

Mass Media Convergence through the Ages and the Challenges of Modern Radio Broadcasting Creative Industry

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received: 04 September 2019;

Received in revised form:

28 September 2019;

Accepted: 8 October 2019;

Keywords

Media Convergence,
Mass Communication,
Federal Radio Corporation of
Nigeria (FRCN).

ABSTRACT

This paper takes an apriori look at media convergence through the eyes and recommends that aposteriorily these convergences must continue to avert the death of some media even in our modern challenges of not only mass communication as a whole but broadcasting in particular with a focus on Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN).

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Introduction

Mass Media Convergence denotes the meeting of part and/or utilization of different media towards achieving an objective or a particular goal.

Nigeria creative Industry: Includes Drama arts, Film arts, Television arts, Radio arts, Print Journalism arts, Fine arts, Photographic arts, Advertising arts, Public Relations arts, Design arts, Fashion arts and the New Social Media arts, of Mass Communication Creative Industry.

Challenges of Modern Broadcasting: denotes the dilemma of broadcasting to be or not to be in analogue and digitalization era

The kernel or key or thesis of this discourse is that the history of creative industry in the entire world is one way or the other linked with the ancient Graeco Elizabethan era and even in these era there was convergence of architectural design, fine arts, song arts, masking arts in the creative industry of the proscenium and round theatres of the period.

Even the ancient Asian/Chinese performing arts were not left in the game of media convergence as element of fine arts, facial paintings, masks, stage designs etc can be seen in the total repertoire of their creative industry.

Coming back home, the Professor Adedeji's **Alarinjo Theatre**, Professor Harry Hagher's **Kwaghbir Theatre**, etc (Quoted in Shaibu 2019) can be gleaned:

- Mask arts
- Design arts
- Puppet theatre arts
- Architectural arts
- Facial design arts
- Effects arts
- Painting arts
- etc

We can categorically state therefore, in our context, that when we are talking of Media Convergence we can postulate like Professor Wole Soyinka that "as it was in the beginning, so it is, and ever shall be!"

To use our modern parlance, the beat of Media Convergence must go on, if not some media will die their natural deaths.

A glance at the progressive theory of all Media of Mass Communication in Nigeria will reflect these assertions:

- Newspaper/Print Journalism entry into Nigeria via the Missionary "Iwe Irohim"
- Coming of Radio Broadcasting first via British Broadcasting and subsequently relay stations, re-diffusion, Nigeria Broadcasting Service, Nigeria Broadcasting Corporation, Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria etc.
- The coming of the first television courtesy of Awolowo's Initiative in Africa via western Nigeria Broadcasting Service (WNBS), the Nigeria Television Authority (NTA), State Television Station etc
- The coming of Independent Broadcasting via Radio and Television courtesy of Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida (IBB) initiative in Nigeria.
- The explosion of the New Social media that pumped WhatsApp, LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and other messages into the ever widening Mass Media Communication Spectrum.
- And the beat goes on because the media of Mass Communication in vogue in given society is a product of the Technological development of the age/era in question.

Some Scholars have argued, that though to some extent, and convincingly too that had it not been for Media Convergence in response to the need of change in order not to

be changed out, the following would have happened in Media History:

- The coming of Radio would have signaled the death of Print Media.
- The birth of television would have led to the death of Radio.
- The explosion of the New Social media would have sent jitters or shockwaves into the world of Radio and Television Communication.

Their natural reaction, therefore was either to change or be changed out of relevance – hence the present inculcation of the New Media Communication paradigms into the existing regimentation, rules, regulations and controls of the Conventional Media.

The Implication of all these is for us to be abreast and up to date on the challenges of the imperatives of change in current radio broadcast training Change is making the rules, theories and paradigms of yesterday to look moribund and archaic. Change is a reality in all aspects of our lives. In the area of training generally and broadcast training in particular, there are many areas that beckon for change, if we are to continue to be relevant, refusing change in our broadcast training is like using typewriter solutions to solve present computer problems.

Change realities have made the following to be mandatory.

Imperative of School Curricular Update

We discovered for an example, that the old FRCN Training School Curriculum is as old as the colonial regime that gave birth to it. Our original training curriculum was such that graduates, secondary school and even Primary School Leavers were crammed together to take Basic, Intermediate and Advanced Courses under the same roof. Although this has since changed, this was good for that time but cannot be relevant in today's realities. The reality is, a building must be on a foundation if it must stand. We (the researcher and others) brought in the NBTE for an exploratory survey and they made their input within in limitations of their knowledge of broadcasting. Our multipronged approach is presently geared towards yielding a Curriculum that will reflect modern realities in broadcasting. This has since given birth to Nigeria's Broadcast Academy (NBA).

