

GHANA INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM

USAGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR NEWS GATHERING BY JOURNALISTS  
AT GRAPHIC COMMUNICATIONS GROUP LIMITED (GCGL)

ENOCH DARFAH FRIMPONG  
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MANAGEMENT

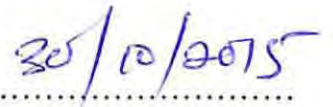
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## DECLARATION

I declare that, except for references to other people's work which have been duly acknowledged, this dissertation is a result of my own research conducted at the School of Graduate Studies and Research (SoGSaR), Ghana Institute of Journalism under the supervision of Mr Yaw Odame Gyau.



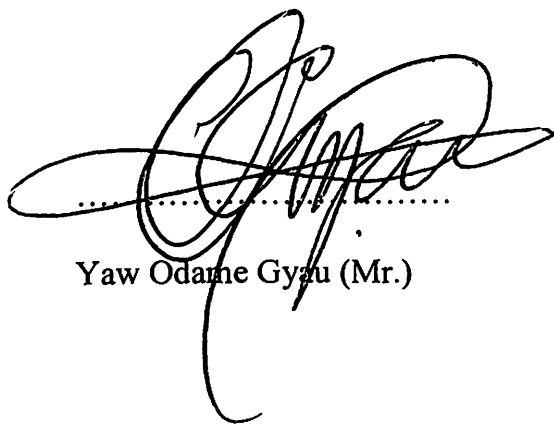
.....  
Enoch Darfah Frimpong  
(Student)



.....  
Date

## CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this dissertation was supervised in accordance with the laid down procedures by the Ghana Institute of Journalism.



.....  
Yaw Odame Gyau (Mr.)

.....  
30/10/2015.

Date

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to the Almighty God for His Grace and Divine Mercy and consistently been my help than I ever asked for or thought of.

I also dedicate it to my wife, Naa Adorkor Darfah Frimpong, my mother, Mary Owusu Bonsu, brother Richmond Darfah Mensah, Ama Pokua and all my siblings for their love, sacrifice and constant support throughout the years.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
DECLARATION.....	i
CERTIFICATION .....	ii
DEDICATION.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	v
LIST OF FIGURES .....	vii
LIST OF TABLES .....	viii
ABSTRACT.....	ix
CHAPTER ONE.....	1
INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.0 Background to the study.....	1
1.0.1 New media in Africa .....	6
1.0.2 New media in Ghana .....	10
1.0.3 Background of Graphic Comm. Group Ltd .....	13
1.1 Statement of the problem.....	14
1.2 Research objectives .....	16
1.3 Research questions .....	17
1.4 Significance and Justification .....	17
1.5 Organisation of the study .....	18
1.6 Operational Definitions .....	18
CHAPTER TWO .....	20
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE .....	20
2.0 Introduction .....	20
2.1 Theoretical Framework .....	20
2.2 Gatekeeping .....	21
2.2 Diffusion of Innovation.....	25
2.3 Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) .....	27
2.4 Review of related literature.....	29
2.5.1 Old versus new media (Social media) .....	29
• Differences between Web 2.0 and Web 1.0 .....	30
• Social media, Web 2.0 and the news .....	32
• Changing media consumption .....	36
• The fifth estate .....	39
• Citizen journalists .....	40
• Social media and the practice of journalism .....	42
CHAPTER THREE .....	53
METHODOLOGY .....	53
3.0 Research Design .....	53

3.0.1 Quantitative Research design .....	53
3.1 Population .....	55
3.2 Sampling procedure.....	56
3.2.1 Selection of Survey Respondents .....	57
3.3 Data collection procedure .....	57
3.4 Instrument .....	58
3.5 Data analysis .....	58
CHAPTER FOUR .....	59
FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS .....	59
4.0 Introduction .....	59
4.1 Presentation of Findings.....	59
4.2 Survey .....	60
4.2.1 Demographics .....	60
4.2.2 Internet usage .....	64
4.2.3 Social media usage .....	66
4.2.4 Social media for sourcing and publishing news stories .....	70
4.2.5 Credibility of social media as a news source .....	73
4.2.6 Effects of social media .....	74
4.2.7 Employers attitude to social media .....	79
CHAPTER FIVE.....	82
DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	82
5.0 Introduction .....	82
5.1 Summary of main findings .....	82
5.1.1 Summary of the Problem Sstatement.....	83
5.1.2 Summary of the objectives.....	83
5.1.3 Actual findings .....	84
5.2 DISCUSSION .....	85
5.2.1 Actual findings and Theoretical framework .....	90
5.2.2 Implications .....	93
5.3 Conclusion .....	95
5.4 Limitations .....	96
5.5 Recommendations .....	96
REFERENCES.....	
APPENDIX.....	

## LIST OF FIGURES

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
Figure 1: Differences between Web 2.0 and Web 1.0 .....	30
Figure 2: How popular is google.com? .....	38
Figure 3: How popular is Facebook.com? .....	38
Figure 4: The Modern Journalist .....	47
Figure 5: Gender distribution .....	60
Figure 6: Age distribution .....	61
Figure 7: Distribution of respondents according to academic qualifications .	62
Figure 8: How long have you been practicing as a journalist .....	63
Figure 9: How do you access online material .....	64
Figure 10: Which search engines do you use to research news story ideas ..	66
Figure 11: How long have you been using social media .....	67
Figure 12: Which one of these social media platforms do you use very often..	69
Figure 13: Why do you use social media.....	70
Figure 14: Which of the following do you trust as a source of news	
Gathering .....	73
Figure 15: That social media improves news gathering and news reporting ....	74
Figure 16: That social media disrupts newsroom routines .....	75
Figure 17: That social media negatively affects journalistic standards .....	76
Figure 18: That social media has affected gatekeeping .....	77
Figure 19: That social media in anyway influences daily journalistic practice...78	
Figure 20: Management support in use of social media .....	79

## LIST OF TABLES

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
Table 1: What do you often do online.....	65
Table 2: Which social media platforms do you use .....	68
Table 3: How often do you follow up or report on a story you saw on social media .....	71
Table 4: How often do you publish materials on social media.....	72
Table 5: How often are your stories sourced by or shared by others on social media .....	73

## **ABSTRACT**

The study's aim was to determine the usage of social media for newsgathering by journalists at Graphic Communications Group Limited (GCGL). It was designed using the survey method to investigate the influence of social media in the newsroom as well as the organization's attitude towards social media use in line with global trends where social media over the last ten years has seen a significant influence on the way in which news is reported and digested by all parties within journalism, with traditional journalists taking on a developed role utilising social media as both a way to deliver and to promote their work. The findings revealed that majority journalists at Graphic (94.3%) and their organization were largely open to using social media as part of their news processes however half of them (57.9%) thinks that social media negatively affects journalistic standards noting that social media had to an extent impacted on the way they go about their work. The majority (82.6%) were also of the opinion that social media had affected gatekeeping.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.0 Background to the study**

Information Communication Technologies (ICT) have transformed the world in all aspects of life, its potential for reducing manual operations in fostering the growth in the media has increased rapidly, Dugo (2008). It has made it convenient for journalists to gather information, process and publish it with sophisticated equipment which enables information to go viral immediately they are published. The arrival of new ICTs has brought forth a set of opportunities and challenges for conventional media, Garrison (1996). It has ushered in an era of new media signaling limitless possibilities for ordinary citizens to engage in some form of journalism – citizen journalism.

Barksdale & Park 2007 suggests that the advent and growth of the Internet has opened opportunities for communication that never existed before and that the practice of writing to pen pals in other countries around the world has been popular for decades but seems old-fashioned in an era where global communication occurs every day. Now, modern technological advancements like email may seem outdated to some. Instant messaging, video conferencing, cellular phones and the like have advanced the ease of communication to levels never before seen (Katz 2007).

Social networking sites (SNS) like Facebook allow users from all over the world to remain in contact and communicate thereby creating a global village through which people can communicate with others across the world on regular basis as if they were living next door.

ICTs are spoken of in particular context such as in education, health care or libraries and mass media. In this context the study will try to determine the usefulness of ICTs to media which has culminated in what is known as new media or social media especially in the field of newspaper journalism and news gathering.

Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) defines social media as a term used to describe the type of media that is based on conversation and interaction between people online. It is a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content. Social media according to Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) allow people to create, share or exchange information, ideas, and pictures or videos in virtual communities and networks.

Kietzmann et al (2011) explains that social media depend on mobile and web-based technologies to create highly interactive platforms through which individuals and communities share, co-create, discuss, and modify user-generated content. They introduce substantial and pervasive changes to communication between businesses, organizations, communities, and individuals.

For almost two decades, the web has changed the world and revolutionized how information is stored, published, searched and consumed. The ripple effect has spread so wide that it impacts not just businesses and industries but crosses over into politics, medicine, media and breaches geographical locations, cultural boundaries and ultimately, affects people's day to day lives.

The great wave of web innovation since Google in 1998 has been in social media. Social media is about networking and communicating through text, video, blogs, pictures, status updates on sites such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. What makes social media of particular interest to journalism is how it has become influential as a communication, news gathering and breaking tool.

ICTs have always been on the forefront of newsgathering and the journalistic process. The presence of new media and the Internet in particular, has posed a challenge to conventional media, especially print newspaper (Domingo & Heinone 2008). Analysts in industrial organizations and businesses are of the view that the U.S. newspaper industry is suffering through what could be its worst financial crisis since the Great Depression (Barthelemy et al., 2011). The new media have also affected the way newspapers get and circulate their news. Since 1999, almost 90 per cent of daily newspapers in the United States have been actively using online technologies to search for articles and most of them also create their own news websites to reach new markets, Garrison (2001).

Kirchhoff (2009) observes that advertising revenues are reducing due to the severe economic downturn, while readership habits are changing as consumers

turn to the Internet for free news and information. Some major newspaper chains are burdened by heavy debt loads. As in the past, major newspapers have declared bankruptcy as several big city papers shut down, lay off reporters and editors, impose pay reductions, cut the size of the physical newspaper, or turn to Web-only publication.

However, the digital and audio-visual innovations are contributing to how journalists go about their work and reason. Newsgathering and diffusion technologies are fundamental prerequisites to modern journalism (Emery & Emery 1996). From the penny press in the United States, television, radio, wire services and satellite communications technology have continually transformed how the media have produced and communicated content. Yet these technologies have not by themselves redefined what it means to be a journalist, in the professional sense, Lasorsa, Lewis & Holton (2011).

Many traditional and non-traditional media outlets report and comment on how the Internet and social media, especially social networking, have begun to seriously affect news organizations and how they operate. Traditional news organizations have set out an agenda to become more engaged, they are including live blogs of events on their websites, incorporating amateur video into their feeds and encouraging user comments and feedback in formal and informal ways, (Knight & Cook 2013). Lately social media for instance has become a part of news process with all big news organizations looking to tap into its newsgathering potential as a new tool to engage the audience and also distribute the news. Networks like the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Aljazeera, Skynews

and Cable News Network (CNN) often stream live activity from their social media accounts. The influence of social media has led western news organizations like the New York Times, Reuters, Associated Press and BBC in recent times to adopt written guidelines on how their journalists use social media in newsrooms ([www.socialmedia.biz](http://www.socialmedia.biz)).

The 2011 social journalism study in the United Kingdom (UK) by Cision and the Canterbury Christ Church University advocates that social media has become part of the journalist tool kit. Despite some journalists in the UK expressing concern about the implications for the quality of their work when they use social media, its usage is now a standard practice for UK journalists (Cision 2011). The Cision survey showed that 97 per cent of UK journalists regularly use social media as part of a mix of channels used to source, verify, monitor and publish work.

Social Media is undoubtedly pushing traditional media organizations to change some aspects of their operations especially in the aftermath of social agitations like the Arab Spring where protests were organised for the removal of governments in some North African countries like Egypt, Tunisia, Libya and Occupy Flagstaff House where protests were organised through social media against economic hardships in Ghana. In the recent US, Ghana and Nigeria elections in 2012 and 2015 respectively, social media played a role in sending out information. Sports journalists are now live tweeting from sporting events like FIFA World Cup, the Confederations Cup, the Olympics and the European Football Champions League from their personal and organizational Twitter accounts. International and local disasters such as the London bombings, typhoon

in the Philippines, the Haiti earthquake and the collapse of the Melcom building at Achimota in Accra in November 2012 and the recent June 3, 2015 floods in Accra generated news on social media. In the midst of these events journalists did not only inform the audience of these unfolding events but were also informed by the audience through postings on social media. This is observed especially on Aljazeera with the programme, The Stream where viewers around the globe are able to contribute to discussions via Skype, Twitter or Facebook and on the BBC with Have Your Say on Facebook and Twitter and the CNN's iReport where followers are able to publish videos, audios and texts of unfolding events at the same time as the network provides up to the minute update of unfolding events. The Daily Graphic newspaper in Ghana since June 2013 has been publishing "Your Voice" which are comments from its fans on Facebook. The newspaper allows its fans to express their opinions and publishes it on its Editorial page.

The impact of social media on journalists is also influencing how journalists rate the access of their stories online. The number of views, comments, likes and re-tweets a story receives on social media platforms in the United States has become a popular measure of a journalist's success (Oriella Digital Journalism Study, 2012).

### **1.0.1 New media in Africa**

Banda (2010) notes in his exploratory study of citizen journalism and democracy in Africa that the 1990s saw the collapse of state socialism and the consolidation

of capitalism worldwide, marked by a dramatic intensification of public awareness of democracy. It was evident in the way most African systems of government changed from authoritarian to liberal forms of democracy. This seems to agree with those who place the media in Africa in what they call the two waves of democracy. The first wave refers to the colonial period which sees the African nationalist struggles for independence from colonial rule as an agenda for democratization. This initial wave was effaced soon after independence, giving way to a second wave of post colonialism Hyden & Okigbo (2002). Indeed some scholars refer to this process as Africa's liberation to underscore the betrayed hopes surrounding the liberation from colonial rule in the 1950s and 1960s Diamond & Plattner (1999), and the renewed hope for democratic renaissance or 're-democratization' on the African continent.

The growth of new media platforms has been dependent on the growth of communication technology, most importantly broadband and mobile Internet. In year 2000 Africa had about 15 million mobile subscriptions. By the end of 2010 there were over 500 million users (Standard Bank Africa Macro Insight and Strategy Report, 2012). Between 2000 and 2011 Internet penetration on the continent grew by 2,527 per cent compared to a world average of 480 per cent. It is believed that by 2015 Africa will add an extra 300 million Internet subscribers making a total of 800 million, more than twice that of the United States (Standard Bank Africa Macro Insight and Strategy Report, 2012). This number is still a fraction of the continent's population, which currently stands at over one billion. According to a UN report, rarely has anyone adopted mobile phones faster with

regards to the way Africa took the lead in the global shift from fixed to mobile phones (UN Africa renewal magazine, 2010). Already, Nigeria is the world's 10<sup>th</sup> largest mobile market with over 90 million mobile subscribers.

In the process of this rapid expansion in communication Africans have quickly caught on to social media. This development has been attributed particularly to the growth of mobile communications and its apparent utility for both the poor and middle classes (Patterson, 2013). New media is growing on the continent, 27 per cent of African Internet users are believed to have Facebook accounts (Standard Bank Africa Macro Insight and Strategy Report 2012). The number of African Facebook users jumped up from 17 million in 2010 to 32 million users by the end of 2012, which represents over 15 per cent of the continent's online population (Standard Bank Africa Macro Insight and Strategy Report, 2012). According to statisticsbrain.com, there were about 51million Facebook users in Africa as of June 24, 2013. Other social networking websites, Twitter and YouTube, Google plus and LinkedIn, rank among some of the most visited websites across Africa.

The power of social media tools on the African continent over the last few years cannot be disregarded and that the series of revolutions that took place in some northern African and Arab countries dubbed the 'Arab Spring' which began on social media in Tunisia in 2010 resulted in the fall of longtime presidents like Egypt's Hosni Mubarak and Libya's Muammar Al Qadhafi. Social media during this period was largely credited with giving a voice to the people even in the face of government crackdown on communication systems. The power of mobile

devices and new media tools and applications like WhatsApp, Facebook and Twitter was quite evident in these situations. The restricted access of traditional media by these governments led to the rise of citizen journalism and social media becoming an important news source. Protesters uploaded raw footage, photos and messages of chaos using Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. These videos became credible sources of news, which were received by audiences worldwide (Ali and Fahmy, 2013). Indeed the 2011 Egyptian protests were often referred to as the 'Facebook revolution.' Ali and Fahmy conclude that is the case of the uprising in Iran, Egypt and Libya, the work of citizen journalists provided a powerful source of information for traditional media who picked stories that fitted their organizations' routines.

