

**NEW TECHNOLOGY AND BOOK PUBLISHING INDUSTRY IN NIGERIA: ISSUES,
CONSTRAINTS AND PROSPECTS.**

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Abstract

The study evaluates new technology and book publishing industry in Nigeria: issues, constraints and prospects. Using qualitative research design; it employed descriptive statistical tools to ascertain the influence of new technology in book publishing industry in Nigeria bringing forward the prospects and problems, and thus, endeavours to map out solutions for better days ahead in this sector. Book publishing is a small, very important but complex industry. It faces significant challenges from changing patterns of ownership, from changing markets and from the implications of new technologies. The study is anchored on the Technological Determinism Theory and tries to answer the questions as to the extent of adoption and constraints. The findings show that new design and printing technologies adopted are evident on the current developments discernible in book covers, cover finishing, impression quality, illustrations and binding. Local publishers now produce books in CD-Rom, audio CD and online. The implication for sustainable development is that perennial paper problems which could have been overcome with digital distribution systems may persist. Power problems, piracy, huge tax and government negligence, make the future look bleak and deepen the nation's problem of book publishing in this digital age. The study recommends government urgent improvement in the areas of power sector, its affordability and subsidize or free open internet access/ facilities at least within every government institution and ministries.

Keywords: New Technology, Book Publishing, diffusion, Issues, Constraints, Prospects.

Introduction

Books remain a primary means of communicating knowledge. They are central to providing information, entertainment, analysis and education to millions throughout the world. Books serve as catalysts for mental growth and social integration. They are also veritable sources of information to the teachers and students, a gold mine of knowledge for researchers and a spout of pleasure and leisure to general readers. According to Kalejaye and Akangbe (2007), ‘book is described as a multi-faceted, dynamic product and a monumental asset of every society. It is also a surge for national integration and development, the grand index of technology, government, politics, religion, economy, sociology, medicine, engineering, and so on’. Awoniyi, (1979) cited in Ojo et al (2016), in his view, opined that, ‘books are indices of progress, pivots of stability, catalysts for social development as well as springboards of advancement and galvanizers to breakthrough’. Book is a medium of mass communication which propels effective utilization of other media.

Book publishing plays a significant role in the growth of a nation. Without book publishing, intellectual and other records, as well as the academic information and theories of those education scholars and philosophers like Abraham Lincoln, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle e.t.c, would not have been preserved for posterity. Thus, publishing is an intellectual as well as social responsibility for keeping human activities for posterity.

The effects of books in human, social and literacy development are unquantifiable. So, a developed nation can be strictly assessed based on its literacy level, which the book stimulates. According to Nyeko (1991); book publishing is explained as thus: “It is the process of producing for dissemination; books, films, computer programmes, records, newspapers, periodicals, discs, bulletin, magazines and other literacy materials”. Therefore, in a related definition, Carter and Pattis (2001), opined that, ‘publishing is a generic term used to describe the process of producing literacy and information materials for public utility. It becomes meaningfully focused whenever it is contextualized.

Historically, books are the oldest communication technology, dating back to Johannes Gutenberg’s invention of movable type in 1455 (Gutenberg is generally credited with this invention which made modern printing possible, but movable type first appeared in China around 1100 and then in Korea a half-century before it was invented in Europe, although there seems to be no relationship between these inventions. Early books were inscribed by hand and lavishly decorated; many were valued as work of art. Until approximately the 12th century, most books in Europe were produced by monks in monasteries. Interestingly, the invention of movable metal type of printing press by Johannes Guttenberg gave birth to the expansion of modern book publishing. The printing guru since then had the credit of making mass production of printing documents. In about 1455 Gutenberg printed his first book, the Bible. Printing with movable type was immediately recognized as a truly extra-ordinary technological advancement over woodblock printing. His ideas caught on quickly and by 1500, printing presses had been established in 242 cities across various countries (Oso, 2002).

In line with the above, publishing has come a long way in Nigeria, to be précised it commenced about 171 years ago when the Presbyterian floated the historic printing press in 1846 (Ojo, etal 2016). Henry Townsend followed suit in 1959 at Abeokuta. Ever since this period, the publishing industry in Nigeria has been passing through several phases of transformation to attain quality standard which would become better for publishers and the consumers of the publishers' products. Specifically, new technologies as manifested in information and communication technologies (ICT), personal computers, internet and World Wide Web have revolutionalised book publishing operations and as well, turned the world into a global village. Information Technology via the internet is not only changing the way that we work, study, play and conduct our lives but is doing so much more quickly than any other notable revolution with impacts that are far more reaching than any other development (Osifeso, 2012:84). This revolution has transformed publishing processes from the analog to digital. Defleur and Dennis (1991:229) posit that Technology has been a mother for change that has driven publishing industries. As far back as Gutenberg, it was technology – moveable type – that spurred change. Later, fast printing presses, the telegraph, zinc engraving and modern photography.