Transitions and Training Imperatives

We have moved from wired broadcasting to Analogue Broadcasting. And we have equally moved from Analogue to digital Broadcasting. The movement is not complete yet as we are going Satellite with high Information technological base, all these must be reflected in our Curriculum, if training is to be meaningful, functional and compliant to modern challenges. Today, we must think of inculcating “**On line Journalism, Digital Troubleshooting, Audio, Engineering, On Screen/Off Screen reading of News Bulletins, Local and Wide Area Networking, Editing, Reporting**”, to mention but a few. Our present telephone-linked programmes, OBs, News etc. cannot stand the new challenge microwave and satellite links that is the norm in developed broadcasting technology. Even in the areas of sourcing for News and Programmes, we have to move from outmoded methods of monitoring of stations (both local and foreign), leg walk – Journalism and Production towards shooting ourselves into the jet-age of Internet connectivity in a global village that is now our world.

OUR TREND/EVOLUTION SO FAR:

Colonial Regime:

Wired Broadcasting – Chalk and Board Training – Pre – 1960

Military/Civilian Regime:

Analogue Broadcasting – Chalk Board and Rote Training – 1966 – 1983

Military Regime: - Chalk Board and Rote Training – 1983 – 1999

Civilian Regime/Post Military:

Digital Broadcasting – I.T Based Training – 1999 – Date

Civilian Regime:

Satellite – I.T Based Training – After Now to the Future

With the new developments are new training challenges. For example, there has been a transition from tape splicing, cut editing, analogue studio management to digital sound management via audio vaults rooted in deep computer literacy and use of computer for sound mixing digitally. Even in this transition, we have not fully mastered or explored to the maximum the full potentials of audio vault engineering or sound management.

The new V.Sat Satellite Technology, being introduced has its training challenges towards preparedness to brace up with the challenges of the new technology. The new V-Sat Technology is among others, deliver CD quality signals to all National Stations. Experiences in the past is an overemphasis on the technical components of transmission to the detriment of the software components in total approach to I.T based broadcasting of the present.

We may have to look at training in:

1. On-line Journalism
2. On-line Production
3. On-line Engineering Trouble Shooting
4. On-line Digital Studio Management
5. On-line Presentation
6. Local Area Networking (LAN)
7. Wide Area Networking (WAN)
8. Blending E-mail, Internet, and Text Messaging into Presentations, News and programmes Productions, O.B. etc

Duncan Campbell must be echoing our minds when he asked the pertinent question.

**“On-line media may have come of age.
But has On-line Journalism?”**

The challenges of On-line Media in general and On-line Journalism in particular are diverse:

1. A whole world of exploration at our fingertips through Web browsing.
2. On-line News/Programmes Operations.
3. Cost effective way of searching/Collating data through the Web
4. Effective use of mobile Internet Technology such as Wireless Application Protocol (WAP), E-mail Alert, etc.
5. Usage of the “Ocean of Content” available on the Web as we cannot buy attention. We can only make people interested in what we are doing if the content of our programmes/News is engaging, enriching, enlightening, entertaining, educative, and embracing. I call this the **6th Rules of attraction by any media of Public Consumption**. The 6th Rules are:

- Engaging
- Enlightening
- Educating
- Enriching
- Entertaining
- Embracing

6. Embracing the digital revolution and inculcating same in our Programme/News content.

We can take a lifetime without being positioned to comprehend the world of opportunities available on the Internet. Gregg Knauss captures this aptly:

**Twice a year or so, like clockwork,
a new technology or paradigms sweeps over
the face of the Internet, Promising to transform
not only the medium but the very fabric of our lives.**

Today, instead of sending Correspondents all over the place, instead of crude monitoring of radio/TV sets, instead of wired links with NAN (News Agency of Nigeria), instead of leg-walk news/programmes gathering, we can now publish, broadcast and enlighten the world from our bedrooms! Today instead of bogus transmitters and transmitter parts, instead of complex and giant offices, instead of having numerous Site Engineers, bloated manpower base, numerous stringers, plant attendants, aerial riggers, etc. we can now engineer Programmes and News from the narrow confines of a small room or a small OB Van/Car.

The implications of all these are mind boggling to the conventional ways we do our work. Our concern now is how we can harness all these to best effects for our relevance in the ever-changing world of digital technology.