Similarly Nigeria, Kenya and Zimbabwe have also experienced a proliferation of social media in the run up to general elections. In Zimbabwe for instance blogs have been quite important in addition to other new media platforms (Moyo 2009). He acknowledges that these various blogs provided information and discussion often absent in mainstream media served as a parallel market of information to mainstream media. According to Moyo, mainstream media often tap into citizen journalism as a source of credible news source since it often serves a testimony of citizens' accounts of events, which was particularly evident during the 2008 elections.

## **1.0.2 New media in Ghana**

In Ghana, discussions on new media technologies leading socioeconomic development are ongoing. There is an expressed political desire not only to facilitate human development via information and communication technologies (ICTs), but also to become the digital technology hub of the West African region (Sey 2011). Ghana's ICT for Accelerated Development Policy states its objective "to accelerate Ghana's socio-economic development process towards the realization of the vision to transform Ghana into a high income economy and society that is predominantly information-rich and knowledge based within the next two to three decades or less" (Ghana ICT4AD Policy, 2003).

A fixed-telephone subscription per 100 inhabitants in Ghana as of 2013 was equal to one and a Mobile-cellular subscription per 100 inhabitants was equal to 108.2 (ITU 2013). Similarly a Fixed (wired)-broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants is 0.3, a Mobile-broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants is 39.9, Households with a computer is 36.6 per cent, that of Households with Internet access at home is 31.8 per cent and Individuals using the Internet is 12.3 per cent (ITU 2013).

According to the Measuring the Information Society 2014 Report by ITU, Internet usage is on the increase and that there was an improvement in ICT Development Index measurement. Ghana ranked 113th out of 155 countries in 2013, an improvement from 2012's 115th, 2011's 117th and 2010's 121st positions. The

ICT Development Index (IDI) was 3.46 in 2013 as against 3.29 in 2012. (ITU 2014)

Ghana's Mobile Voice subscriber base increased from May's 2015 figure of 31,961,602 to end June 2015 with 32,363,111. The penetration rate for the month under review was 119.41 percent (NCA June 2015). This portrays a growth of broadband and mobile Internet.

Ghana has over 5,171,993 Internet users with a population of about 26 million as of December 31, 2014. Internet penetration is pegged at 20.1 per cent with 1,630,420 Facebook subscribers making it the most visited website in Ghana ([internetworldstats.com](http://internetworldstats.com)).

The level of new media technology use among the general Ghanaian population is, however, limited by the sparseness of the existing telecommunications infrastructure, although significant strides have been made in recent years fueled by industry deregulation and restructuring (Sey 2011).

Mobile phones' smart consumption for connectivity, user resourcefulness in getting around budgetary limitations is evident in the appropriation of mobile phone technology and a reflection of mobile phone subscriber numbers even taking into account the distortion in statistics resulting from multiple SIM card ownership (Sey 2008; James & Versteeg 2007, Sutherland 2009). Not surprisingly, among new media technologies in Ghana, mobile phones have received the most attention in recent times from researchers and journalists due to

the innovative ways in which users are adapting this particular technology to their everyday needs.

These services allow journalists to source, edit, publish and receive comments almost instantaneously while on location.

A number of media houses have integrated social media platforms into their news cycle. Organisations like Citi FM, Viasat1, TV3, Joy FM, Daily Guide, Daily Graphic, Graphic Business, Business and Financial Times have been engaging their audience on Facebook and Twitter. They often publish and broadcast comments and suggestions from their social media fans. In some instances news anchors urge audiences in locations where news stories are unfolding to send updates. The Daily Graphic newspaper normally asks its fans on facebook to submit their comments, which is published on the Editorial page. Conversations start through television and radio phone-in sessions and then move online after these programmes are off air. This allows journalists to engage audience all day. During the Supreme Court hearing of the election petition in 2013, social media became an important platform for discussion among citizens and the media. Those who could not watch the live proceedings on television either went online to news sites or onto social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter. These instantly became important resources not only for updating and informing the public on proceedings but also educating them on the various processes and language used in court. When Ghanaian and BBC World news anchor Komla Dumor died in January 2014, it was on social media platforms such as Facebook where people started discussing the news before traditional media broadcasted the news. Again

when Ghana President John Evans Atta Mills died in 2012, it was on social media that people started talking about the death before traditional broadcasted the news. Many well-known Ghanaian journalists and media personalities have their own Facebook and Twitter pages currently. Broadcast personalities like Africa's best award winning DJ Black, also known as Kwadwo Ampofo, a disc jockey at Joy FM, Bernard Avle (host of CitiFM's breakfast show), Sports journalist, Gary Al Smith of Joy Sports and Investigative journalist Anas Aremeyaw Anas are among the many Ghanaian media personalities now on Facebook and Twitter. Anchors often read posts from their Twitter handle or their station's Facebook page during broadcasts to make it possible for listeners to participate in the discussions via social media. The Daily Graphic newspaper has been asking its Facebook fans to post comments on particular subjects which are published on the Editorial page alongside the editorial of the newspaper. Currently networks like TV3, Joy FM, Citi FM, Starr FM, often stream live activity from their social media accounts.

### **1.0.3 Background of Graphic Communications Group Limited (GCGL)**

The Graphic Communications Group Limited (GCGL) is the leading and largest newspaper publishing and printing company in Ghana. It is a state owned company that publishes six different newspapers, The Daily Graphic, The Mirror, Graphic Business, Graphic Sports, Junior Graphic and Graphic Showbiz. Its flagship, the Daily Graphic has the largest circulation of between 80,000 and 100,000 copies a day. The newspaper covers politics, business and finance, sports,

education, development, the environment, social and international affairs. The Daily Graphic is the GCGL's premier newspaper published since October 2, 1950. (Graphic Communications Group Company profile).

The GCGL, through its newspapers, aims at improving lives through information and knowledge. It seeks to do this by achieving leadership in disseminating high quality information and other products. It was established in 1950 as the West Africa Graphic Limited by the Daily Mirror Group of newspapers in the United Kingdom headed by Cecil King. The company has an online news portal, Graphic Online ([www.graphic.com.gh](http://www.graphic.com.gh)) which reproduces articles published in the various newspapers printed by the GCGL online as well as publishes breaking news and other news stories which may not find space in the newspapers. The GCGL employs about 100 journalists and it is this that has attracted the researcher's attention to look at the present situation of the newspaper vis-à-vis. the use of social media by print journalists.

### **1.1 Statement of the problem**

Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and the list of social media tools could probably run on for paragraphs. Today's technology changes so rapidly that many industries, including corporations and news media, can barely keep up. Rosenstiel and Mitchel (2012) observed that Facebook and Twitter have become pathways to news and social media has become a popular tool that continues to redefine the way we connect, interact and share information. In the traditional world,

newspapers, corporations, governments, or other types of leading organizations simply had to give out information, and people would consume it by reading or looking at it. But this tried and true method has started to transform. Simply making information available is not enough for today's audiences. Today's audiences expect to be able to choose what they read, and most believe they should be able to contribute content and opinions, too. (Newman 2009) This shift, sometimes called the social media revolution, is not the death of journalism as has been said by some scholars. Rather it is like the birth of a democratic movement that emphasizes some of journalism's key factors: transparency, honesty, and giving a voice to the person who doesn't have one (Newman 2009).

Despite the initial misgivings about the credibility of the information dissemination on social media, mainstream journalists have gradually started to adopt these media as professional tools Jordaan (2013). Cision (2015) and Oriella PR (2013) reports indicate a growing trend towards journalists' use of social media. Most of this research has been carried out in United States of America (USA) and Europe. Within the African context very little investigations have been done, although as pointed out earlier, there are signs news organizations are integrating social media in their work. According to Atton and Mabweazara (2011) mainstream journalists in Africa are taking advantage of new ways to practice the profession but the move lacks theoretical and empirical grounding.

The question remains as to the extent to which social media was influencing practice of journalism in Africa and in Ghana in particular. This study tends to investigate how newspaper journalists at Graphic Communications Group Limited

(GCGL) are using new media tools in news gathering and how these tools are impacting on their work, their organization as well as their organization's posture on social media use.

## **1.2 Research objectives**

The potential of new media tools fostering growth in the mainstream media has grown rapidly. The Internet has fast become one of the most used means of gathering information. Pavlik (2001) points out that not only are new media transforming the news and the newsgathering process, it is also transforming the operations within the newsroom. The general objective of this study is to find out how new media tools and newspaper journalist will continue to coexist and reinforce each other. That is to find out if journalists at the Graphic Communications Group Limited are using new media tools and is it in anyway influencing their work.

The specific objectives are as follows:

1. To find out if journalists at Graphic Communications Group Limited (GCGL) are using new media tools in their work.
2. To find out if the management of GCGL support the use of new media tools by their journalists.
3. To find out if new media tools were having any impact on journalistic work processes at the GCGL and if so to what effect.

### **1.3 Research questions**

The study will seek to answer the following questions.

RQ1. The extent to which, journalists at Graphic Communications Group Limited (GCGL) are using new media tools?

RQ2. Do journalists think new media tools improve their newsgathering and reporting?

RQ3. Are there any changes in the journalists at the GCGL's daily routines as a result of using new media tools?

RQ4. Which age groups of journalists have embraced social media the most?

RQ5. What social media platform is often used by the journalists?

### **1.4 Significance of the study**

Studies have showed that the number of journalists who use new media tools to gather and disseminate information as well as engage audience is on the increase. Many of these studies have been done in the United States of America and Europe. By investigating whether newspaper journalists at the Graphic Communications Group are adapting to the changing media environment and taking advantage of new media tools, this study will provide knowledge from a Ghanaian perspective on how the birth of the new media revolution was

impacting on journalistic practice in Ghana. It will also contribute to academic literature on new media use among journalists in Ghana.

### **1.5 Organisation of the study**

The report contains five chapters, chapter one deals with background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study. Other aspects of the chapters are research questions and significance of the study.

Chapter two focuses on the review of related literature while the methodology in chapter three describes the research design, the population, sampling and sampling procedure, data gathering instrument and data collection procedures and analysis.

In chapter four, findings and analysis are presented. Finally the summary of the findings, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further research form the concluding chapter of the report.

### **1.6 Operational definitions**

**Social Media:** Internet based applications used for social networking anywhere on any digital device as well as interactive user feedback, creative participation.

**New media and social media** are often used interchangeably throughout.

**Information Communication Technologies (ICT):** ICT is an umbrella term that includes any communication device or applications encompassing radio,

television, cellular phones, computer, network hardware, software and satellite systems etc. as well as the various services and applications associated with them such as video conferencing and distance learning.

**Conventional media:** refers to newspapers, television, radio and magazines.

**Mainstream media:** Mass media technologies that are intended to reach a large audience by mass communication.

**Newsroom journalists:** Journalists working directly in an organization's newsroom.

**Citizen journalism:** Public citizens playing an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analyzing, and disseminating news and information.

**Web 2.0:** Describes World Wide Web sites that emphasize user-generated content, usability, and interoperability. The term was popularized by Tim O'Reilly and Dale Dougherty at the O'Reilly Media Web 2.0 Conference in late 2004, though it was first coined by Darcy DiNucci in 1999.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter seeks to review and analyse the written works and other research materials of authorities in relation to the study area. It also discusses the theoretical framework within which the study was done.

According to Lamb (2013), literature review is a systematic review focused on a research question, trying to identify, appraise, select and synthesize all high quality research evidence and arguments relevant to that question. Its main goals are to situate the current study within the body of literature and to provide context for the particular reader. Literature review therefore forms the basis for research in nearly every academic field.

#### **2.1 Theoretical framework**

Fawcett (1978), states that when theory and research are isolated activities, they become 'excursions into the trivial.' This means that integration of theory and research is essential and without it, the quality of research is diminished.

Brown (1977) in a widely cited work sees the relationship between theory and research as a transaction where theory determines the data to be collected and the research findings support the theory.

There are discussions ongoing about whether conventional media can still maintain their role as gatekeepers. Roberts (2005) notes that gatekeeping was no longer relevant – if one information source will not publish something, another one will publish it. The question then is whether technology has taken away the often-cherished role of gatekeeping from conventional media.

New media is a digital innovation whose diffusion and adoption is just like any other innovation which occurs within a system over time. Some factors determine whether or not individuals or groups use a particular technology. Technological advances have always fueled changes in journalism.

Quinn (2011), notes that innovations have become an important determinant of newsgathering. The Internet as a mass communication source has further sparked considerations of gatekeeping in both scholarly research Roberts (2005).

This study looks at the findings within three theories: Gatekeeping theory, Diffusion of Innovations theory and Technology Acceptance Model.

## **2.2 Gatekeeping**

Shoemaker and Vos (2009) define gatekeeping as a process by which information is filtered to the public by the media. It is the process of culling and crafting countless bits of information into the limited number of messages that reach people every day and it is the center of the media's role in modern public life. This process determines not only which information is selected, but also what the

content and nature of the messages, such as news, will be, Shoemaker & Vos (2009).

Gatekeeping theory is defined as the selection process of choosing stories and/or visuals that follow the organizations' news routines and narratives (White, 1950).

DeFleur and DeFleur (2009) notes that personnel in the news organization become gatekeepers, letting some stories pass through the system but keeping others out, thus limiting, controlling, and shaping the public's knowledge of the totality of actual event occurring in reality. New media in recent times has generated a lot of discussion in the field of journalism due to its lack of standardized gatekeeping. This means a lot of content come up without any sort of filtering.

Singer (2006) suggests that the Internet was changing the process for newspapers, contending that, the power of gatekeepers seems to diminish in a modern information society. The Internet defies the whole notion of a 'gate' and challenges the idea that journalists or anyone else can or should limit what passes through it. Singer (2006) in his study of how gatekeeping translates to how traditional newspapers use online tools found that the content which appears in online editions of newspapers mostly comes from content that appears in the print versions. However, editors were also very proud of the interactive tools on their websites that could not be in the paper.

Since gatekeepers act as mediators establishing what is important information and worthy of transforming into a public message, gatekeepers contribute to

individuals' construction of social reality and their personal world view (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). Shoemaker and Vos (2009) propose that the Internet differs from other forms of mass media and mass communication as it provides increased opportunity for interactivity and two-way conversation. New media platforms enable audience members to participate in the dialogue, interacting directly with businesses, institutions, and newsmakers.

As Singer (2005) noted, citizen-generated materials, such as blogs, are being used by traditional media organizations to enhance their own coverage. Thus user generated content is being adapted to fit the narratives and routine practices of the traditional media. These routines are part of the gatekeeping process.

Chin-Fook and Simmonds (2011) cites Finnemann (2011) as outlining that "hypertextual, interactive, and multimodal features unique to digital media. As a result, the interactive potential of digital media increases the ways in which individuals can transform the flow of news. Chin-Fook and Simmonds (2011) contend that though some scholars argue that gatekeeping may be irrelevant in the age of digital media, gatekeeping theory remains relevant today. They argue that new media technology with its interactivity has rather introduced another level of gatekeeping.

According to Rosentiel & Kovach (1999); Solomon & Schrum (2007) gatekeeping theory does not apply to digital media, increased audience interactivity has, in fact, introduced a new stage in the gatekeeping process, whereby audience members participate as secondary gatekeepers on the Internet

(Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). Audience members have not only redefined gatekeeping theory by becoming active participants in the gatekeeping process, they have also redefined the very nature of the audience, making it more difficult to measure and predict target audiences because of the global influence of the Internet (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009).

Singer (2004, p. 275) said despite the Internet's labeling as the future of journalism, journalists struggled in the last decade to see how a profession based on selecting and vetting information before disseminating it might fit in a world where anyone can easily and instantly publish anything. Control over the flow of news information by media professionals, or gatekeeping, has also been contested with the rise of digital media (Bryant & Thompson, 2002). As Hermida (2010) summarizes: The professional and cultural attitudes surrounding Twitter have their roots in the working routines and entrenched traditional values of a journalistic culture which defines the role of the journalist as providing a critical account of daily events, gathered, selected, edited and disseminated by a professional organization. It reflects the unease in adopting a platform which appears to be at odds with journalism as a professional discipline for verifying information. (p. 300).

