Podcasting and Vodcast as Tool for Media Communication: A New Frontier for Social and Security Awareness

[1]Nwabueze Ekwem & [2]Ogbe, Sunday John
[1]Department of Mass Communication
The Federal Polytechnic, Nasarawa, Nasarawa State
[2]Senior Research Fellow/Deputy Training Coordinator
Institute for Development Research and Training (IDRT) Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria

A b s t r a c t

Podcasting and Vodcasting have become the new normal in information content creation and dissemination. These channels of communication over the internet have been embraced by the educational and entertainment sectors in the sharing of knowledge, musical audio and video files to the public using mediums such as YouTube and Spotify among other numerous channels. Popular media houses like Channels, African Independent Television (AIT), Voice of Nigeria (VON) and NTA and musical artists in Nigeria like Tuface, Davido, Wizkid, and Burna Boy to name a few. With the rising level of insecurities in Nigeria, the use of Press releases and information on public service broadcast channels is considered less effective. Thus, the successes recorded with the adoption of Podcast and Vodcast, especially with regards to information sharing during the Covid-19 lockdown made it imperative for the solicitation of these new norms of communication to be adopted in the creation of awareness as a way of intelligence gathering and sharing. This paper is an expository discourse to further drive the need for the choice of podcast and vodcast to promote social and security awareness.

Keywords: *Awareness, Podcast, Security, Vodcast.*

Corresponding Author: Nwabueze Ekwem

Background to the Study

Nigeria and Nigerians are daily inundated by real acts and threats of terrorism and insecurities. Numerous instances of armed bandits and herdsmen ransacking whole communities, killings individuals and destroying properties to the suicide bombing of a private nursery and primary in Kano State, in the Northwestern region of Nigeria which was initially traced to the explosion of a gas welding shop and later confirmed to be a suicide bombing (Nimi, 2022; Torelli, 2022). The abduction of more than 60 persons on a homeward bound night train from Abuja to Kaduna led to a significant loss of lives, and the destruction of rail transport activities on the Kaduna- Abuja railway services (Maishanu, 2022). The unending almost daily killings, and kidnappings of villagers, travellers and now clerics across different states in the country. For example, the continuous banditry activities in states like Katsina wherever the advance convoy of the president came under attack (Ayitojo, 2022). In Zamfara, killings of harmless villagers have led to a call by the Governor of the state, Ibrahim Matwelle for its indigenes to apply for arms to protect themselves since the nation's security apparatus has failed in its constitutional duty to protect them (Odita and Terhemba, 2022). Similarly, the shooting of worshippers at a Catholic church in Owo, Ondo, South Western Nigeria (BBC News, (2022) and the daredevil attack on Kuje Medium Correlational facility within the precinct of the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria indicated that the country is insecure (Khalid, and Davies, 2022; Odeniyi, 2022). This then means that the need for security consciousness and awareness has become a necessity that goes beyond intelligence gathering to the dissemination of information that could and would mate the citizen aware of the dangers these numerous threats and manifest acts of insecurities posed to their lives, properties, national security, stability and cohesion.

Nigeria, since the entrance of the Global System of telecommunication otherwise known as GSM in 2001, has since subscriber's usage across the major telecom services providers namely MTN, Airtel (formerly Vmobile, Celtel, Zain), 9mobile (formerly Etisalat) and Globacom reaching over 180 million subscriber base, the highest on the continent. Similarly, its internet usage per user in the country has also grown by leaps and bounds. According to Statista (2022 a&b), the country has over 84 internet users and 90 million social media subscribers using Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp and the rest. To be precise, the country is ranked behind Egypt in internet usage on the continent.

Primarily, most of the usage of the internet in the country are traced to entertainment purpose and a few on the side of academic business and government communication. The usage of the internet for entertainment purposes is boosted by an already thriving musical and movie industry which is touted to Beth the largest on the continent and second behind Bollywood in terms of content production. Furthermore, the proliferation of short drama skirts that could be viewed on the social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram as well as shared on individual or group contacts on WhatsApp are now becoming prominent and permanent features of our daily media contents consumptions. Hence the need to look at how there could be harnessed to significantly contribute to security consciousness and awareness of the overwhelming level of insecurities rather than performing mere entertainment functions to the public.