With the advancement in information and communication technology (ICT), publishing firms are faced with the challenge of keying into this transformation or become irrelevant. In moving from analog to digital technology, publishing firms have taken advantage of new and state-of-the-art equipment which drives the new techniques in publishing that makes product reader friendly. This development has benefitted both the author, the publisher and the reader.

New technologies have transformed many of the processes of book publishing and distribution. This is true not only for composition and printing, but also for knowledge transmission itself. The internet, for example, is being used in many different ways for publishing. Changes in the commercial underpinnings of publishing have significantly altered the traditional economics of the industry, especially through the consolidation of firms and the entry into publishing of multimedia corporations. Publishing has also become more international, not only through the export of knowledge products, but also in terms of multinational ownership of firms. We shall focus on some of the dramatic changes in publishing which are transforming the underpinnings of what was a traditional industry – a 'profession of gentlemen' – into the highly competitive, commercial and technological environment of the twenty-first century.

In the past, Book Publishing process involved the acceptance of a manuscript in hard copies, its editing, typesetting and typographic design enacted. But today authors hand-in soft-copies known as electronic copies of their manuscripts to editors. Hence, editors can work on the screen of their computers, edit the manuscript, and return error free proofs at great speed and lower cost. Book publishing is a highly information intensive activity, hence, in the great scope for exploiting diverse new information technologies in the origination, design, pre-press, production and marketing of published books.

The book publishing industry has benefited from this development in Information Communication Technology (ICT). A book that will formerly take years to produce can now be

produced in a few months. Today's new breed editors and designers now edit and illustrate on computers. Production quality is much better. The editor or the publication designer who is not computer literate can no longer flourish in the creative market of the new world. Electronic publishing has developed, books are available on CD-ROM and a lot of titles are available online. Hard disks of Computers are loaded with software like Core Draw, Pagemaker, Print-shop, and Freehand.

Statement of the problem

In the words of Kasdorf (2007: 1), 'we are in the middle of a revolution. It's a common observation that the technological advances of the past decade or two are changing publishing more profoundly than it has changed since Gutenberg's time. Kasdorf explains, in addition, how book and journal publishers in America and Europe are diversifying into electronic publishing – electronic distribution of information and knowledge hitherto distributed through traditional paper books. His statement summarizes how the business of book publishing has, since 1450, advanced from hand-setting of movable metal type to Linotype setting, Monotype setting, Lithographic offset printing, Word processing, Desktop publishing, Direct imaging, On-line books, and now portable electronic books. The rapidity of the change, according to him, has created opportunities and challenges. And making a move to electronic publishing, he explains, is beginning to be a matter of survival for publishers.

Regrettably, irrespective of these prospects mentioned above, the industry has been bedeviled by various challenges in spite of its grown in size and structure. Today, more than ever before as kalejaye and akangbe (2007) cited in Ojo etal (2016), agreed that book publishing has more formidable constraints to wrest with. Based on this premise, this paper examines and explores the avalanche of issues, constraints, and prospects notable in the book publishing industries in Nigeria and the need to tackle those constraints headlong by finding lasting solution to them. These are the perspectives this study stand to ascertain with the aim of providing the conceptual viewpoints on how the new communication and information technology has impacted on the publishing industry.

It can be argued that the end of the twentieth century is seeing a similarly profound transformation of publishing. A combination of technological factors, linked in different ways to the computer as well as to new developments in reprography, is changing the industry. Economic changes, including the multinationalization of major publishing firms and the linking of publishing to other knowledge and entertainment industries, are also altering the landscape of books and publishing. Therefore, the researchers are worried over the position of the Nigerian book publishing industries amidst the new media age.

Objectives of the Study

The overall objective of this study was to appraise the application of new technologies in the book publishing industries in Nigerian: issues, constraints and prospects. However, the specific objectives include:

1. To ascertain the level of application of new technologies in the book publishing industries.
2. To identify the factors responsible for that level of new technologies in the book publishing industries.
3. To assess the implication (constraints and prospects) of the present level of new technologies in the book publishing industries
4. To recommend ways of improving the adoption and enhanced application of new technologies in the book publishing industries.

Overview of the Impact of Book Publishing Industry on Society.