Reporters are reluctant to change ingrained work habits they indirectly learned over time from the established group behavior of the newsroom (Schultz & Sheffer, 2010; Daniels & Hollifield, 2002; Giles, 1995; Singer, 2004). Online journalists still see their role as revolving around the delivery of credible information, but that information is less likely to be static and more likely to be

open to further shaping by individual users. According to Singer and Ashman (2009, p. 6), newspaper journalists strongly believe ethics and standards are an element of professionalism that should be the same in print and online, but they worry that time and staffing pressures are eroding the ability to verify information quickly enough to disseminate it competitively.

As Lewis (2010) concludes, “Journalists derive much of their sense of purpose and prestige through their control of information in their normative roles. In other words, they take for granted the idea that society needs them as journalists and journalists alone to fulfill the functions of watchdog publishing, truth-telling, independence, timeliness, and ethical adherence in the context of news and public affairs information (p. 45).”

This study sought to determine if journalists at Graphic Communications Group thought their gatekeeping roles had been seized with the rise of new media.

### **2.3 Diffusion of innovation**

Rogers (1962), who developed the first model of diffusion, defined diffusion of innovation as, “the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system”. For its adopter, an innovation could be any “idea, practice, or object that is perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption”. The diffusion process consists of four key elements: innovation, the social system which the innovation affects, the communication channels of that social system, and time (Rogers 2003). As one of

the most influential theories of communication in marketing, the focus of diffusion theory is on the means by which information about an innovation is disseminated. Although Rogers' model is classic and widely established, it has several limitations regarding its predictive power related to the dissemination of an innovation (Bass 1969).

Bass, therefore, proposed the Bass model to explain his discovery that the number of adopters during a time period is almost identical to the number of sales throughout most of the diffusion process. This suggests that the number of adoptions in a time period serves as a good proxy for sales. Thus, the Bass model has been revised and implemented in forecasting innovation diffusion in multiple fields (Mahajan, Muller, & Bass, 1990). While the Bass model has potential to predict the distribution of the adoption curve, Rogers' model serves as a comprehensive framework for understanding diffusion process of an innovation and its underlying factors driving the diffusion. Rogers' theory (1962, 2003) serves as a comprehensive framework for understanding the spread of an innovation and its driving factors accelerating the rate of adoption. It basically addresses user motivations and adoption behavior

Chan (2010) chose diffusion of innovations theory to look at the New Perspective on Twitter Hashtag Use. From the diffusion of innovation and user interface perspectives, the question of hashtag adoption or non-adoption could depend on whether the user has been exposed to hashtag information. After all, sharing tweets on Twitter is not limited to one interface; users can do so directly from the Twitter website, or indirectly through any of desktop or smart phone applications.

Chan (2010) cited Watters (2010) that Twitter users have over 100,000 third-party applications as choices to tweet; 60 percent of all tweets are related to these third-party applications (Watters, 2010). Therefore, due to different interface designs of various devices, the focus of interface design should be on human information interaction (HII) rather than human computer interaction (HCI). The user may make different decisions about what, and how, hashtags are to be adopted.

The theory can be used to provide a background against which new media tools adoption by journalists can be studied. D'Arcy (2012) in her study of social media adoption among TV journalists used diffusion of innovations theory to hypothesize potential relationships between age, educational level, experience and social media use. Her preliminary findings showed that age and educational level did influence social media use. Journalists aged 29 and below tended to use social media more than those 39 years and above. More Masters degree holders than Bachelors degree holders in her findings used social media. She also noted that more males than female journalists used social media.

This study looks within the Graphic Communications Group Limited context to see if factors such as age, level of education and sex had any correlation with their social media use.

#### **2.4 Technology acceptance model (TAM)**

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) is an information systems theory that models how users come to accept and use a technology. According to Davis

(1989), it suggests that when users are presented with a new technology, a number of factors influence their decision about how and when they will use it, notably perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. It is seen as an extension of the diffusion of innovations theory.

Kripanont (2007) employed the TAM of Internet Usage by academics within Thai Business Schools in order to predict and explain user behavior. His study showed that user adoption and usage of an IT innovation is ultimately determined by personal beliefs and attitudes toward the information systems.

Similarly Porter and Donthu (2006) also used the TAM to explain how attitudes determine Internet usage. Their study showed that despite the fact that most Americans use the Internet, those who are older, less educated, minority and lower income have lower usage rates than younger, highly educated, white and wealthier individuals. They found that although access barriers have a significant effect in the model, perceptions regarding ease of use and usefulness have a stronger effect. Their results suggest that by extending the TAM, to include perceived access barriers helps to explain demographic-based differences in Internet use.

This study also employed the applicability of TAM in explaining the perception of Graphic Communication Group Limited journalists and the organization itself concerning the usefulness of social media in their work.

## **2.5 Review of related literature**

### **2.5.1 Old versus new media (Social media)**

Alejandro (2013) in her study of journalism in the age of social media posits that news consumption today is not the same as pre-satellite news when people waited for their morning papers or sat down at an appointed time for the evening news on television. News consumption today is not the same as pre-internet news when people tune in to events happening around the world through 24-hour television news channels. More recently, a growing number of readers, viewers and listeners are going online for their news. Television, newspapers and radio are still here but there is a growing competition from interactive online media according to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC).

Heinrich (2008) argues that organizational structures in today's print, broadcast and online platforms need to be reassessed according to the dynamics of an evolving global news sphere not least through developing a 'new' sense of connectivity but within this evolving global news sphere, information flows are in fact multidirectional. According to Heinrich, a globalized journalistic network sphere is taking shape which involves mainstream journalistic outlets and bloggers, independently operating journalists in various corners of the world and so-called 'user-generated content'-providers alike. To him, the 'one-way' flow of news from a news outlet to the audience has been replaced by a network structure that transform the professional journalism sphere in many world regions in quite similar ways and create new forms of journalistic practice.

However, Herrera and Requejo (2012) argue that news media organizations have yet to realise the potential of social media platforms, especially Twitter, for re-energizing traditional journalism by listening to and talking with their audiences and by linking to external content that enriches discussions.

Similarly, Ludtke (2009) argues that social media can bring greater depth and breadth to journalists' work.

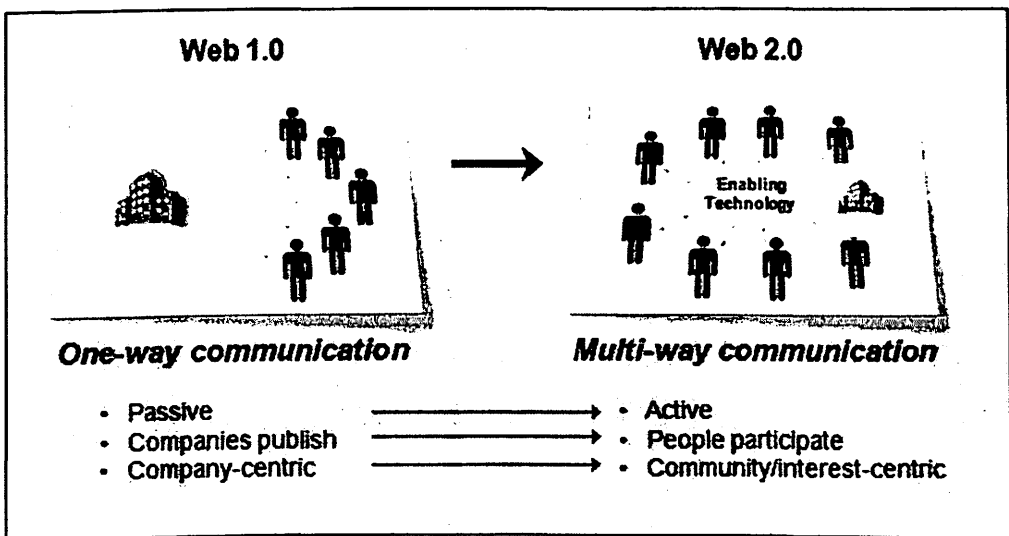
### **Differences between Web 2.0 and Web 1.0**

Web 2.0, which describes World Wide Web sites that emphasize user-generated content, usability, and interoperability allows for openness, organization and community. With Web 2.0, web publishers today create platforms instead of content and users create the content. Facebook, Twitter and YouTube most illustrate the power of Web 2.0 especially for ordinary web users.

Briggs (2007) explains Web 2.0 as an approach of creating and distributing Web content that is characterized by open communication, decentralization of authority, freedom to share and re-use, and the idea of “the market as a conversation”. In comparison with the Web 1.0 model, a Web publisher (whether a news site or a personal site) would upload content to a Web site for many others to read and the communication transaction would end there. The 2.0 model not only allows those many others to comment and add to the content posted by the publisher, but the audience can also add original content themselves (Briggs 2007).

The following illustration (made by Dcgy's Blog XD for his readers) compares Web 2.0 with Web 1.0 and explains how things have changed since the web culture has evolved. Webmaster and user interaction no longer depend on direct means of communication but have been turned into a whole new system of social interaction which includes really simple syndication (RSS feeds) and also the use of social networking sites.

**Figure 1: Differences between Web 2.0 and Web 1.0**



(Dcgy's Blog XD, 2013)

From the illustration above, Web 1.0 has a slow connection compared to the speedy connection of the Web 2.0. Web 1.0 has a Webmaster-driven site, but Web 2.0 has a user-driven site. Web 1.0 uses dial-up, but Web 2.0 uses broadband. (Dcgy 2013).

According to Shirky (2008), old media like publishing used to require a printing press where circulation was limited to a fraction of a geographical location.

Broadcasting via radio and television rely on expensive equipment to transmit signals around a country, regionally or globally. Now, once a user connects to the internet, the user has access to a platform that is at once global and free. The new model assumes that the devices themselves are smart. This means that one may propose or explore new models of communication and coordination without needing to get anyone's permission. An individual with a camera or a keyboard is now a non-profit of one and self-publishing is the norm.

### **Social media, Web 2.0 and the news**

Beckett (2008) notes that new-media technology is not only having a serious effect because of its impact on established journalism but the way that the vast bulk of public and commercial media is changing is more important than the emergence of citizen journalism or the independent blogosphere. Together they offer the opportunity to transform the news media into a more open, trustworthy and useful forum for information and debate. As news becomes non-linear and open-sourced, journalism will change and is changing. This is about more than posting a comment on a blog or sending in a photo to a website and that the claims that traditional media are the sole champions of authority, objectivity and quality will be (and is being) challenged.

Raymond & Lu (2011) in their study of journalists' use of Facebook noted that the rapid expansion in use of social media has caught the attention of individuals, businesses and organizations, and various professions. Both for-profit and non-

profit organizations are among businesses that are advertising and branding on social media, with many providing links from social media to their primary websites.

News media organisations and individual journalists also use new media such as Twitter and Facebook to connect with their audience, reach new audiences, practice their craft and even sometimes change notions of who practices journalism through citizen journalism and user generated content (Bosch 2010).

According to Alejandro (2013) there is a ground shift happening in the media industry and that mass media is out of date and it is now all about personal media. In the old days, a reporter was given a lead or went out to find a story. Today, many stories are received third hand (sometimes even fourth or fifth hand) through Facebook posts or Tweets so that by the time a story is assigned to the reporter, the story in some form or another is already out there in the social media universe. The reporter now has to take that into consideration and find some angle to the story that is not yet being talked about. With regards to scoops and breaking news, a lot of tips or leads these days are from the web or what is trending in social networks like Twitter, Facebook or Instagram. This is radically changing the industry's concept of what a scoop or breaking news is. Journalists are therefore forced to accelerate the traditional journalistic process, because people now want real time information as soon as the journalist or the media outlet receives it. So to sit on a story until it is complete is to risk being out-scooped by competitors. It is now a necessity to give the audience bits of information at a time, as soon as the information is available. Traditionally, media outlets compete

to out-scoop each other but today if they hold on to a story too long, they run the risk of being out-scooped by amateurs such as bloggers, citizen journalists and twitterers.

While the current technological landscape shows fantastic promise and present numerous prospects for news and journalists, there are also potential downsides.

According to Lazaroiu (2010) social media and networking sites challenge standard modes of reporting and interpretations of events. Although there were hopes that such advances would create a better informed citizenry, it appears that these forums often serve merely as platforms to disseminate personal opinions, to discuss events of a more private nature or as ways to expand one's social circle.

While social media networks stir out possible leads, there are also a lot of hearsays going on and even deceptions. In October 2008, a citizen journalist, a CNN iReport poster reported that Apple CEO Steve Jobs had been rushed to the hospital after a severe heart attack citing an anonymous source (Kim 2008). The story turned out to be false. CNN removed the story from the site and referred to it as fraudulent. That false story impacted the financial markets. Apple's stock in US trade took a major hit and dived to its lowest that year before bouncing back. Newspapers reported that the stock recovered around the time the post was removed. Apple's stock, which opened at US\$104 a share, fell by 9 percent to US\$94.65 before rebounding (Kim 2008).

When in late April 2010, reports surfaced on the internet that pop star Lady Gaga amputated one of her legs just below the knee in the name of fashion, the story

was rapidly tweeted and retweeted that eventually news media outlets took notice of the rumour. Upon verification from Lady Gaga's record label however that the story was untrue, the story was quickly discredited (Eoline April 2010).

Social media networks such as Facebook and Twitter as well as web 2.0 applications like blogs and Google have changed the news industry and the journalism practice inside out. They now present awesome possibilities and at the same time a high risk for errors. The challenges social media and web 2.0 have thrown to news managements and journalists have been like nothing seen before.

Barriers to entry have been lowered since anyone with a tablet, a mobile phone or laptop can be their own publisher. They can blog, tweet or facebook it anytime, anywhere. What makes social media of particular interest to journalism is how it has become influential as a communication and news-breaking tool. According to the AFP (2009), in June 2009, the U.S. State Department asked Twitter to delay scheduled maintenance on the service because it was being used by protestors angered by the results of Iran's disputed presidential election. In July 2009, a Twitter user in Indonesia beat most major news companies by tweeting about the Jakarta bombings. (AFP 2009).

Ryfe (2012) argues it may be that new media and new forms of journalism cannot fill all the gaps left by the loss of traditional journalism; however, journalists have only just begun to figure out how to best use these new media platforms to enhance journalism and public debate. Currently, however; there are sites for more nuanced debates about world issues and political arguments, but overall,

more emphasis seems to be placed on the social aspect (Hyde-Clarke and Van Tonder 2011).

(Pavlik, 2000; Paterson & Domingo, 2008, p. 159) maintains that how social media influence professionalism, and specifically professional relationships, has yet to be seen, as these new technological changes alter how journalists produce content, structure their work environments, and build relationships with sources, competitors, the public, and one another.

In September 2006, Facebook opened to anyone over the age of 13 with a valid e-mail address and by December 2007, more than half of Facebook users were outside universities (Facebook, 2007; Lewis & West, 2009, p. 1210). It was during this time the implications for journalists entered regular discussion because it resulted in faster contact with younger sources on the positive end, and with considerations of an accountability-free environment on the negative end (Wilson, 2008, p. 12).

### **Changing media consumption**

As stated earlier, the consumption of news currently is not the same as pre-satellite news when people waited for their morning papers or sat down at an appointed time for the evening news on television. More and more readers, viewers and listeners are going online for their news. Television, newspapers and radio are still here but there is a growing competition.

Benkler (2006) observes that the 'traditional' "one-way, hub-and-spoke structure, with unidirectional links to its ends, running from center to the periphery" is being eroded. News environments are changing rapidly with the diffusion of digital media. One of the most notable trends is the explosion of social media such as Facebook and Twitter as news platforms.

In America, social media offer opportunities for news organizations to reach more people than ever before, (Pew Research, 2014b). For young people, in particular, social media news feeds, not news websites, are their major news sources (Hermida, Fletcher, Korell, & Logan, 2012; Pew Research, 2013; Stassen, 2010). Increasingly, people consume the news by liking or following journalists or news organizations on Facebook or Twitter (Hermida et al., 2012; Pew Research, 2014b). As of 2013, 67 per cent of those who use Facebook at least an hour a day, which amounts to 30 per cent of the U.S. population, get news through Facebook (Pew Research, 2013).

In its annual report for 2008-2009, the BBC reported that its television overall reach among the 16 to 34 years old audience fell by over 7 percent between 2003 and 2008, from 82.6 percent to 75.4 percent. The data provided by the BBC also showed the amount of BBC television viewing by teenagers fell from 39 minutes a day in 2003 to 24 minutes a day in 2008, a decline of nearly 40 percent in a five year period. (BBC Annual Report and Account 2008-2009).