Statement of the Problem
The role of the media in producing and disseminating security-conscious content and messages that could be broadcast to the public in this regard is once again brought to the front burner. It has been established through several empirical studies (Okoroafor, Okoro,, and Tayo-Garbson, 2012; Dalhatu, Erunke, and Idakula, 2019; Dare, Bamidele, and Oluwasanmi, 2020) that the mass media in Nigeria has been able to significantly carry out the responsibility of raising awareness on national security issues, especially using print (Newspaper, bulletins and fliers) as well as electronic (radio and television) to do this. Podcasting and Vodcasting have become the new normal in information content creation and dissemination. These channels of communication over the internet have been embraced by the educational and entertainment sectors in the sharing of knowledge, musical audio and video files to the public using mediums such as YouTube and Spotify among other numerous channels. Popular media houses like Channels, African Independent Television (AIT), Voice of Nigeria (VON) and NTA and musical artists in Nigeria like Tuface, Davido, Wizkid, and Burna Boy to name a few. With the rising level of insecurities in Nigeria, the use of Press releases and information on public service broadcast channels is considered less effective. Thus, the successes recorded with the adoption of Podcast and Vodcast, especially with regards to information sharing during the Covid-19 lockdown made it imperative for the solicitation of these new norms of communication to be adopted in the creation of awareness as a way of intelligence gathering and sharing.

Aims and Objectives
This paper aims to explicate the possibility of using podcasts and vodcast as not only information and entertainment tools but that which could be used as enlightenment tools in raising security consciousness and awareness with the view of enhancing public preparedness in addressing these insecurities threatening national security. The specific objectives of the paper include:

1. Explain the usage of podcasting and vodcasting in information content production and dissemination.
2. Examine the effect of podcasts and vodcast in raising social security consciousness and awareness.

Methodology
Expository research according to Singh (2007) seeks the use of expository essays in presenting the points that support views which this paper builds on to establish the findings of the objectives of these studies. Hence, to bring to the fore the prospect of the adoption of a phenomenon of discourse beyond the purview of social entertainment to that which could be used for security information dissemination the expository research design was adopted for this paper.

Literature Review
As new opportunities in communication begin to show up with technological advancements in content production, transmission and distribution especially through Internet Protocol Enabled Television (IPTV) and audio-linked channels over the internet, so is the pervasiveness

of broadcast content geared to socially educating and entertaining the public. One of the beautiful ways this is being done is through Podcasting and Vodcasting. A podcast or vodcast according to David, Auvikki de Boon and Smith (2021) is an audio or video file placed on the Web for individuals to listen to or view primarily on MP3 and MP4 enabled players such as iPod, android and smartphone or television. Podcasting and vodcasting are seen as potentially powerful information sharing, and instructional mediums (Johnson, 2005; Mackey, 2005). Podcasting and vodcasting should not only be seen as a convergence medium, that is to say, but the amalgam of audio, television, and films into the internet or web also listened to or viewed across multiple streams of channels. It is now a communication exercise that is forcing the broadcast industry to rethink how content should be produced, distributed and consumed by audiences and viewers. Empirically, it has been established as a channel of communication, especially that which is information driven to relay messages to a select group of people. The study carried out by Chung and Kim (2015), aided social interaction and entertainment among young adults and students. One very significant way which made these channels of communication prominent was during the Covid-19 pandemic where according to Urfan, Ningrum, and Br. Ginting (2020), greatly keeps the classroom going and enhances school interactions between students and lecturers. The failure of significant adoption of these mediums led to the loss of almost an academic session in Nigeria's public schools. In a review of several studies, David, Auvikki de Boon and Smith (2021) established the potential inherent in the use of podcasts and vodcast in knowledge sharing among farmers in the United Kingdom. It is these potentials that are being suggested should be leveraged to make the public in Nigeria socially aware of the heightened level of insecurities in the country. Such awareness could be said to be now beyond the adoption of just a few means of communication, especially through the use of the mainstream media.