Why must we embrace change in On-line media or Journalism in both and training and execution?

Bob Eggington Postscript (2002) Affirms that:

❖ On-line is a distinctive medium because it is user-driven and multi-faceted.

❖ All elements of the medium should support the offering of the content

❖ The application of core Journalistic principles and processes should inform all stages of On-line content creation and Presentation, from the Digital idea to the finished page or site.

❖ On-line Journalism is a broad church embracing content creation across wide range of types (e.g news and information) and settings (e.g commercial as well as news-based).

The norm now is FM style of broadcasting. And FM broadcasting demands Programmes and News being beamed out in tit bits, capsules and snippets. We can now see that the best place to go for content is in the digital world as digital data is in bits and pieces (digits). The earlier we realize that present digitalization challenges /beckons the media for compliance, the better for us all. If the present challenges in E-commerce are knocking off traditional retail outlets like distributors, black-bag-carrying contractors etc. you can imagine what Internet, On-line Journalism can do to orthodoxy in broadcasting!

If our banks are being ravaged by digital revolutions through On-line banking, you can imagine the ravage that is awaiting us in broadcast trainings, broadcast consumption etc. all the old constraints are evaporating. Old rules are giving way to new ideas that are digitally compliant! The Web is now seen as primary means of communication by many News and Programmes organization. Are we listening and complying?

If we are listening, our training and orientation should knock the following from our airwaves:

➤ Long Monologues

➤ Top down sporadic-needle-approach to public enlightenment.

➤ Talking down on listeners as if we are addressing School Children or hapless listeners.

➤ Non-interactive News and Programmes.

➤ Un-researched News and Programmes

➤ Over-concentration on Public Officers to the detriment of the common interests.

➤ Information-constipation as a result of “**Talk-Talk Programmes**” that are largely propaganda in approach and content.

➤ Stereotype Programmes, News, Music. Effects and Lack innovative and creative News and Programmes

➤ Etc

Change and effective Training must face the challenges of leadership. Leaders, according to Robert Orr must replicate themselves in their subordinates. This is what the Managerial/Leader/Trainer does:

Managerial/Leader/Trainer



Trainees become Trainers
Followers become Leaders



Perceived Success Without

Successful Successive Successors is Failure?

There are Three (3) major challenges, according to Robert Orr, which we need to embrace as Leaders and Trainers that are relevant to our changing times:

Challenge No.1:

Selection: To select people for certain positions or responsibilities: we need to match personalities, talents, skills, abilities and experiences with the situation.

Challenge No.2:

Development: People need to develop their own God-given talents and abilities. God did not give spiritual gifts for people to bury. A Leader/Trainer must ensure that people have the opportunity to be good stewards of their talents and abilities and to develop their potentials.

Challenges No.3:

Enablement: A Leader/Trainer must enable and equip people to utilize their abilities and skills and then turn them into helpers of others to develop and use their gifts and talents as well.

These model, as you can see destroys one of the many age-long dictum by mediocres in our system that “**broadcasters are born not made**” Talents, skills etc. not selected, developed and enabled will lie dormant. Like many dreams and aspirations buried in our numerous graveyards and cemeteries dotted all over our land!

Let us now for once in our lives begin to agree with great scholars in leadership and training that Leaders and Trainers are:

(1) **Made** and they (2) **Learn** how to (3) **Set direction** (4) **Create Strategy** (5) **Launch Processes** and (6) **initiate Change**. They (7) **Create a Vision** of the future and (8) **Communicate it (Transmission)** frequently, clearly and convincingly. They (9) **Make new Leaders/Trainers** of every level of the organization. They (10) **also reward even small successes**. They (11) **Nurture Leadership Potentials** in others and (12) **help them achieve** organizational and personal goals. (13) they **Energize** all those involved in the organization to overcome the obstacles that block forward movement. They (14) **Understand** that although both

management and leadership are both necessary there is a great lack of leadership.

Let us now learn to agree with Benjamin Franklin:

“We constantly change the world, even by our inactions, Therefore, let us change it responsibility”.

We can only do this by daring to be different in our present mass hysteria of “siddon look”. “This is not how we have been doing it”, over-emphasis on experience to the detriment of qualification, over-emphasis on qualification to the detriment of experience, top-down lording of our narrow-demented-views on hapless subordinates, victimizations, dethroning of excellence, promotion of mediocrity and many more in the public and private sectors of our economy.

The grand norm empowering FRCN Training School to embark on broadcast training can be found under the foundation of the Corporation in Decree No.8, of 1st April 1978 and the Amended Decree.

