyber security insurance, etc.
3. Organisations should always opt to adopt the newest technologies and teach their employees to adapt to the new methods.
4. Organisations should ensure that when new media are introduced, the employees are adequately trained to be able to use the new media
5. Organisations should consider the interest of all its employees before contemplating on the type of new media to adopt.

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