The Usage of Podcasting and Vodcasting in Information Dissemination
Nigeria is one country that could be said to have been blessed with virtually all forms of medium of communication covering the indigenous, traditional and new media-enabled platforms of communication. Thus, it could be said that content production is no longer within the grip of professionally trained media men and women but also left in the hand of the citizens. The ability of the citizen to produce and disseminate audio and visual content is further enhanced by the plausibility of production applications or in short form apps such as Canva that could be uploaded to social media platforms on the internet and mobile phones such as Tiktoks, Instagram, YouTubes channels, Facebook reels and even contacts on WhatsApp as statuses. The ability to help the audience, viewer and listener with this content is unprecedented and still growing. Content producers such as Mr Marcaroni (Freaky Freaky). Sirbalo, Dimmykiss, Broda Shaggy, Emmanuella of the Mark Angel production and a host of others too numerous to mention whose contents are purely comedy skits and for entertainment purposes could be involved by the security agencies to produce security tips content that could reach the public seeing that their production enjoys greats followership. The tendency of podcasts and vodcast from these content producers has a significant level of believability in perception and influence than when such is promoted solely by the agents of government themselves to a large extent.

The Effect of Podcast and Vodcast in Raising Information Awareness
Content producers in today's media world do not only produce for the mainstream media the convergence of the media enables internet multimedia functionalities and dynamism in production, transmission and distribution. Hardly would you find any media platform or outlet without a podcasting or vodcasting capacity and capability to reach out to both local and global audiences and viewers online and offline. By online, I want to say as the information is being communicated in real-time and offline, I want to say, audience and viewers have the chance to download previous media content and listen to or view them. Notable media organizations such as the British Broadcasting Corporation – BBC, Voice of American – VOA to mention just few have adopted this process in news content dissemination. Back home here in Nigeria, media stations such as channels, African Independent Television – AIT, Arise Television News and even the Nigeria Television Authority have adopted similar modes of content distribution.

On the entertainment scene, Nigerian musical artists like Tuface, Davido, Burna Boys, and Wizkid to mention just a few readily release their musical tracts on Spotify (a musical podcast platform to its teeming musical fans. Similarly, the movie industry in Nigeria to be not left behind in adopting Netflix (a vodcast) platform for its movie releases. However, the plausibility of message communication, using these platforms, and usage for security awareness and information have not been tapped into here in Nigeria even as it is long being done in advanced countries such as the United States of America – USA and the United Kingdom – the UK as established in the study carried out by Barraco (2013).

The effect of such content on public consciousness and awareness could significantly address the problem of scepticism with information disseminated from publicly controlled or owned media platforms or channels. However, there is the need to also curtail the excesses inherent in podcasts and vodcasts that could be inimical to national security does to the production of content aimed at misinforming the public. Here, the issue of fake news which has been one of the reasons for the attempt by the government to censor the social media space comes to mind. However, the fear of misinformation and fake content production and dissemination (UNESCO, 2018), podcast and vodcast has been found to have significantly enhanced communication in academic institutions where it has been deployed for real-time online learning as well as in the business world where it is used for business presentation of documentaries using the internet as its main feed. It is pertinent to state here that, Nigeria as a country, could leverage were on the advantages inherent in the adoption of this medium in helping the government, security agencies, Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as well as individuals in adopting these tools for security awareness and sensitizations content production and dissemination to the public. Who knows if this could become another way of security intelligence communication sharing that is largely missing in our efforts at addressing the monstrosity and audacious dastardly acts of insecurities bedevilling our country beyond the use of official press releases and conferences on security threats and military exploits the Defence Information Directorates of the country's Armed Forces.

Conclusion

The shift in the use of entertainment platforms from home theatres, cinema, televisions as well as public broadcast services to the internet, android and smartphones has seen the phenomenal growth of podcasts and vodcasts. These new tools have significantly led to more positive musical and coming entertainments to the generality of the public. This has equally brought about economic gains to content producers using these tools as well as made public influences on sundry topical issues, especially during the EndSARs as well as the current call for voters' registration and political participation of the youths in Nigeria's democracy. Adopting such tools for security sensitization and awareness should be seen as a new frontier for communication that should be harnessed by the Federal Government and security agencies to reach the teeming Nigerians that are daily ferreted with information from these platforms. If such an idea has not been thought of before now, it should be, because given the inability of most Nigerians not been able to view public information on their television sets due to erratic and irregularity in power supply, the mobile phones internet serviced social media becomes the ways that new information could be podcasted and vodcasted.