Book publishing has a tremendous impact on the society. According to Lai Oso (2000); “Book publishing is a serious business, a benchmark of a nation education, one of the basement block in cultural building and an important index of national development”. The publication of books in any academic area is a record kept for the generation to come. Books that were published centuries are still standing as a reference point. Moreover, it enhances cultural heritage and values. Book publishing navigate culture towards civilization and it reflects and enhances people’s understanding of the customs, tradition, norms and values of their given society. Valdehusa (1985) relays the impact of books in the national integration. He opines; “ The quality, quantity and diversity of books produced by a society are important indicators of that society’s level of development, intellectual sophistication, capacity for technological innovation and industriousness”.

Information technology allows its users a wide access to information stored in many locations to communicate and collaborate with others. It could be connected to the global network of environment known as internet, or its counterpart within organization known as intranet or extranet which helps to link intranets with various business and professional partners all over the world. The internet which is a form of information technology allows users to access information location in database all over the world.

More so, the rate of advancement in technological innovations in recent time is such that yesterday’s technologies have become obsolete today, while today’s discoveries will inevitably become antiquities tomorrow. It is therefore no gainsaying the fact that technology is growing at an astronomical pace and scientific fictions are being translated to realities on daily basis. According to Agba (2002:108), “one area where these technologies have made tremendous impact is in the area of mass communication, and book publishing in particular”. The mass media being a product of science and technology, are taking seriously the numerous opportunities afforded by the ICTs revolution for improved programme contents, greater speed, greater reach, clearer sound and vision, better quality output and better reception.

Current issues

Publishing faces a range of contemporary challenges that have a profound impact on the nature of the industry, and indirectly on the ways that books are produced and distributed. This section focuses on the most important issues affecting publishing today.

The impact of new technologies

Two basic technological developments are affecting publishing.

The first is the **reprographic revolution initiated by photo-reproduction technology**. This technology has stimulated not only the ubiquitous photocopy machine, bringing challenges to copyright, but has introduced innovations in printing. Computers have profoundly affected publishing in book production, distribution and, perhaps most important in the long run, the storage and retrieval of knowledge. The reprographic revolution started several decades ago. At first, photocopying permitted individual readers easily to make copies of printed materials. This was followed by commercial enterprises making unauthorized copies of published materials. The cost of photocopying machines and the cost of making copies declined and such machines became increasingly affordable. Reprographic technology was soon harnessed to printing. This permitted significant economies in printing costs, especially for limited press runs. Suddenly, it was economically feasible to print small numbers of books for specialized audiences. It became possible to print books in languages spoken by small populations. Recent reprographic advances, linked to computer composition, permit even greater economies in the production of printed materials. Presses based on advanced photocopy technology can print small numbers of books very quickly and inexpensively. It is even possible to print single copies for individual users through this technological application. This has assisted publishers in countries and regions, and in languages, which have only small markets. At the outset, reprographic revolution was seen as a challenge to traditional publishing, however, as time went on, it was successfully exploited by publishers. Irrespective of the early challenges encountered, presently, the publishing industry has accommodated the new developments. Reprographic technology has been linked to printing to reduce costs. In a related development, the challenges to the copyright system, however, were, and remain, considerable.

Secondly, of greater importance to publishing than reprography is **the revolution based on the computer**. Traditional composition technologies have in most countries of the world, been replaced entirely by computer-based composition and book design. This has revolutionized the physical design of books and led to the development of desktop publishing, a term that refers to the creation of composed text through the use of personal computers. Sophisticated software programs exist for book preparation and design. Many languages using their own unique scripts have benefited from computer-based typesetting.

Computerized book design and preparation has dramatically lowered the cost of composition, and has also decentralized it. Publishers or authors now have the capacity to carry a book through from manuscript to 'camera-ready copy' prepared for printing. The computer has also changed business procedures relating to inventory control, billing and tracing trends in the

sale of specific titles. Software programs permit publishers to reduce the cost of the business processes of publishing, allowing tasks that in earlier periods constituted a significant expense now to be performed quickly in-house. This application of computer technology has also enabled small publishers to operate efficiently in ways that in earlier times could only be done by large firms through economies of scale. Computer technology has also permitted the effective use of targeted mailing lists, specialized publicity campaigns and the like.

A final and tremendously important use of computer technology is for the delivery of printed material to readers. This application of technology, **linking computers via the Internet** as well as other alternative means of document delivery, has profound implications for publishers. This aspect of computer-based technology is in a relatively early stage of use, but it will soon have widespread consequences for publishers, libraries and bookstores. It is possible to deliver documents through the Internet, and publishers are developing the technologies to supply materials this way. Some scientific journals are already distributed exclusively on the Internet, and publishers are increasingly using the World Wide Web (**www**) and other electronic means to publicize books and journals.