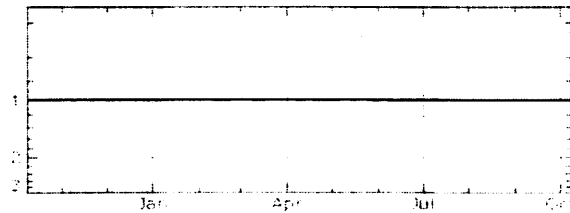
Globally Facebook was the second most visited site after Google as of June 2015 according to Alexa.com.

## Figure 2: How popular is google.com?

How popular is google.com?

### Alexa Traffic Ranks

How is this site ranked relative to other sites?



Global Rank ?

 1

Rank in United States ?

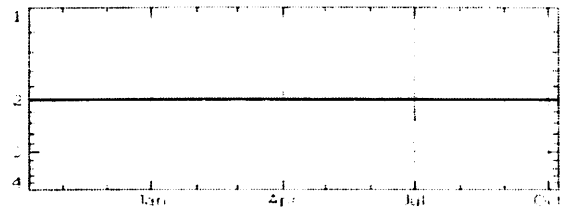
 1

## Figure 3: How popular is Facebook.com?

How popular is facebook.com?

### Alexa Traffic Ranks

How is this site ranked relative to other sites?



Global Rank ?

 2

Rank in United States ?

 2

(Alexa.com June 2015)

With the coming of the social media, people who have long been on the receiving end of one-way mass communication are now increasingly likely to become producers and transmitters. From Indymedia to the future BBC, the distinction between information producers and consumers will become increasingly difficult to draw (Creeber & Martin, 2009; Bennett, 2003).

For instance the news about the death of Michael Jackson in 2009, Facebook and Twitter users broke the story ahead of any major news network, the moment the UCLA Medical Center made the death announcement official. Social network sites, search engines and news websites reported heavy traffic volumes in the hour the story broke and some websites even crashed. That single story showed how news is consumed and disseminated in social media, how far it can reach and how fast. The death of Michael Jackson story is now used by media gurus as a textbook example of how social media has breached the gap between traditional media and the consumers. It proved that the gatekeeper role is no longer exclusive to journalists as the participatory culture of social media about engaging the audience has broken down the wall of journalism which separates the reader from the journalist. News (information/knowledge) which was previously disseminated Top-down can now be disseminated Bottom-up. The audience now has a say as to what news is important to them and as to what level of engagement they wish to pursue it whether watch or listen to it on TV or radio or go online or reply via mobile text or tweet about it or post it on Facebook or upload it on Youtube on whatever device when they want it and where they want it.

### **The fifth estate**

In their study on Social Media in the Changing Ecology of News: The Fourth and Fifth Estates in Britain, (Newman, Dutton & Blank 2012) found that in the UK, most of the efforts of mainstream media organizations were being directed at

Facebook and Twitter. Their study showed that social network users had a greater propensity than non-users of social media to go to Web pages via links they received from others over the Internet. The study by Newman et al showed that for the first time since 2003, the tendency to rely on search engines for information had dropped slightly, from 64 per cent in 2009 to 61 per cent in 2011. This was explained by the rise in referrals from social media sites and the increasing time spent on social media sites and that the trends were leading mainstream media companies to take social media activity increasingly into account.

If the press is the Fourth Estate, William Dutton of the Oxford Internet Institute termed social media as the emergence of the Fifth Estate. In a 2009 interview with Nic Newman, former BBC Future Media Controller, Dutton said “we are witnessing the emergence of powerful new voices and networks which can act independently of the traditional media. Highly networked individuals (helped by new platforms like social networking and messaging) can move across, undermine and go beyond the boundaries of existing institutions” (Newman 2009).

### **Citizen journalists**

Banda (2010) in his exploratory study of Citizen Journalism in Africa observed that the globalization of democracy has implications for citizen participation in journalistic work which includes traditional journalism being questioned in terms

of how it represents different sections of the population purely on the principle of democratic representatively. Again conventional media and journalism must democratize their occupational practices in order to encourage audience engagement.

Former head of global news for the BBC, Richard Sambrook wrote that within six hours of the London bombings on July 7, 2005, the BBC received more than 1,000 photographs, 20 pieces of amateur video, 4,000 text messages and 20,000 emails (Sambrook 2005). He wrote, “People were participating in our coverage in a way we had never seen before. By the next day, our main evening TV newscast began with a package edited entirely from video sent in by viewers.” Today, the BBC has 23 journalists working in a UGC (user generated content) centre to process information, photos and text coming in from the general public (Sambrook 2005).

The CNN also has a user-generated content site branded as iReport. It is the section of CNN.com where the stories, photos, texts and videos are uploaded by the audience. In Ghana, the Daily Graphic newspaper published by Graphic Communications Group Limited has “Your Voice” on its Editorial page 7, where comments from readers on its Facebook fan page are published alongside the editorial. The Ghanaian television network, TV3 also has a similar segment on its news bulletin where comments from viewers posted on Facebook are read.

## **Social media and the practice of journalism**

Chaffee and Metzger (2001), discusses that a multiple platform structure of journalism is taking shape in which boundaries between traditional media outlets of print, radio, and television and between national and 'foreign' journalism are blurring and merging online. With this, information spheres begin to merge and influence each other. Bloggers, so-called user-generated content providers, citizen journalists or media activists have entered the global sphere of information exchange and have become a vital part of the news exchange chain. A new level of connectivity is emerging that demarcates the end of a 'closed' journalism sphere in which a very small number of 'gatekeepers' secured journalism as "broadcasting to the masses".

According to Farhi (2009), news organizations adopted social media because its speed and brevity make it ideal for pushing out scoops and breaking news to Twitter-savvy readers (p. 28). This medium is useful for news dissemination when stories are changing quickly (Farhi, 2009, p. 28).

Sports Journalists use social media for similar purposes. Schultz and Sheffer (2010, p. 233) determine that most sports journalists use Twitter for posting information about breaking news, promoting their work and connecting to readers. Schultz and Sheffer (2010) cite Derrick Gold of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch as an example of how sports journalists are incorporating Twitter into their routines:

“Journalists should view Twitter as a collective intelligence system that provides early warnings about trends, people and news. Journalists

[Arizona State University journalism professor Dan Gillmor] says, should follow people who point them to things they should know about and direct questions back to them to do better reporting. (p. 29)”

As Posetti (2009) suggests, because social media merges the professional and personal, the public and the private, blurring the lines of engagement, journalists who are trained to be didactic observers and commentators rather turn to be participants in debates and characters within stories. (p.1) Keeping the personal and professional spheres separate, while maximizing the benefits of social media, can be problematic for sports journalists.

Lee (2015) in her study on social media, journalism, and political communication found out that audiences exposed to a journalist's self-disclosure and interaction with other audiences via social media perceive the journalist more positively in the personal dimension than those who are not exposed to the self-disclosure and interaction. Lee (2015) predicted positive effects of journalists' social media activities. A hierarchical multiple regression result indicated that self-disclosure and interaction indeed significantly and positively influenced personal-dimension perceptions respectively, with the influences of topic interest, knowledge, and media bias perception controlled.

Karlsson, Bergström, Clerwall and Fast (2015) in their study, Participatory journalism – the (r)evolution that wasn't, Content and user behavior in Sweden 2007–2013 note that 16 percent of the news items afforded user comments in 2007, but the share increases rapidly and peaks in 2010 with almost 65 percent.

This indicates quite a large willingness from the news organizations to invite the readers/users into the discussion. However, from the peak in 2010 there is an almost equally fast decline, and in 2013 only about 29 percent of the items afford user comments. This might be seen as the media organizations being less eager to facilitate a public discourse – in the form of comments – on their sites. Karlsson et al., (2015) further notes that another way to promote public discourse is allowing bloggers to link to news items on the website. That way a reader can quite easily connect with others who have written about, or at least linked to, a specific news item and can thus share readership with the news site.

Wilson (2008) notes that sports journalists' use social media primarily for professional networking purposes and saw the site as limited in its usefulness as a journalistic tool.

Reed (2011) concludes that the use of social media among sports writers to gather information has influenced sports journalism practices and relationships with sources, further complicating the industry's abstract definition of professionalism. In Reed's study on Print sports journalists' use of social media and its effect on professionalism, it was found that 46 per cent of participants who used Facebook used it for professional purposes while 80 per cent of Twitter users used it professionally. Some journalists use their Facebook and Twitter accounts for background research before interviews to get a sense of whom their subjects were with 61 per cent of participants having directly quoted from athlete's Facebook page and or a Twitter feed. The study suggests that sports journalists' definition of professionalism is now interpreted through additional lenses, among them are

how they separate professional and personal relationships on Facebook and Twitter sites and how they use information found on athlete's Facebook and Twitter pages in writing stories. The findings suggest that though Twitter has been accepted as a "normalized" medium for professional sports journalism newsgathering, particularly among younger professionals the same cannot be said, however, of Facebook.

(Hermida, Lewis, & Zamith, 2014; Knight & Cook, 2013; Vis, 2013) notes that for journalists, social media have become powerful tools to capture information flow, gauge public opinion, and disseminate news, particularly in crisis situations. Individual journalists increasingly create their own social media pages for public consumption to promote their news products and build personal brands. Some news organizations encourage their staff journalists to engage in social media to expand readership, raise brand awareness, and increase their website traffic (Gleason, 2010; Hermida, 2013). Keeping pace with the trend, journalism schools integrate social media components into their academic curricula (Cochrane, Sissons, Mulrennan, & Pamatatau, 2012).

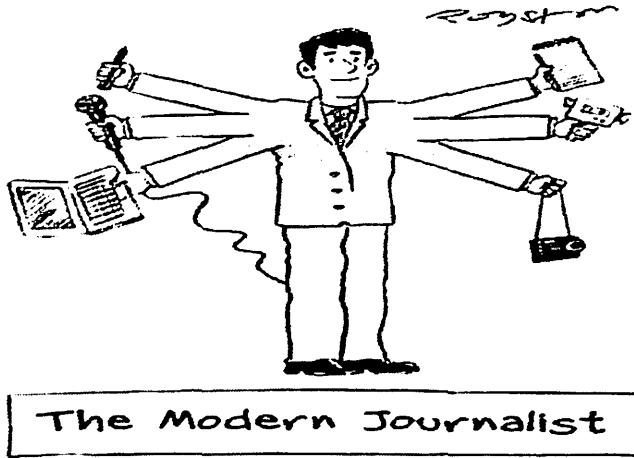
Hermida (2010) argues that journalists use social media in order to fulfill two of these uses, sharing information and reporting news. Hermida (2010) observes that the traditional model of journalism in which facts are defined as information and quotes from official sources is in fluctuation. With the instant dissemination of information via social media from a wide array of official as well as unofficial sources, norms and practices of journalism are changing. Hermida, therefore, talks of new forms of journalism that he refers to as "ambient journalism", a form of

journalism exemplified by Twitter and the way in which this kind of information distributed. Rather it can be seen as a system that alerts journalists to trends or issues hovering under the news radar" (Hermida 2010, 302). The greatest challenge that journalists thus face in this information era is not necessarily the need to negotiate and navigate the thousands of sites and comments posted but rather the need to distinguish between a legitimate piece of information and those that are less valid.

Social media has transformed into newer and more user-friendly versions (Tufekci 2008). MySpace dominated the online landscape almost from its beginning in 2003, but has since been surpassed by Facebook, which now boasts more active users (Holbrook 2009; Wakiyama & Kagan 2009). As the websites have developed, the content and characteristics have been shaped by the preferences of users (Smith 2009). Individuals, along with organizations and businesses, are getting involved at varying levels, and this trend is likely to continue.

For the journalist, the new equation is about doing a lot more with a lot less as illustrated by Royston Robertson in the cartoon below. Reporters are now required to submit stories for multiple platforms – television, radio, print and online. For a journalist in today's media landscape, it is essential to be multi-skilled.

**Figure 4: The Modern Journalist**



(Source: Royston Robertson Cartoons)

Bunz (2009) writes that new posts like “social media editors” or “community editors” have been and are still being created in newsrooms since 2009. In May 2009, the New York Times hired its first social media editor to expand the use of social media networks and publishing platforms to improve New York Times journalism and deliver it to readers. Also early in 2009, Sky News in the UK appointed a Twitter correspondent whose main responsibility is to cover breaking news. BBC also appointed its first social media editor in late 2009. His job is to help the BBC team of reporters and producers engage more proactively with social networks, Twitter being one of them, as newsgathering and distribution channels for journalism (Bunz 2009).

Cision (2011) journalism study on the perceptions and use of social media among European journalists on the other hand reports that journalists across Europe have fully embraced social media as an important channel in their journalistic practice.

European journalists use a mix of social media and traditional tools in their daily routines. They use social media for sourcing stories, making personal contacts, finding public relations (PR) sources and press releases, following traditional news sources and for publishing and promoting their work. Key findings from the report show that 96 per cent of the journalists in the United Kingdom (UK), Finland, Sweden and Germany employed social media in their work, with Twitter being the most used social media site among journalists in the UK. The findings conclude that overall social media is supplementing the resources and communication options available but not replacing the existing tools that journalists already use in their work.

There is considerable use of social media by all journalists, there remains to be a strong preference for journalists to source a story through personal contacts. The same is true for story verification with 85 per cent using personal contacts by phone, email or face-to-face. This supports studies done on Africa by Adaolekun and Nyamnjoh, (Atton and Mabweazara, 2011, pg. 669) suggesting that ICTs only serve to “enlarge and accelerate processes already in place in societies and organizations rather than create entirely new forces that radically break from old ways”. Within the African context though new technologies are offering new channels for sourcing and distributing the news, traditional modes of communication still remain in force.

Joordan (2013) notes in her study on the impact of Facebook and Twitter on newsrooms routines in South African weeklies that despite initial misgivings

about the credibility of the information disseminated on social media, mainstream journalists have gradually started to adopt these media as professional tools.

While social media networks and web 2.0 applications open new opportunities for the news industry, they also raise the possibility of a professional crisis for journalists and media organisations.

Huckerby (2005) argues that the web is not some orderly library, tended with care by diligent scholars; sometimes it's more akin to a garbage heap. As a reporter, you need to be an expert in sifting out the rubbish, and at detecting the dubious claims and biased presentations that abound.

This was illustrated in November 2010 when a BBC reporter asked the African National Congress' Youth League (ANCYL) leader Julius Malema, about comments made on a Twitter account in his name. Malema claimed not to have an account and threatened to close Twitter down should his impersonator not desist from posting comments (SAPA 2010). This resulted in a flurry of activity on Twitter and within a week, 22 fake Julius Malema accounts had been created (Daniel 2010). Whereas the ANC Youth League's threats were treated with hilarity and disbelief, the case does emphasise the difficulty in validating and authenticating these sources.

As The Washington Post senior editor, Milton Coleman, noted, "Social networks ... can be valuable tools in gathering and disseminating news and information. They also create some potential hazards we need to recognise" (cited in Grensing-Pophal 2010).

Lewis (2010) maintains that social media pose a potential threat to professionalism because the degree and kind of participation allowed in online spaces challenges news organizations to reassess their established boundaries. According to him the digitization of media broke cultural and material barriers to mass publishing, posing commercial and conceptual threats to journalists' sense of control and jurisdiction.

According to Jenkins (2006), digital technologies and digital cultures enable and encourage greater user participation in the media process, but by doing so, it challenge journalism's professional jurisdiction.

Wilson (2008) found that journalists were using Facebook primarily for professional networking purposes and saw the site as limited in its usefulness as a journalistic tool.

The use of social media by journalists is controversial. Meintjies (2011) thinks that journalists who really break BIG stories aren't spending 24/7 on Twitter and it because they are busy working on those stories arguing that it is easy to be an expert on the web and it is also quite another thing to prove yourself in the newsroom.

This view is supported by the study of Rodny-Gumede & Hyde-Clarke (2014) in their study of South African Political Journalists use of social media as news sources. One of the political journalists interviewed, who stated that he does not use social media such as Facebook or Twitter as he feels that "part and parcel" of being a good reporter is not to allow your stories or ideas to be dictated by tweets and other social media: "News is the current state of things and nothing less,

unless we talk history, so I analyse current events and develop my own story ideas.” This view was also shared by some of the South African media monitors interviewed, who argued that journalists should express extreme caution when using these sources, warning that social media tends to consist of "a very small, and very opinionated group of people, who speak to other, very opinionated people.”