It states in section C that the whole purpose of FRCN and by implication, Training School is to:

Ensure the establishment and maintenance of high Standards and promote the efficient operation of the entire Federal Radio Broadcasting System in accordance with National Policy.

Section (L) in addition stipulates:

Order functions as:

To provide facilities for training and advancing the skills of persons employed in Broadcasting Services and for enhancing the efficiency of the equipment used in its services including provision by the Corporation or by others on its behalf of facilities for training education and research...

By implication, the Decree empowering broadcasters to be leaders in training creates the basis for:

- * Physical structures including Lecture Theatres, Auditorium, Classrooms, Language Laboratory, Engineering Laboratory, Training Studio etc. that Are compliant to modern teaching and research.
- * Transport logistics that facilitates movement of teachers and participants.
- * Conducive hostel environment with refectories or dinning hall or cafeteria for feeding participants.
- * Teaching Allowances that will make Lecturers put in their best in contributing to professional knowledge especially in radio broadcast training.
- * Effective Library back-up (with e-library facilities) that can qualify to be the intellectual data bank of the training Institutions.
- * Creating a Website where we can make our Resources, Services and Products available to the global community
- * Etc.

We can go on and on. But the more we go on, the more we see that the present legacy of adhoc facilities for the foremost radio broadcast training Institution in our sub-region does not allow it to assume her pride of place as a center of excellence for broadcast training.

The pace setting standards must be seen in:

- Drama Programmes
- Feature Programmes
- Documentary Programmes
- Women and Children Programmes
- Educational Programmes
- Environmental Programmes
- Health Programmes

- Political Programmes
- Economic Programmes
- Scientific Programmes
- Historical Programmes
- Etc

Part of the present problems in FRCN Training School is in the area of Curriculum Development. The involvement of NBTE, though in our journey towards a near perfect Curriculum has indicated lately that the limited-straight-jacketed NBTE towards only Polytechnic accreditation cannot lead broadcast streaming to the Canaan of Curriculum development journey. There is a need to look widely without losing focus. The focus is a purely professional broadcast training rooted in a solid intellectual base. It is not, and should not be another exercise in mainstreaming into straight jacketed, Certificate Churning Programme

There is a need to look forward to a curriculum of the future that is rich in content that will include most of the following:

- ✚ On-line Journalism Courses
- ✚ On-line Production Courses
- ✚ Broadcast Technology/IT Courses
- ✚ Broadcast Management and Leadership Training/Courses
- ✚ New Approaches/Best Practices in Coverages, Reporting and Editing/Music
- ✚ Creative Thinking/Writing Course
- ✚ Website Design/Production Courses
- ✚ Writing for the Internet Courses
- ✚ On-line Workshop Course
- ✚ Creative Packaging Courses
- ✚ Techniques of Interactive News and Production Courses
- ✚ Training-the-trainer Courses
- ✚ Digital Editing Courses
- ✚ Broadcasting Accounting, Auditing Courses
- ✚ Satellite Broadcasting Courses
- ✚ Going Digital Courses
- ✚ Etc

In addition to present routine course contents in:

- Production Courses
- Presentation Courses
- Digital Studio Management Course
- Journalism Courses
- Broadcast Engineering Courses
- Computer Course
- General Studies Courses

That have themselves been undergoing structural adjustments in the Change Project Experiences. It should be noted that all these have no antecedents in our developing economy.

The more the looking forward to posting courses on the Internet so that we can break away or complement the present promotions through brochures, prospectus, radio, TV, Newspaper and other promotions etc.

Orr (1994) thesis that the whole purpose of training is to produce a change in knowledge, improved skills, attitude, behavior and ones own ability to learn is relevant here.

A leader is a change-the-student-agent! We may need to know the learning process by William Authur Ward:

The mediocre teacher tells:

The good teacher explains:

The superior teacher demonstrates;

The great teacher inspires.

The focus in FRCN Training School should be to bequeath legacies that believe and reflect the ideals of

effective teaching and training. The aspiration clearly is to build succession by grooming the young ones to be positioned to carry on the business of broadcasting in a complex and-an-ever-changing-world. As we do this, we know that:

“An effective teacher respects the individually of each person in understanding that everybody learns through his or her own perceptions”

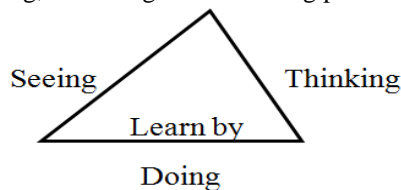
W.E. McNeil captures the white essence of learning in a training experience:

**Do not ask students to learn facts
But teach them to think**

“Learner enables the student to change,” he continues, “because her or she is stimulated to:”

- Know and made aware of New knowledge, seeing new insight, information, concepts.
- Understand, perceive the value, evaluate and think through the meaning and significance of the new information.