References

Ayitojo, N. (2022). Sad day in Nigeria as gunmen attack presidential convoy, prison, police officers, others. *Premium Times,* July 6, Retrieved from https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/541153-sad-day-in-nigeria-as-gunmen-attack-presidential-convoy-prison-police-officers-others.html .

Barraco, R. A. (2013). *Information security awareness and training for small businesses*. Big Rapids, Michigan: Ferris State University

BBC News, (2022). Nigeria Owo church attack: Gunmen kill Catholic worshippers in Ondo. *BBC News Africa,* June 6. Retrieved from https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-61697409

Chung, M. Y., & Kim, S. K. (2015). College students' motivation for using podcasts. *Journal of Media Literacy Education*, 7(3), 13-28, Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1088575.pdf

Dalhatu, M. Y., Erunke, C. E., & Idakula, A. R. (2019). Media, terrorism and national security in Nigeria's fourth republic. *Scientific Research Journal (SCIRJ), 7*(4), 115-123. April.

Dare, O., Bamidele, S. O., & Oluwasanmi, A. C. (2020). The role of mass media in security challenges in Nigeria's fourth republic, *International Journal of Advanced Research in Management and Social Sciences, 9(1),* 244-255. January.

David, C. R., Auvikki de Boon, J. S., & Smith, R. (2021). *Videos and podcasts as potential approaches for knowledge exchange with farmers: testing their potential role in ELM: Results from a literature review and an empirical study in England*. Reading: University of Reading.

Johnson, B. D. (2005). Someone call Karl Marx: The means of production is in the hands of the masses and a revolution is under way, *Maclean's*, *118*(51),56-60.

Khalid, I., & Davies, A. (2022). Nigeria Kuje prison break: More than 400 missing from Abuja jail, *BBC News Africa*, July 6, Retrieved from https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-62069753.

Mackey, R. (2005). Video podcasts. *The New York Times*, December 11.

Maishanu, A. A. (2022). Train Attack: Save children, women under harrowing conditions – Ex-Kaduna governor. *Premium Times,* April 28, Retrieved from https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/526506-train-attack-save-children-women-under-harrowing-conditions-ex-kaduna-governor.html

Nimi, P. (2022*). Death toll in blast near school in Kano, Nigeria rises to nine amid allegations of a cover up. CNN,* May 27, Retrieved from https://edition.cnn.com/2022/05/17/africa/explosion-kills-four-nigeria-intl/index.html

Odeniyi, S. (2022). Over 600 inmates escape from Kuje prison. *Punch Newspaper*, July 6. Retrieved from https://punchng.com/over-600-inmates-escape-from-kuje-prison/

Odita, S., & Terhemba, D. (2022). Matawalle signs banditry bill into law, explains call for self-defence, *The Guardian News,* June 29. Retrieved from https://guardian.ng/news/matawalle-signs-banditry-bill-into-law-explains-call-for-self-defence/

Okoroafor, C. E., Okoro, O. J., & Tayo-Garbson, U. S. (2012). The media, National Security and Socio-Economic Development in Nigeria*, Canadian Journal of Scientific Research 1(2)*,16-23.

Singh, K. (2007). *Quantitative social research meth*ods, SAGE Publications, 64

Statista, (2022a). *Number of internet users in Nigerian from 2018 to 2027*, Retrieved from https://www.statista.com/statistics/183849/internet-users-nigeria/

Statista, (2022b). *Total number of active social media users from 2017 to 2022,* Retrieved from https://www.statista.com/statistics/1176096/number-of-social-media-users-nigeria/

Torelli, C. (2022). Nine killed and 27 injured in confirmed IED Explosion, Kano, Nigeria, *Relief Web International,* May 24. Retrieved from https://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/nine-d-and-27-injured-confirmed-ied-explosion-kano-nigeria

UNESCO, (2018). *Journalism, 'fake news' & disinformation: Handbook for Journalism education and training*, Paris, France: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Urfan, F., Ningrum, A. S., & Br-Ginting, K. (2020). Development of podcasts as teaching materials for students of higher education in the pandemic Covid-19, *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research, 576*:157-162.