Rodny-Gumede & Hyde-Clarke (2014) found that almost all of the political journalists were using social media sources regularly, but they were very discerning about which ones they accessed. They used it mainly for breaking stories, background research and as a useful tool for gauging public opinion. They conclude that Internet sources were indeed more politically biased than traditional sources, and that journalists and all media practitioners treat every source with caution and scepticism. Another major finding by Hyde-Clarke & Rodny-Gumede (2014) was that social media sources should be verified before being used, and the decision about how much one should rely on these sources depends on the story/assignment covered. Also, too much reliance on social media sources by journalists is causing a decline in observational reporting.

Deo-Silas (2013) in his study of journalists’ use of social media in Ghana found that majority of journalists were of the opinion that social media improved news gathering though they were of the opinion that it disrupted newsroom routines. The findings revealed that journalists in Ghana were embracing social media and were quite optimistic about its potential as an information resource. Deo-Silas (2013) concludes that radio and television journalists were embracing social

media more than print journalists but despite the positive opinion about social media use. Deo-Silas found out that none of the media organisations selected for the study had developed a comprehensive policy to guide their journalists' use of social media. Based on Deo-Silas (2013) findings, this study will look at social media use among journalists of Graphic Communication Group Limited in relation to the organisation's policy and training on social media use.

Raymond & Lu (2011) in their online study of 'journalists and Facebook', a Facebook group consisting of almost 14,500 members revealed that journalists are among the many professions that have established group areas on Facebook. Their investigation revealed that though the personal nature of Facebook may have professional implications and ethical considerations, journalists continue to use it for purposes that are beneficial to their work. According to their findings many journalists now use Facebook and other social networks in their story research and investigation. This is particularly useful when researching non-public figures, about which little is often known. Two out of three of those respondents were also currently employed as paid journalists, 90 per cent of the respondents were between 26 and 54 years of age, with 52 per cent being represented in the 35 – 54 age group indicating that the social media site was more popular among younger journalists. Based on Raymond & Lu (2011) findings, this study will look at social media use among journalists of Graphic Communication Group Limited in relation to age. Atton and Mabweazara (2011) suggestion that ICTs only help to speed up already existing processes rather than chart entirely new courses was considered in determining if journalists felt social media use changed their

routines and practices. The study will also look at the professional implications of journalists using social media, whether it was allowed by their organizations.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This chapter looks at the methodology used for the study. It explains the research design appropriate for the study, gives details on the population, sample and sampling procedures and the instruments used in collecting data for the study. It also discusses the data collection procedure.

#### **3.0 Research design**

The data collection for this study involved the use of quantitative methods. For a research of this nature it was important that views from journalists, both reporters and their supervisors who managed them be sought. This approach provided an insight into how journalists at the Graphic Communications Group (GCGL) as well as their organisations' attitude towards social media use. It also allowed certain contrasts to be made.

##### **3.0.1 Quantitative research design**

According to Atieno (2009) and cited by Ochieng (2009) many researchers view quantitative research design as the best approach to scientific research because it offers precise measurement and analysis. In quantitative research design the researcher will count and classify, and build statistical models to then explain what is observed. Data collected using this research approach is in the form of numbers and statistics. In the article entitled, "An Analysis of the Strengths and Limitations of Qualitative and Quantitative Research Paradigms", Atieno (2009),

suggests that, “quantitative research paradigm is empirical in nature; it is also known as the scientific research paradigm”. This research process includes a method of deductive reasoning by use of measurable tools to collect relevant data. Quantitative research then results in precise measurements. In quantitative research, the aim is to determine the relationship between one thing (an independent variable) and another (a dependent or outcome variable) in a population.

Quantitative research designs are either descriptive (subjects usually measured once) or experimental (subjects measured before and after a treatment). A descriptive study establishes only associations between variables. For an accurate estimate of the relationship between variables, a descriptive study usually needs a sample of hundreds or even thousands of subjects.

A similar approach was adopted for the purpose of this research, which generally discusses how journalists at Graphic Communication use social media tools in their work and how it was impacting on the state owned newspaper publisher.

The researcher used the descriptive study as this method seeks to gather information so that a description of what is going on can be made. The data collection for this study involved quantitative methods. The reason for the choice of Graphic Communication Group Limited is because the researcher is familiar with the working environment which enables easy access to respondents and the gathering of any additional information that might be needed for the study.

For the purpose of this study, the survey research method was used. This is because this method is the most appropriate for a study of this nature that studies variables in their natural habitat. According to Baran (1999) cited by Nwodu (2006), survey allow mass communication researchers to measure characteristics, opinions or behaviours of population by studying a small sample from that group, then generalizing back to the population, which is of the group.

A survey was conducted among journalists sampled from the Graphic Communications Group to determine how they are employing new media tools in their practice. It was hoped that the survey would capture certain aspects of new media use among the journalists.

A questionnaire made up of close-ended questions was designed and distributed among all journalists of the Graphic Communications Group Limited.

### **3.1 Population**

Oswala (2001) refers to population as the number of persons or objects covered by the study or with which the study is concerned. In other words, it is a set of people items under consideration in a study. A research study population is also known as a well-defined collection of individuals or objects known to have similar characteristics. In this research, the population considered for the study was drawn from journalists working for the Graphic Communications Group Limited. Information gathered from the Human Relations Directorate of Graphic put the number of journalists employed by the company at 96.

### **3.2 Sampling procedure**

Purposive sampling was used for the study. Purposive sampling includes subjects selected on the basis of specific or known characteristics or qualities. It is a type of nonprobability sampling method in which the researcher uses their judgment in the selection of the sample members (Babbie, 1992). According to Neumann (1997), this is an acceptable kind of sampling for special situations especially when very little research work has been done in an area. This sample is more easily obtained unlike random sampling which is almost always difficult and expensive. Appelberg, Nygren and Gardstrom (2012) in their study on how social media active journalists used the medium applied purposive sampling to select participants. According to them, this ensured that the sampled respondents were relevant to the study. D'Arcy (2012) in her study of TV journalists and social media use also adopted purposive sampling to survey broadcast journalists.

Therefore since this study aimed at gaining deep insights and understanding the phenomena rather than generalizing the results to the entire population, purposive sampling was appropriate.

#### **3.2.1 Selection of survey respondents**

After determining that 96 journalists worked at the Graphic Communications Group Limited it was decided to administer a questionnaire to each one of them. A list of the journalists was obtained from the Human Relations Department and

used to assign questionnaires for distribution. Each person was presented with a questionnaire.

There is no simple rule for sample size that can be used for all surveys. Much depends on the professional and financial resources available. Analysts often find that a moderate sample size is sufficient statistically and operationally (American Statistical Association, 1980). For this study a sample size of 96 was chosen. An important reason for this was due to the fact that this was largely a descriptive study. Therefore, all 96 journalists that worked at Graphic Communication were included in the sample.

However, there was a problem because not all the journalists are based in Accra. It was therefore decided that the questionnaire would be emailed to those outside Accra. The selected participants included reporters and their editors from various specialties such as sports, business, politics, health and others.

### **3.3 Data collection procedure**

Data was collected through questionnaire. The questionnaires were distributed to the respondents one week earlier for their study and completion before the researcher collected them. The questionnaire was emailed to those journalists who are not located in Accra. Initial face-to-face meetings were conducted with those located in Accra to get acquainted and to brief respondents on the study before the questionnaires were administered.

### **3.4 Instrument**

The instrument used for the study was a questionnaire made up close ended questions. The questionnaire was designed purposely to assess the journalist's usage of new media tools. The validity of the questionnaire was submitted to the supervisor and colleagues who read through them to ascertain its degree of reliability. The reliability of the questionnaire was to help the researcher get the right responses the same way each time it was used under the same conditions with the subjects.

### **3.4 Data analysis**

Data obtained from the administration of the questionnaires were edited, categorized and analyzed by using percentages and charts.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

This chapter looks at an analysis of the results pertaining to the study of journalists at Graphic Communications Group Limited (GCGL) on how print journalists are using social media tools in Ghana.

#### **4.1 Presentation of findings**

This research sought to find out first and foremost, if print journalists at the Graphic Communications Group were using social media in their work, if they thought social media use improved newsgathering and reporting and if these new media platforms had impacted their routines in any way. The research also sought to find which social media tools they were using as well as their employers' attitude towards social media use.

The findings are reported based on the survey conducted. The data from the survey are provided in pie chart showing distribution and percentages of responses.

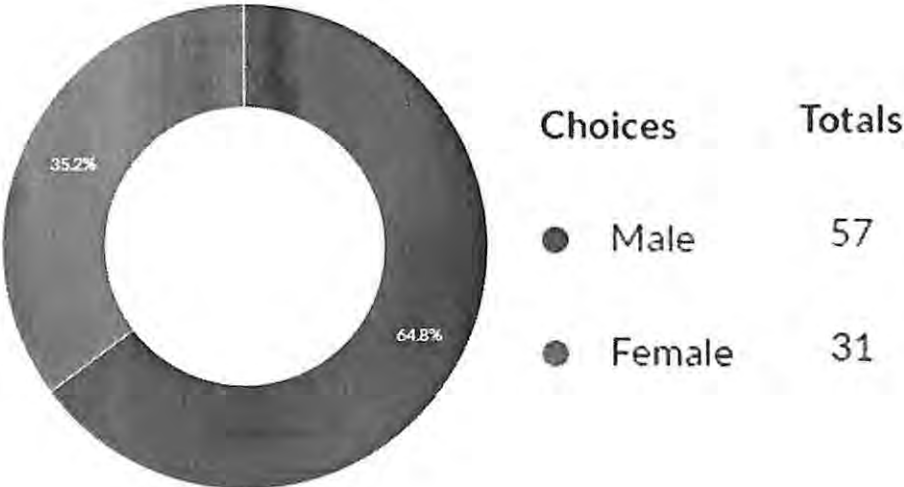
#### **4.2 Survey**

The survey was carried out among all journalists from the Graphic Communications Group Limited. The survey questionnaires were mostly close

ended. Out of 96 questionnaires distributed to all journalists of Graphic, 88 were returned indicating a return rate of 92 percent. With regards to the distribution, 41 questionnaires were sent via email to the reporters whom the researcher could not meet physically in their office because of their work schedule outside of the office and those located in the regions outside of Accra in Wa, Bolgatanga, Tamale, Sunyani, Takoradi, Cape Coast, Tema, Ho, Koforidua and Kumasi. The Accra head office had the largest concentration of journalists of the Graphic Communications Group Limited.

**4.2.1 Demographics**

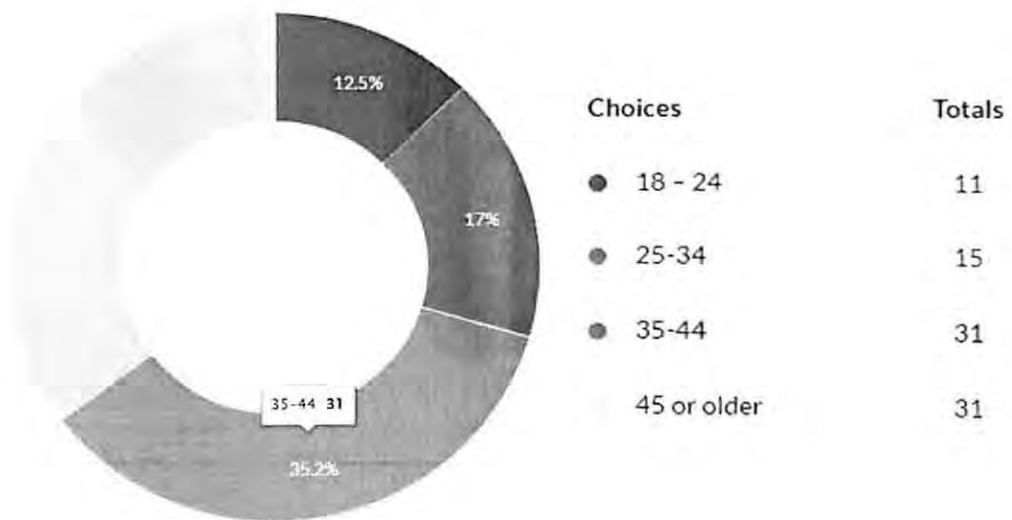
**Figure 5: Gender distribution**



It was important to note the gender distribution of respondents since this could provide an insight into the rate of social media use among male and female journalists. Figure 1 shows the gender distribution for the study which was 57

males representing 64.8 percent and 31 females representing 35.2 percent. The total respondents were 88. This reveals that the GCGL involved in the study had more male journalists at the time of collecting the data than female journalists. Media Matters for America (2013 reports that at 38 percent women were still largely underrepresented in newsrooms across the United States of America. It must be noted that this distribution may change assuming all respondents had participated in the study. However, considering that only 8 percent did not participate, the change in the distribution would not be that significant.

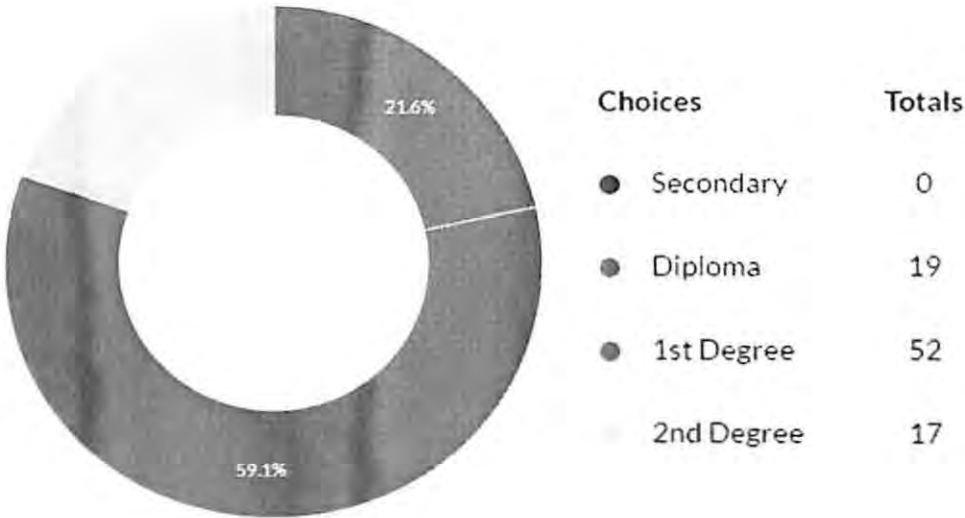
**Figure 6: Age distribution**



The data provides an insight into age distribution of respondents surveyed. The data from Figure 2 shows that most of the journalists (70.4%) surveyed were 35

years or older. 31 respondents said they were aged between 35 – 44 years and another 31 also said they were 45 or older. This was followed by 15 (17%) respondents who said they were between ages 25 – 34 and 11 (12.5%) who said they were between ages 18 – 24.

**Figure 7: Distribution of respondents according to academic qualifications.**



The study also sought to determine the level of education of respondents since this could be an influencing factor in adopting innovations as pointed out by D’Arcy (2012) that journalists with some college degree were most likely to adopt social media. In terms of education 17 respondents (19.3%) said they had second degree followed by 52 (59.1%) respondents who said they had first degree and 19 (21.6%) respondents who said they had Diploma.

None of the respondents had only secondary school qualification and this reflected in the years of experience as shown below in Figure 4. Almost all the respondents, 84 (95.5%) said they attended journalism school. Only 4 (4.5%) respondents said they did not attend journalism school.