Do-act-on, use and apply the knowledge that is understood. The following illustrates the relationship of seeing, thinking, and doing in the learning process:



The learner is indeed the measure of the success of the Teacher!

The whole essence of training is people development. In our case, the FRCN Training School has been in the business of developing people to keep the flag of broadcasting flying as years roll on.

This must be done within the paradigm/framework of the ever-changing world and ever changing technologies of our world. Here in lies the relevance of our radio broadcast training in an ever-changing World.

WHAT NEXT? RECOMMENDATIONS

Shaibu et al (as FRCN Coordinator in FRCN/NTA/BBC Change workshop) recommends in their o conclusion, a visionary view of the future from retrospective experience. It is along this lime of thought that the following are proposed:

1. Synergy: This is the vision of the present Minister of Information and Recommendation of BBC/FRCN/NTA Change Project. Here we have to move away from emotions and Military mentality of job-for-the-boys that has led to series of duplication in our socio-political set up. We are recommending synergy of broadcast trainings in a common Curriculum

2. Broadcast Academy: A situation where FRCN is having its Training, VON having its Training Institution, for NTA, Independent Station etc. is not good enough. We are recommending a formidable Broadcast Academy with Campuses in strategic locations or two (2) Campuses i.e. Radio Academy Campus, and TV Academy Campus.

3. Curriculum Development: There is an urgent need now for all stakeholders to call for a common Curriculum for Radio training and a common one for TV training. To this effect, a National Curriculum Development Workshop can be summoned by the Hon. Minister for us to present a common formidable frontier of Professional Broadcast Training. If we do not do that now we will be caught napping as SABC is daily pulling the rug from our feet.

4. Strategic Physical Infrastructures Development for the Broadcast Academy: Our present sporadic, isolated approaches hardly project a good planning image for a giant country like our Country. We need an outstanding Academy that is a professional Broadcast tower of Academic and Professional Excellence.

5. Accreditation of Broadcast Training in Nigeria: Over the years, there is a hidden and queer definition of professionalism to deprive broadcasters of the academic base and intellectual backing that is the norm of all practices. The time has come to seek a proper definition accreditation of broadcast training Programmes not from conventional universities or professional conventional Accrediting Agencies that dot our horizon because they do not have the basis for pure Broadcast Accreditation. This is my challenge to all broadcasters and this challenge is borne out of experience.

6. Making Curriculum Review a Regular Exercise: This has to be, because technology and change are making regimentation look archaic, outmoded and atavistic.

For example, on a daily basis the technological world and their appliances or gadgets are daily changing and making usage and application theories irrelevant. The knowledge of yesterday will become irrelevant today except it is updated. Our age-old dictum “**this is not the way we have been doing**” will sound stone age to our children and children’s children except we change and brace up with the realities of our time.

7. Making all Trainings Relevant to our society: Our training approaches hitherto is the daily charming out of graduates from our universities, polytechnics with all form of qualifications but they cannot face the challenges of self-employment, innovation, creativity and making their knowledge and learning relevant to society. I am to not saying this as an ally to the mediocre in our land that ridicule learning and certificates. The reality now is, those with these certificates are better positioned to adapt, readapt and change according to the dictates of our time. Watch carefully the regimented people in our land, and you will discover that these are half-baked uncertificated people in our land. When they are certificated, and yet regimented, you will observe that they earn their certificates in the afternoon or evening of their lives time, when dry fishes can no longer be bent.

**A little learning is a dangerous thing,
Drink deep.....!**

When there is a convenient marriage of academic and experience, professionalism becomes real. It can never be either one of the above without the other.

8. Manpower and Capacity Building: We have come to an era where we have learnt through bitter experiences that putting square pegs in round holes cannot lead us to our promised land of excellence. This is a cross-cultural, historical, economic and political fact. Our kit and kin administration, administration of religious bigotry and ethnic plactions cannot and will not yield the dividends that we are terribly in dire need of today. We need the best to impact the best for us to continue the legacy of professional broadcasting for our generation and generations yet unborn.

These are the imperatives of convergence/change for us to move forward and for effective broadcast service delivery to all our numerous listeners. This cannot be done without Training.

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