**Figure 8: How long have you been practicing as a journalist?**

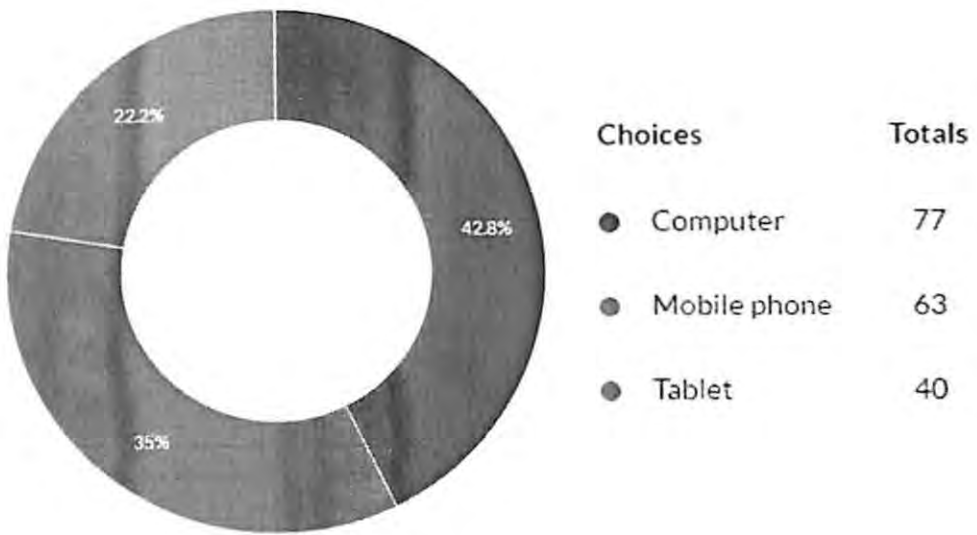


A total of 51 respondents (58%) said they had more than 10 years' work experience as journalists followed by 17 (19.3%) who said they had 1 – 3 years working experience followed by 11 (12.5%) who said they had 5 – 10 years working experience and 9 (10.2%) who said they had 4 - 5years working experience.

### 4.2.2 Internet usage

All 88 respondents said they go online. The chart below shows a distribution of how the respondents access online material.

**Figure 9: How do you access online material**



The data from the figure 5 shows than most respondents (57.2%) access the internet via mobile devices such as mobile phones or tablets. With 35 percent of respondents saying they accessed online material on their mobile phones and 22.2 percent saying they accessed it through tablets, the findings reflected a growing trend of mobile internet penetration in Ghana that currently stands at 48.84 percent as of February 2014 (National Communications Authority, 2014). The survey also revealed that 42.8 percent of respondents accessed the internet

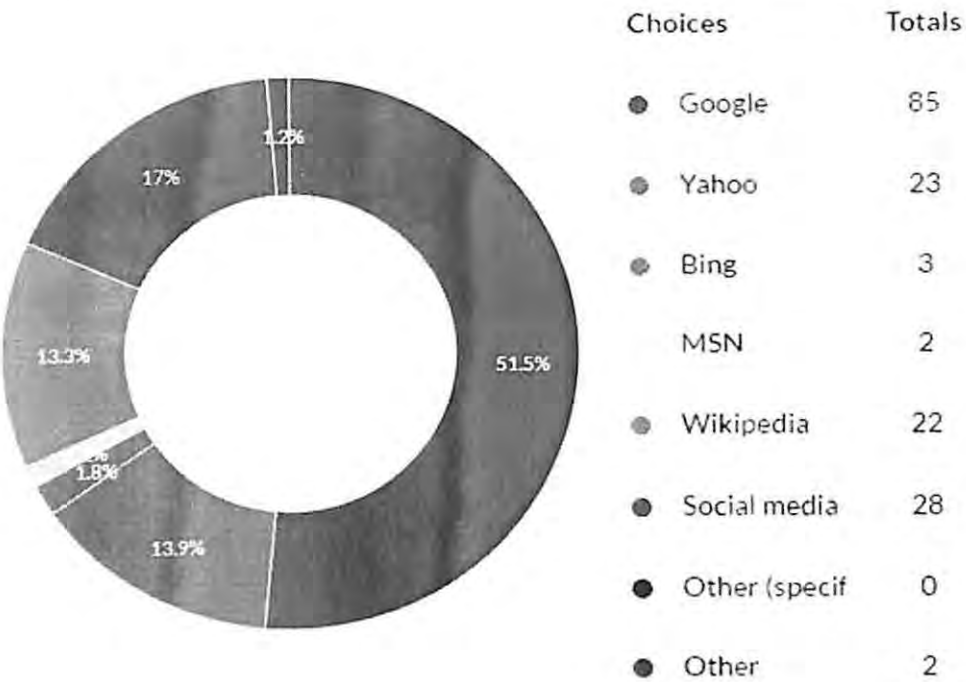
through the computer, indicating that the computer is still most preferred medium of access.

**Table 1: What do you often do online?**

<b>Choices</b>	<b>Totals</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Mail	75	26.2%
News	77	26.9%
Entertainment	33	11.5%
Sports	34	11.9%
Social networking	66	23.1%
Other	1	0.3%

As to what they did online respondents were allowed to choose more than one answer. From Table 1 above, the most predominant activity among half of the respondents (53.1%) was to go online to check for Mails and news. Others (11.5%) go online for Entertainment, sports (11.9%) and social networking (23%).

**Figure 10: Which search engines do you use to research news story ideas?**



Half of the journalists surveyed (51.5%) said they used Google to research story ideas. The data from the chart in figure 5 above indicates that even though social media was not a traditional search engine, some journalists (17%) were now resorting to it to search for story ideas. Other respondents (13.9%) said they used Yahoo and 13.3 percent said they used Wikipedia.

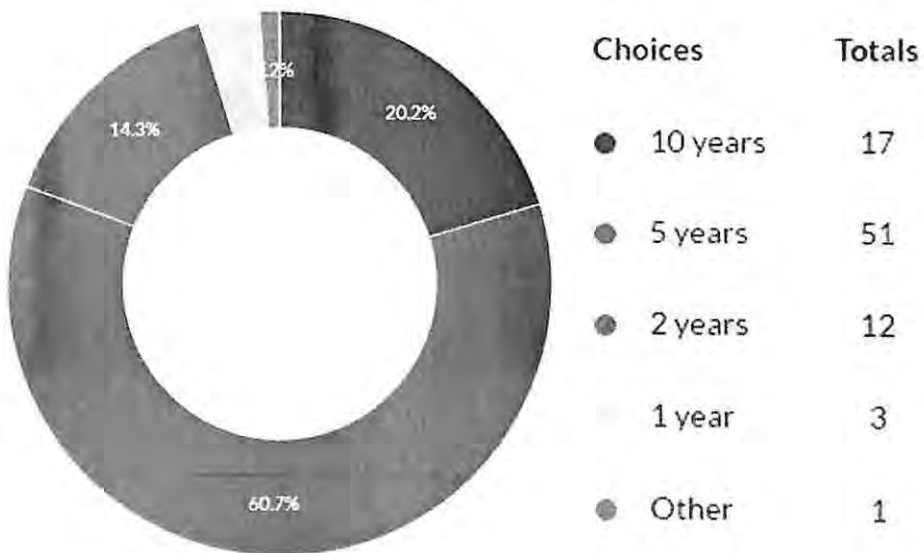
**4.2.3 Social media usage**

The study sought to determine if respondents were using social media and for how long they have been using it as well as which age distribution in particular were using it the most. The findings suggest a high adoption of social media among respondents. The findings revealed that almost all journalists at Graphic (94.3%) were using social media tools. Out of the 88 responses to the question, do

you use social media, 83 (94.3%) said YES. Of the five respondents (5.7%) who said NO to the question, four did not find social media useful and one said it was difficult to use.

From the study, respondents in the age group 18 – 44 years were the ones who were very active on social media everyday and spent longer hours between 2 - 6 hours daily on social media. Respondents over 45 years (33.3%) were the least social media users. The findings indicate that social media use was more prevalent among the younger journalists and confirms D’Arcy (2012) hypothesis that younger journalists were more likely to use social media.

**Figure 11: How long have you been using social media**



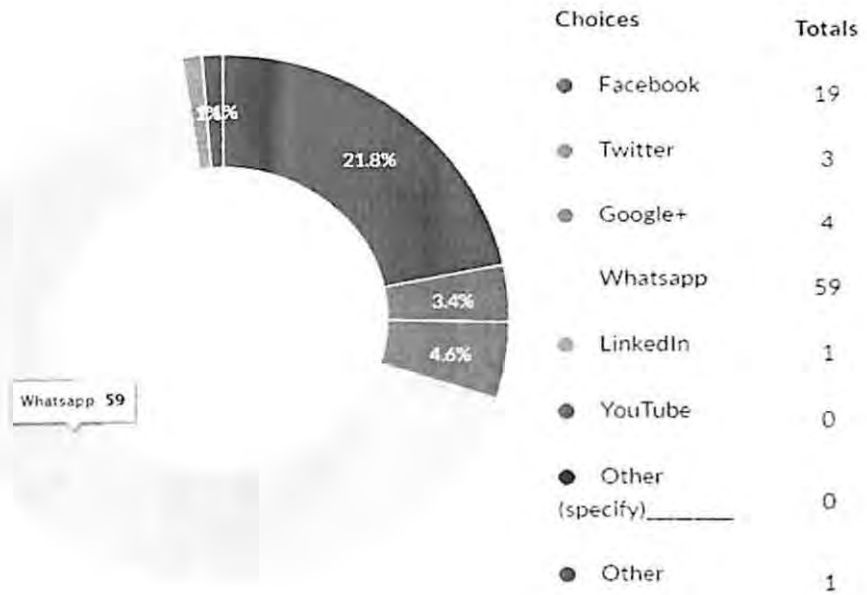
The study sought to find out how long respondents have been using social media and the findings as shown in the chart in figure 7 reveals that more than half of

the respondents (60.7%) have been using social media for more than 5 years followed by 20.2 percent who said they have been using it for more than 10 years. 14.3 percent said they have been using social media in the last 2 years followed by 3.6 percent who said they have been using in less than one year.

**Table 2: Which social media platforms do you use?**

<b>Choices</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
Facebook	75	25.3%
Twitter	31	10.5%
Google+	35	11.8%
Whatsapp	76	25.7%
LinkedIn	29	9.8%
Youtube	29	9.8%
Others (Telegram, Instagram, Skype, IMO)	21	7.1%

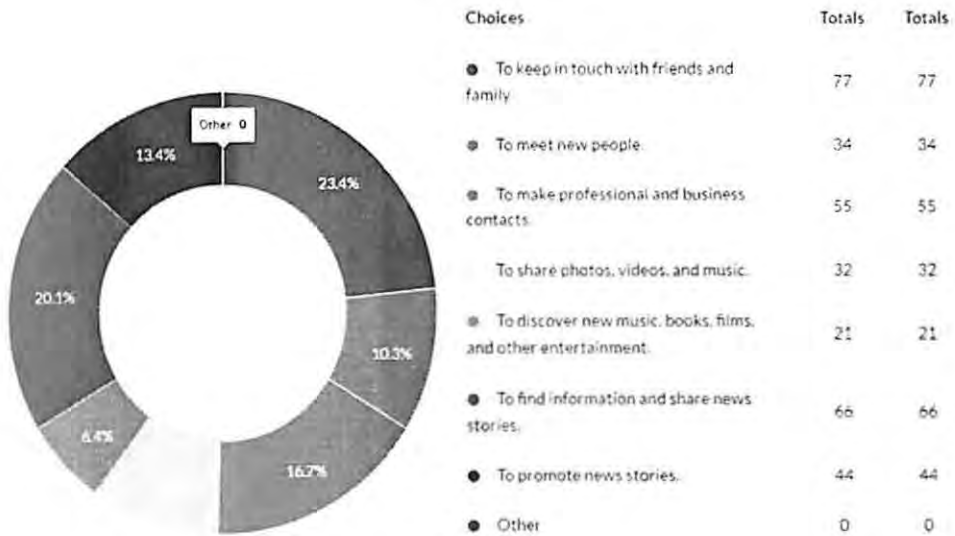
**Figure 12: Which one of these social media platforms do you use very often than others?**



The study sought to determine which social media platforms respondents were using and which one of them was being used very often than others. From Table 2 and the chart in figure 8 above, the findings suggest that more than half (67.8%) of respondents were using Whatsapp compared to Facebook (21.8%). The findings indicate that for every respondent who was using Facebook, they were also using Whatsapp but were using Whatsapp more often than Facebook.

#### 4.2.4 Social media for sourcing and publishing news stories

Figure 13: Why do you use social media?



The study also sought to find out what the respondents were using social media for. Majority respondents (82.1%) said they used it for both private and official business or official capacity purposes. 14.3 per cent said they use it for private purposes only and 3.6 per cent said they use it for official business or professional capacity purposes.

From the chart in Figure 9 above, majority respondents (23%) said they were using it to keep in touch with friends and family whilst 20.1 percent said they use to find information and share news stories. It was followed by 16.7 percent who said they use it to make professional and business contacts, 13.4 percent said they use it to promote news stories, 9.7 percent use it to share photos, video and music

and 6.4 percent use it to discover new music, books, films and other entertainment.

**Table 3: How often do you follow up or report on a story you saw on social media?**

<b>Choices</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
Never	4	4.8%
Hardly	18	21.4%
Often	51	60.7%
Everyday	11	13.1%

Overall Table 3 suggests that majority of respondents (60.7%) often follow up or report on a story they saw on social media which goes to support Newman's (2011) study on how social media is changing the production, distribution and discovery of news. The report suggests that social media has become an accepted way for journalists at Graphic to tell their stories.

**Table 4: How often do you publish materials on social media?**

<b>Choices</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
Never	2	2.4%
Occasionally	38	45.2%
Hardly	7	8.3%
Often	31	36.9%
Everyday	6	7.1%

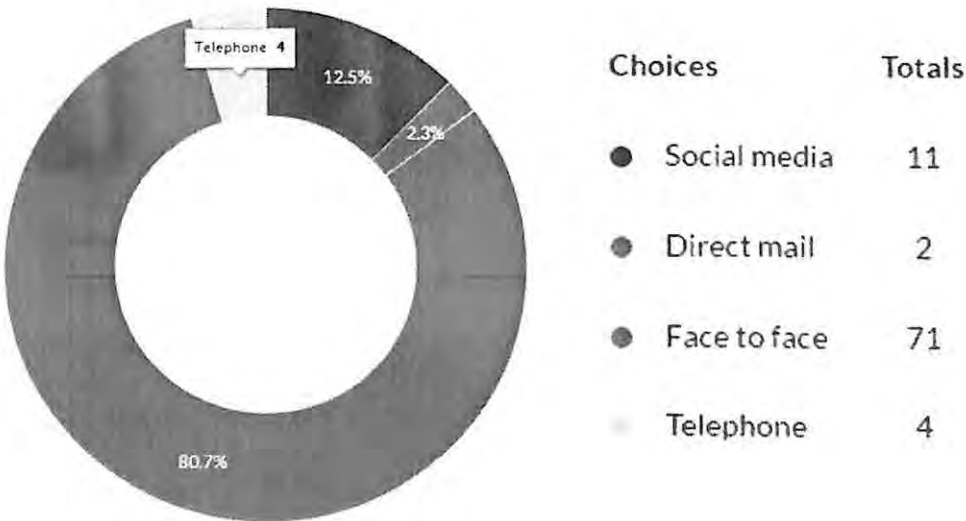
From Table 4 that 45.2 percent of respondents occasionally publish materials on social media whilst 36.9 percent often publish materials on social media. 8.3 percent of respondents said they hardly publish materials on social media followed by 7.1 percent of respondents who said they publish materials every day and 2.4 percent who said they have never published materials on social media.

**Table 5: How often are your stories sourced by or shared by others on social media?**

Choices	Frequency	Percent (%)
Never	1	1.2%
Occasionally	37	43.5%
Hardly	5	5.9%
Often	38	44.7%
Everyday	4	4.7%

**4.2.5 Credibility of social media as a news source**

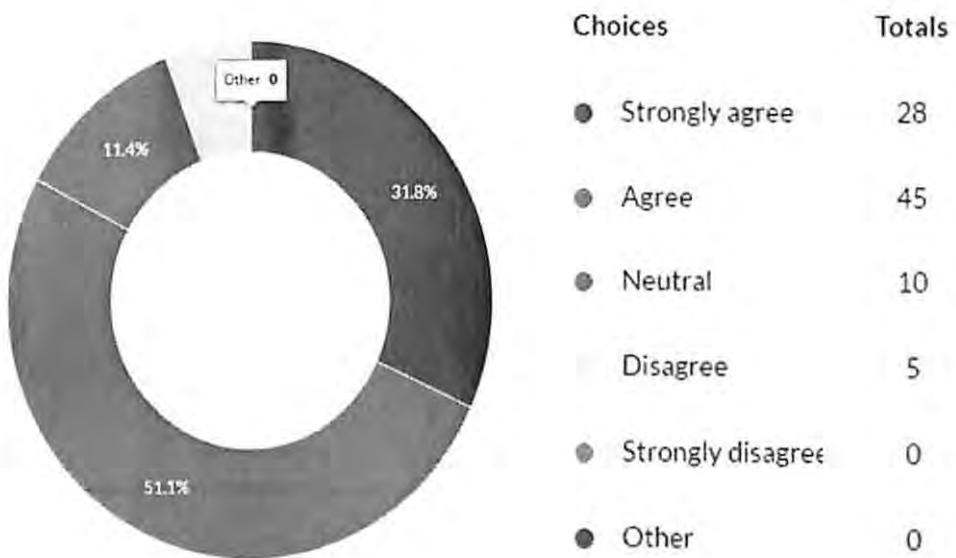
**Figure 14: Which of the following do you trust as a source of news gathering?**



The findings from the chart in Figure 10 above indicate that majority respondents (80.7%) trust face to face as a source of news gathering than social media, direct mail or telephone. When the question which of the following do you trust as a source of news gathering was put to respondents, 12.5 percent said they trusted social media followed by 4.5 percent who said they trust telephone. This indicates that respondents were unable to get credible stories through their social media activity.

#### 4.2.6 Effects of social media

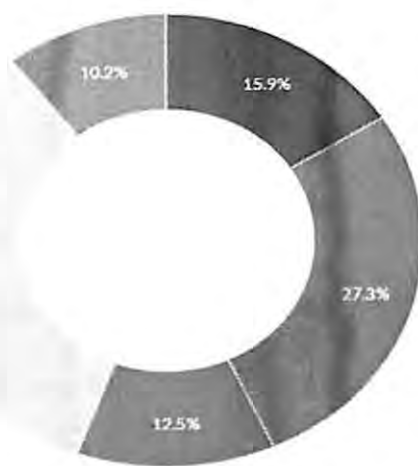
**Figure 15: That social media improves news gathering and news reporting?**



From the data gathered from the chart in Figure 11, though majority of respondents trust face to face more than social media as a source of news gathering, the majority of responsibilities however were of the opinion that social

media improves news gathering and news reporting. When the question to what extent do you agree or disagree that social media improves news gathering and news reporting were put to respondents, 31.8 percent said they strongly agree, 51.1 percent said agree, 11.4 percent said they were neutral followed by 5.7 percent who said they disagree. No respondent said they strongly disagree.

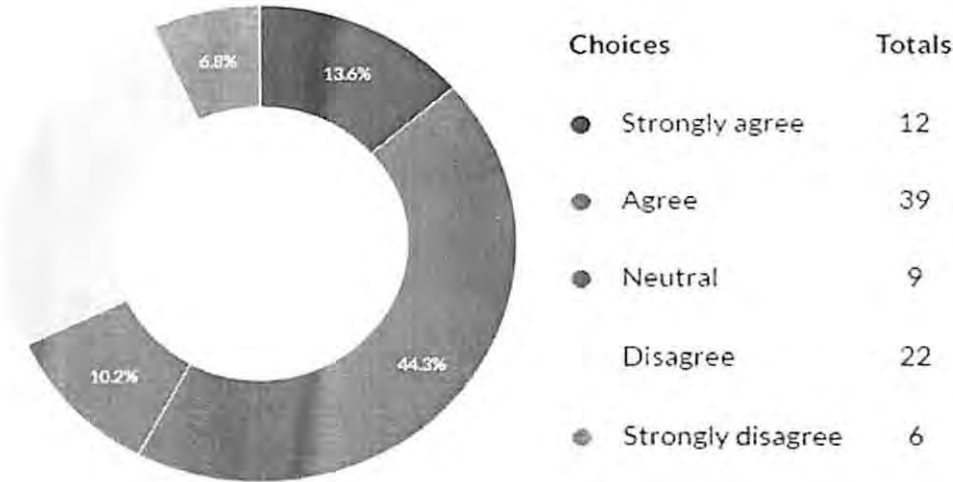
**Figure 16: That social media disrupts newsroom routines?**



Choices	Totals
● Strongly agree	14
● Agree	24
● Neutral	11
● Disagree	30
● Strongly disagree	9

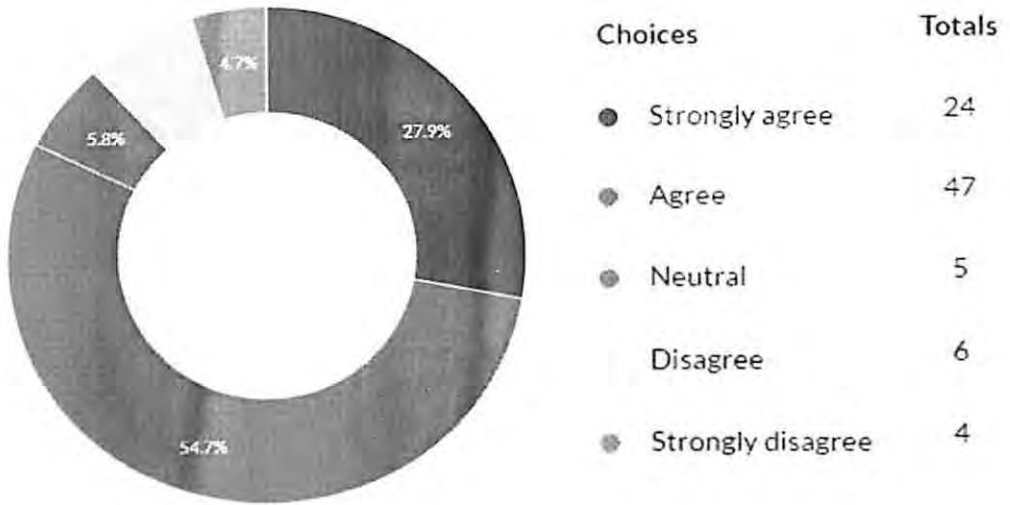
From the data opinions were split as to whether social media disrupts newsroom routines. Whilst 27.3 percent of respondents said they agree that social media disrupts newsroom routines and 15.9 percent also said they strongly agree that it disrupts newsroom routines, 34.1 percent of respondents however said they disagree and 10.2 percent of respondents said they strongly disagree that social media disrupts newsroom routines. 12.5 percent of respondents on their part said they were neutral as to whether social media disrupts newsroom routines.

**Figure 17: That social media negatively affects journalistic standards?**



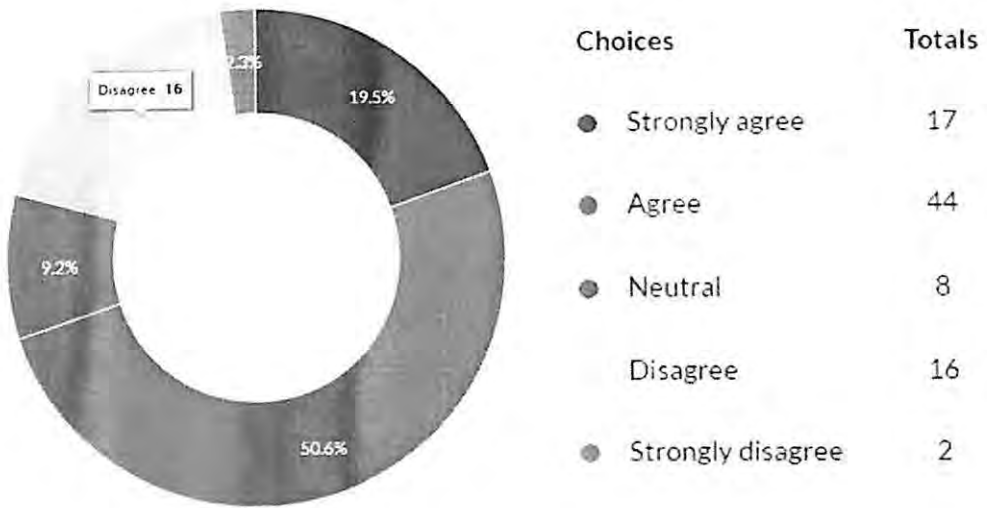
With regards to whether or not social media negatively affects journalistic standards, majority respondents (44.3%) said they agree it negatively affects journalistic standards, 13.6 percent said they strongly agree. However 25 percent said they disagree it affects journalistic standards negatively and 6.8 percent also said they strongly disagree that social media negatively affects journalistic standards. About one tenth of the respondents (10.2%) said they were neutral.

**Figure 18: That social media has affected gatekeeping?**



Majority of the respondents were of the opinion that social media had affected gatekeeping. Whilst 54.7 percent said they agree, 27.9 percent said they strongly agree that social media had affected gatekeeping. Some respondents (5.8%) were however neutral and 7 percent and 4.7 percent said they disagree and strongly disagree respectively.

**Figure 19: That social media in anyway influences your daily journalistic practice?**



The majority of respondents (50.6%) agreed that social media in any way affects their journalistic practice followed by 19.5 percent who said they strongly agree that social media affects their journalistic practice. Nonetheless 18.4 percent said they disagree and 2.3 percent said they strongly disagree that social media affects their daily journalistic practice.

#### 4.2.7 Employers attitude to social media

Figure 20: Management support in use of social media



The majority of respondents said their employer's attitude to social media was positive. Most journalists (67%) said that they have free access to use social media at the work place and that the data revealed that four out of five (88.5%) said their employer provide resources such as tablet, phone, laptop, and computer to enable them use social media more effectively. However the majority (81.8%) said their employer did not have any rules concerning social media and that the majority (63.6%) also said they have never received any training in social media use although they (61.2%) were of the opinion that they were personally responsible for their training in social media use. 36.9 percent of the respondents on their part believed their employer was responsible for their training in social media use.

Asked how they think their use of technology would be like in the future, the majority 92 percent said it would increase while 6.8 percent believed their use of technology would remain the same.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

This chapter looks at a summary of the actual findings, problem statement, objectives and a discussion of the actual findings in comparison with the other related studies cited in Chapter Two, a discussion of the actual findings in relation with the theories cited in Chapter Two and a discussion of implications of the findings to stakeholders, respondents and suggestions for further research and a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of insights drawn from the results. The conclusions made by the researcher and recommendations have also been discussed in this chapter.

#### **5.1 Summary of main findings**

After successful data collection from the field, this research has produced results that show that print journalists at Graphic Communication Group Limited (GCGL) are using social media to improve newsgathering. Majority of the journalists surveyed, about nine out of ten were using social media indicating that social media has become part of the journalist tool kit. The results show that despite some journalists expressing concern about the implications for the quality of their work when they use social media, its usage is now a standard practice and that the impact of social media on journalists is also influencing how journalists rate the impact of their stories online through the number of views, shares, likes and re-tweets a story receives on social media platforms. The most often used

social media platforms by the journalists at GCGL are WhatsApp and Facebook. Overall the GCGL was progressive in terms of social media adoption as the company offered journalists mobile devices and tablets to ease their social media use, however, the GCGL had no policy and no training programme on social media use for their journalists.

### **5.1.1 Summary of the Problem Statement**

The basis on which this research is prepared, takes into account the global growing trend towards journalists' use of social media for newsgathering especially in the United States of America (USA) and Europe as Jordaan (2013), Cision (2015) and Oriella (2013) reports indicate. Within the African context very little investigations have been done, although there are signs news organizations are integrating social media in their work. According to Atton and Mabweazara (2011) mainstream journalists in Africa are taking advantage of new ways to practice the profession but the move lacks theoretical and empirical grounding. This study therefore investigated how newspaper journalists at Graphic Communications Group Limited (GCGL) in Ghana are using social media tools in news gathering and how these tools are impacting on their work and their organization.

### **5.1.2 Summary of the objectives**

The general objective of this study is to contribute to the general body of knowledge by investigating how print journalists at Graphic Communications Group Limited (GCGL) are using social media tools.

### **Specific objectives:**

- To find out if journalists at Graphic Communications Group Limited (GCGL) are using new media tools in their work.
- To find out if the management of GCGL support the use of new media tools by their journalists.
- To find out if new media tools were having any impact on journalistic work processes at the GCGL and if so to what effect.

#### **5.1.3 Actual findings**

- The findings were able to provide answers for the research questions stated earlier. The study found that majority of the journalists, about nine out of ten were using social media. Out of the 88 responses to the question, do you use social media, 83 (94.3%) said YES. Of the five respondents (5.7%) who said NO to the question, four did not find social media useful and one said it was difficult to use.
- Around two out of three journalists noted changes to their journalistic work as well as newsroom routines due to social media use and that the findings revealed that four out of five journalists surveyed were of the opinion that social media had improved newsgathering.
- More than half of the journalists surveyed think social media had negatively impacted on journalistic standards.

- Overall the Graphic Communications Group Limited was progressive in terms of social media adoption with its journalists using social media the most. The company offered journalists mobile devices and tablets to ease their social media use, however, the GCGL had no policy on social media use. This was same as Deo-Silas (2013) findings which found that media organisations in Ghana do not have comprehensive policy to guide their journalists' use of social media and do not organise training on social media use for their journalists.

## **5.2 DISCUSSION**

The study investigated whether journalists at the GCGL were using social media in their practice. The findings from the study are expected to provide insights as to whether print journalists at GCGL were using social media in their work process, if there were any changes in their daily routines as a result of using social media, if the journalists thought social media use improved their newsgathering and reporting, which age group of journalists used social media the most and whether as an organization, GCGL had embraced social media the most? Since this study was largely exploratory and also given the short time period, no particular effort was put into finding out why journalists responded the way they did.

## **Journalists' use of social media**

Key findings from the study showed that 100 percent of respondents were active online with majority of them (94.3%) using social media. The majority (67.8%) used Whatsapp and that they used it to keep in touch with friends and family (23.4%), to find information and share news stories (20.1), to make professional and business contacts (16.7%) and to promote news stories (13.4%). About four out of five said they used social media for both private and work purposes. This confirms the March 2015 state of the media report by Cision (2015) on changing newsrooms and shifting media priorities that advocates that social media has become part of the journalist tool kit. It also confirms Deo-Silas (2013) findings that Ghanaian journalists were using Whatsapp and Facebook to engage their audience in their publications. About half of respondents said their stories are often shared on social media platforms. This shows that despite some journalists expressing concern about the implications for the quality of their work when they use social media, others were taking advantage of its usage to rate the access of their stories online. The results confirms Oriella's (2013) Digital Journalism Study shows that the number of views, comments, likes and re-tweets a story receives on social media platforms in the United States has become a popular measure of a journalist's success. This also means that social media has become more than just a portal for friendly chitchat but the news media in Ghana were largely open to using it with journalists adopting it for work purposes. The implications are that journalists were willing to try new communications channels which is also similar to Cision (2011) journalism study that revealed that majority

of journalists in the UK, Finland and Germany were using social media for work purposes.

### **Effects of social media**

The survey data showed that social media improved newsgathering and reporting. Majority of journalists surveyed (51.1%) thought that social media improved newsgathering and reporting. This is indicative that social media has affected the nature of the newsgathering process and the way information is disseminated. The advantages are that social media helps make a journalist's job better, help journalists understand what issues people really care about and are great for networking and for searching raw information, which can be accessed for free. Quite clearly, the findings points to the conclusion that journalists who were using social media had an advantage of getting tips or leads and are able to monitor beats very well online unlike those who were not using social media. Again they are also able to easily get interviewees for a story through social media and are able to filter for information coming their way. However, it means journalists must sift through the rubble of cyber noise and verify facts. The implications are that the concept of what scoop or breaking news is changing and journalists needs to train themselves in digital skills because it is a must now in the industry. This is because on many occasions social media get to publish breaking news first and the journalists would have to do the follow up with more details so as to be able to engage and entice the audience. From the findings eight out of nine were using it to measure stories access through the number of shares and likes on social media.

One of the objectives was to explore how management of GCGL was supporting the use of social media tools by their journalists. The research discovered that management of GCGL has embraced social media use with the provision of tablets to journalists for easy access. It however turned out that there is no policy on social media use. Going forward, it would be good for the GCGL to have a policy so as to guide the journalists on social media use.

Beyond its usage, another objective was to find out if new media tools were having any impact on news gathering processes at the GCGL. The research discovered a mixed effect. Even though it has improved newsgathering and reporting, the majority (82.6%) say it has affected gatekeeping. This is because they no longer controlled what is to be published and that their gatekeeping powers have been whittled down, since they were now in competition with social media. The explanation is that journalist no longer controlled what information to publish, rather they follow social media to determine what interests the public so as to write stories along those lines. Again, the advantage social media offers citizens to be able to publish whatever information they desire means that journalists cannot suppress any information but rather have to be proactive to engage with their audience so as to be able to publish information and to be able to continue to be relevant. This means that if journalists are changing newsgathering processes to suit the social media landscape, newsrooms too will have to change accordingly to be fully integrated as a newsroom fully connected to the internet and social media.

About half of respondents said their stories are often shared on social media platforms which shows that despite some journalists expressing concern about the implications for the quality of their work when they use social media, its usage is now a standard practice and that the impact of social media on journalists is also influencing how journalists rate the access of their stories online. The results confirms Oriella's 2013 Digital Journalism Study that shows that the number of views, comments, likes and re-tweets a story receives on social media platforms in the United States has become a popular measure of a journalist's success.

Gender distribution for survey respondents showed that 64.8 percent of survey respondents were male and 35.2 percent were female. Social media use was high among both males and females. Majority of females surveyed (96.8%) said they used social media compared to their male counterparts (93%). This is an indication that age is an important factor in social media usage. Pew (2013) Internet study on social networking suggests that majority of social media users (89%) in the United States fell between the ages of 18-29 years. Overall, more than half the journalists (70.4%) surveyed were 35 years or older. 35.2 percent were 35 – 44 years and another 35.2 percent were also 45 years or older. This was followed by respondents (17%) who were between ages 25 – 34 and those (12.5%) between ages 18 – 24. All the journalists (5.7%) who said they did not use social media were aged 45 or older. This suggests that the older journalists at Graphic were not interested in social media use for work purposes, rather it was the younger journalists who were interested in social media use. The findings

support Pew (2014) findings that younger journalists were more likely to adopt social media than older ones.

The survey data revealed that more than half (59.1%) of survey respondents who used social media were first degree holders. Pew (2014) indicates that social media use was highest among respondents who had some form of college education. D'Arcy (2012) also endorses that journalists with college degrees were more likely to use social media. Rogers (2003), notes that early innovation adopters generally tend to be more educated and are more likely to embrace new channels of communication.

### **5.2.1 Actual findings and Theoretical framework**

Social media propelled by user-generated content has become a rich source of information and according to Roberts (2005), the Internet has always challenged journalists' roles as gatekeepers. Lewis (2010) concludes that Journalists derive much of their sense of purpose and prestige through their control of information in their normative roles. In other words, they take for granted the idea that society needs them as journalists and journalists alone to fulfill the functions of watchdog publishing, truth-telling, independence, timeliness, and ethical adherence in the context of news and public affairs information. Chin-Fook and Simmonds (2011) citing Finnemann (2011) argues that the interactive potential of digital media increases the ways in which individuals can transform the flow of news. Chin-Fook and Simmonds (2011) contend that though some scholars argue that

gatekeeping may be irrelevant in the age of digital media, gatekeeping theory remains relevant today. They argue that new media technology with its interactivity has rather introduced another level of gatekeeping.

Ali and Fahmy (2013) suggest that traditional media's news production processes have been largely unaffected. Using the theoretical concept of gatekeeping, Ali and Fahmy examined the relationship between citizen journalism and mainstream media and how gatekeepers continue to maintain the status quo in regard to news about and in these conflict zones of Iran, Egypt and Libya. The findings confirmed scholarly literature regarding the role of traditional media as gatekeepers, particularly the relationship between traditional media and citizen journalism. Scholars such (Karlsson, 2011) suggest that there is a flourishing but restrained acceptance of user generated content. Thus, despite the fact that many news stories written by citizen journalists are available in traditional media outlets, the stories that make the big headlines are the ones that make it past the traditional organizations' gatekeepers. The finding from this study was however in contrast with Ali and Fahmy's findings that despite all these new challenges posed by social media, journalists are still subject to gatekeeping practices. From the findings, 82.6 per cent of journalists surveyed believed that social media had affected gatekeeping.

Rogers' Diffusion of Innovation Theory offers insight and provides reasoning which can be tested in this example of social media adaptation. According to Rogers in any social or cultural organization, there are levels at which different people react to change. Specifically, people react to advances in technology in

certain stages. Rogers (2005) observed innovations will be adopted based on their relative advantage though certain personal characteristics may offer clues to how quickly people adopt them. Journalists can certainly fit into this framework regarding the initial use of social media to distribute news.

From the findings, journalists at Graphic Communications Group Limited (GCGL) have adopted social media in newsgathering. From D'Arcy (2012) study on social media use among television journalists, factors such as age, sex and education were important in social media adoption. The findings from this study showed that though age and sex are a factor in social media use at GCGL, education level did not prohibit its use among journalists. From the findings 93 percent of male journalists at GCGL were using social media compared to 96.8 percent of female journalists who were using social media. Social media use was more prevalent among 18-44 age group. Respondents (5.7%) who did not use social media mentioned usefulness as inhibitors.

Porter and Donthu (2006) argues that access barriers may serve as deterrents to social media adoption. The survey findings from the study reveal that on the whole, the journalists and their news organization perceive social media to be useful to their work and that social media use has become quite a norm in the newsroom. This supports Nasri and Chaferddine (2012) findings that attitudes and social norms are factors in social media adoption.

With regards to the objectives, this research has been able to provide answers for the research questions and set objectives stated earlier. On the whole the findings

show that journalists at GCGL have embraced social media as part of their tool kit.

### **5.2.2 Implications**

The outcome of this research, reveal significant practical implications. It shows that the media landscape is changing with the times for newspaper oriented companies such as Graphic Communications Group Limited in adopting digital technologies. The survey has shown that journalists do realize there is a need for them and journalism to transform and evolve along with the changes happening in the technological and cultural scenes. The findings show most of the respondents are not worried about making the transition and many of them are already preparing themselves for the digital shift. The findings on the survey reveal that journalists are beginning to leverage on social media to receive, gather and distribute news.

But while many journalists unclearly anticipate positive promotional effects from using social media, the potential downside is often underestimated and hardly empirically tested. News organizations increasingly warn against the risks of journalists' social media use with guidelines that focus on preventing trash-talking and perceived conflicts of interest (e.g., Associated Press, 2013; Reuters, 2013; The Washington Post, 2011) while encouraging social media use itself. Findings by (Alejandro 2010) reveal that journalists' social media activities can hurt their professional image even without any serious misbehavior. News organizations should be aware that journalists' social media activity can affect not only the

professional reputation of the journalists but also that of their news products. The survey has shown that the GCGL has no policy on social media use by its journalists. As a researcher, I believe that the journalists' social media activities can affect their individual reputation as well as that of their media organization because a social media network account is now an accepted extension of a person.

It is based on this premise that this researcher, proposes the formulation of social media use policy for the GCGL to serve as a guide on how their journalists use social media because journalists have to embrace social media outlets because these are a rich source of potential stories.

### **Proposal for future research**

The many opportunities for further research have been one of the successes of this investigation. Some of these have come directly out of the data, indicating a chance to dig deeper in a specific area that was not one of the original focuses, while addressing a similar field to that of this study.

The data implied that younger journalists, who had spent a larger part of their working and personal life familiar with social media, were much more receptive and accepting of the impact of social media on journalism. This was not an area of focus in the study, just as considering the amount of time as a professional journalist wasn't, but both these factors likely possess significant enough influence to warrant their own investigation, or at least a broader study encompassing looking into it.

Another branch of research that could be pursued is including audience members in the investigation, aside from or as well as the journalists. The audience inevitably would have much to say if they were interviewed on both the shift in journalism as a result of social media, and the rise of the citizen journalist and how they as the audience felt about that.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

The data obtained and subsequent data analysis certainly emphasize the fact that social media has had, and continues to have a strong influence in the field of journalism. Interactivity with the audience and potential sources has led the journalist away from merely being a reporter of news. In fact, the notion of the journalist has moved so significantly away from aspects of its traditional basis through these influences that it could be said to be a different role altogether in today's social media age. They now have a responsibility to pursue stories quicker, strengthen networks, encourage sharing of articles, and respond to their readers, and because of the nature of social media, they are expected to do this in near real-time.

This survey is by no means perfect, but it has served its purpose as an attempt to get some semblance of social media usage among journalists from Graphic Communications Group Limited (GCGL) and their sentiment about the digital shift and the impact of social media. Admittedly however, there were certain limitations to the study such as sample population. The findings revealed that

journalists at GCGL were embracing social media and were quite optimistic about its potential as an information resource. Overall social media was widely used by journalists in their work. Though social media had become a part of journalists' news process there was indication that it had affected their gatekeeping function or disrupted newsroom routines. The GCGL allowed its journalists to use social media.

#### **5.4 Limitations**

The study had a few limitations. Not all the journalists working within the Graphic Communications Group Limited were available for the survey. The fact that some of the journalists were located outside of Accra and the busy schedule of the newsroom made it difficult to gain access to all the respondents. Distributing survey questionnaires posed quite a challenge. Some of the journalists declined participating in the survey. Most of the journalists were slow in returning their questionnaires and this presented a delay in the data collection process. Despite its limitations, the survey highlighted important features of social media usage.

#### **5.5 Recommendations**

1. Formulation of social media use policy for the GCGL to serve as a guide on how journalists use social media From the findings, the Graphic Communications Group Limited (GCGL) selected for this study has not developed any comprehensive policy to guide its journalists' use of social

media. Social media is still a largely unregulated territory. Vast amounts of posts are generated each day and a lot of content that go online are often unverified and this can present potential dangers for journalists. It would be appropriate for the GCGL to develop written guidelines or update their already existing guidelines to encompass social media specifically.

2. Secondly, the GCGL do not have any active programmes to train its journalists on using social media. Social media is quite dynamic and continues to evolve with new features coming along all the time. Google and other organizations like Facebook and Twitter have developed special forums and tools to enable journalists make better use of their vast resource. It is important that GCGL take advantage of these resources to ensure its journalists receive regular training on social media and other effective tools that will enable them manage the information they come across. Mobile computing is gaining grounds quickly around the world and in Ghana. Social media sites like Facebook and Twitter are pushing more towards mobile applications.
3. The findings from the study also reveal that though most respondents were using social media, some journalists over 45 years were not using social media. Older journalists should be encouraged to take advantage of these new media platforms.

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## APPENDIX

### QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear respondent, I am a student of the Ghana Institute of Journalism, pursuing a research in communication to contribute to the general body of knowledge by investigating *how print journalists are using social media tools*. I humbly seek your participation as you spend some time to answer the questions listed below. Please be assured of confidentiality of the information you provide.

#### SECTION A (Bio data)

Please tick where applicable in the box / space provided below

##### 1. Please specify your gender

- a. Male [    ]                      b. Female [    ]

##### 2. Age

- a. 18 – 24 [    ]                      b. 25-34 [    ]                      c. 35-44 [    ]                      d. 45  
or older [    ]

##### 3. Academic and professional qualifications

- a. Secondary [    ]  
b. Diploma [    ]  
c. 1<sup>st</sup> Degree [    ]  
d. 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree [    ]

##### 4. Did you attend journalism school?

- a. Yes [    ]                      b. No [    ]

##### 5. How long have you been practicing as a journalist?

- a. 1-3 years [    ]  
b. 4-5years [    ]  
c. 5-10years [    ]  
d. More than 10 years [    ]

#### SECTION B (*social media use*)

6. Do you go online?                      1. Yes [    ]                      2. No [    ]

##### 7. How do you access online material?

- a. Computer [    ]  
b. Mobile phone [    ]  
3. Tablet [    ]

##### 8. What do you often do online?

- a. Mail [    ]

- b. News [ ]
- c. Entertainment [ ]
- d. Sports [ ]
- e. social networking [ ]

**9. Which search engines do you use to research news story ideas?**

- a. Google [ ]
- b. Yahoo [ ]
- c. Bing [ ]
- d. MSN [ ]
- e. Wikipedia [ ]
- d. Social media [ ]
- e. Other [ ] specify)\_\_\_\_\_

**10. Do you use social media?**

a. Yes [ ]

b. No [ ]

**11. If No why?**

- a. Not useful [ ]
- b. Difficult to use [ ]
- c. Expensive [ ]
- d. Other [ ] (specify)\_\_\_\_\_

**12. Which social media platforms do you use? Select all answers that apply.**

- a. Facebook [ ]
- b. Twitter [ ]
- c. Google+ [ ]
- d. Whatsapp [ ]
- e. LinkedIn [ ]
- f. YouTube [ ]
- g. Other [ ] (specify)\_\_\_\_\_

**13. Which one (1) of these social media platforms do you use very often than the others?**

- a. Facebook [ ]
- b. Twitter [ ]
- c. Google+ [ ]
- d. Whatsapp [ ]
- e. LinkedIn [ ]
- f. YouTube [ ]
- g. Other [ ] (specify)\_\_\_\_\_

**14. What is the frequency of visiting social networking sites?**

- a. Everyday [ ]
- b. Twice a week [ ]
- c. Once a week [ ]
- d. Once a month [ ]

**15. What time do you spend on social networking sites per day?**

- a. 2hrs [ ]
- b. 2-4hrs [ ]
- c. 4-6hrs [ ]
- d. 6hrs or more [ ]

**16. Why do you use social media? Select all answers that apply.**

- a. To keep in touch with friends and family. [ ]
- b. To meet new people. [ ]
- c. To make professional and business contacts. [ ]
- d. To share photos, videos, and music. [ ]
- e. To discover new music, books, films, and other entertainment. [ ]
- f. To find information and share news stories. [ ]
- g. To promote news stories. [ ]

**17. How long have you been using social media?**

- a. 10 years [ ]
- b. 5 years [ ]
- c. 2 years [ ]
- d. 1 year [ ]
- e. Other [ ]

**18. In what capacity do you normally use social media?**

- a. For private purposes
- b. For official business or professional capacity?
- c. Both

**19. How often do you follow up or report on a story you saw on social media?**

- a. Never [ ]
- b. Hardly [ ]
- c. Often [ ]
- d. Everyday [ ]

**20. How often do you publish materials on social media?**

- a. Never [ ]
- b. Occasionally [ ]
- c. Hardly [ ]
- d. Often [ ]
- e. Everyday [ ]

**21. How often are your stories sourced by or shared by others on social media?**

- a. Never [ ]
- b. Occasionally [ ]
- c. Hardly [ ]

- d. Often [ ]
- e. Everyday [ ]

**22. Which of the following do you trust as a source of news gathering?**

- a. Social media [ ]
- b. Direct mail [ ]
- c. Face to face [ ]
- d. Telephone [ ]

**SECTION C** (*Impact of social media on journalistic work processes*)

*To what extent do you agree, strongly agree, neutral, strongly disagree or disagree with the following statements.*

**23. That social media improves news gathering and news reporting?**

- a. Strongly agree [ ]
- b. Agree [ ]
- c. Neutral [ ]
- d. Disagree [ ]
- e. Strongly disagree [ ]

**24. That social media disrupts newsroom routines?**

- a. Strongly agree [ ]
- b. Agree [ ]
- c. Neutral [ ]
- d. Disagree [ ]
- e. Strongly disagree [ ]

**25. That social media negatively affects journalistic standards?**

- a. Strongly agree [ ]
- b. Agree [ ]
- c. Neutral [ ]
- d. Disagree [ ]
- e. Strongly disagree [ ]

**26. That social media has affected gatekeeping?**

- a. Strongly agree [ ]
- b. Agree [ ]
- c. Neutral [ ]
- d. Disagree [ ]
- e. Strongly disagree [ ]

**27. That social media in anyway influences your daily journalistic practice?**

- a. Strongly agree [ ]
- b. Agree [ ]
- c. Neutral [ ]
- d. Disagree [ ]
- e. Strongly disagree [ ]

**SECTION D** (*Management support in the use of new media tools by journalists*)

**28. Do you have access to social media in the workplace?**

- a. Unable to access [ ]
- b. Prohibited [ ]
- c. Limited access [ ]
- d. Encouraged for work only [ ]
- e. Free access [ ]

**29. Does your organization have any rules concerning your use of social media?**

- a. Yes [ ]
- b. No [ ]

**30. Does your employer provide any resources (tablet, phone, laptop, computer etc.) to enable you use social media more effectively?**

- a. Yes [ ]
- b. No [ ]

**31. Have you ever received training on using social media for journalism?**

- a. Yes [ ]
- b. No [ ]

**32. Who do you feel is responsible for your training on social media use?**

- a. My self [ ]
- b. My employer [ ]

**33. How will your use of technology change in the next 3 years?**

- a. Decline [ ]
- b. Same [ ]
- c. Increase [ ]

**Thank you for your time**