Aside from the technological challenges, a range of other problems are associated with this technology. The impact on copyright of Internet transmission remains both controversial and unclear. The means of obtaining payment are not yet fully defined. The use of library and other networks for distributing published material raises copyright and economic challenges for publishers. The problems that the new technologies create regarding copyright and financing are complex.

The traditional role of the publisher in this new technological universe may change, as the definition of the book is altered and the means of distributing knowledge is linked to new technologies. Without question, the technological innovations are of profound importance to publishers and to the book industry.

The control of publishing

Publishing is undergoing unprecedented economic change. There is a clear trend toward consolidation in the publishing industry as large publishing firms acquire smaller ones and as media corporations move into publishing. Large publishers in the major industrialized countries have in the past two decades become giant multinational firms. Bertelsmann Verlag of Germany now owns publishers in most European nations and in the United States; Hachette in France, Mondadori in Italy, Reed in the United Kingdom, and Elsevier and Kluwer in the Netherlands are other examples of publishers that have a worldwide presence. In the United States, for example, there were 573 mergers and acquisitions in the publishing industry between 1960 and 1989, and over half the market share is held by the top fifteen firms. Other major industrialized nations show similar trends. The multinational publishers have also moved into smaller book markets, purchasing firms and establishing branches. These firms, because of their economic and staff resources, and their global reach, can dominate publishing in many developing countries.

For example, French publishers have traditionally held a powerful position in francophone Africa, and British firms are re-entering some of the Anglophone African markets that they abandoned in the years following the end of colonialism.

At the same time, new technologies, the development of 'niche markets' that had been abandoned by the large firms, and increasing specialization in the book industry have permitted small firms to survive and even prosper in a market increasingly dominated by giant multinational companies. The small publishers can make use of desktop technology, computer-based direct marketing and new printing arrangements that permit economical limited printing. This situation also has potential for publishers in small markets and in developing countries, although limited access to the new technologies hinders success in developing areas.

Copyright

It is important to note here that copyright has special importance for book publishing at this time. While traditional copyright is more widely accepted than ever internationally, and the piracy of books is, comparatively speaking, at a lower level, technology and the multinationalization of publishing have created significant challenges for copyright. While books continue to be pirated in a small number of developing countries without significant publishing industries, virtually all countries have signed the main international copyright agreements, and generally observe copyright. Nations such as India, which at one time were critics of traditional copyright and engaged in some book piracy, now support copyright, in part because a local publishing industry has developed that benefits from copyright protection. Among major publishing nations, it seems that only in China is there significant book piracy, and even there compliance is increasing.

Copyright, of course, protects the owners of intellectual property and sometimes makes it difficult for people in countries that have limited purchasing power and few publishing resources to obtain access to books. Copyright, in this respect, reinforces a system of knowledge inequality and creates a kind of monopoly dominated by the owners of knowledge. The copyright system works against those who have least to spend on books and other knowledge products, and those who are consumers rather than producers. We have seen a strengthening of the copyright system. Publishers in the industrialized nations are increasingly insistent on protecting their rights and their economic benefits. There is little willingness to give less economic nations special access to books, and the recent negotiations that established WTO provided special protection to knowledge products and further strengthened copyright

The future of the book

Publishers face a future in which the traditional definition of the book is changing. They will have to adapt to the new realities of the new media if they are to survive. Books will remain an important product and a central means of imparting knowledge and entertainment. At the same time, the means of producing, distributing and even editing books are changing. Economics, technology and the increasing interweaving of the world economy are all affecting

books and publishing. Publishers must inevitably be more international in their outlook. More books are being translated from the major metropolitan languages to languages spoken by smaller populations, and there is relatively little translation in the other direction. The ownership of publishing firms shows similar characteristics.

Major firms in the large industrialized nations expand into other parts of the world. In Africa, for example, not only are major European publishers entering the market, but better established firms with more capital.

At the same time, there is considerable scope for indigenous publishing because local publishers and entrepreneurs have the advantage of knowing national realities and are able quickly to adapt to changing circumstances. There is, without question, a rapidly changing pattern of ownership and entrepreneurship in publishing worldwide. The book is often linked to other media products, and this would have an impact on what is published and the nature of books, perhaps even changing the definition of books in the long run. Links between books and films, for example, are common, and books are often related to computer applications or CD-ROM products. Books are increasingly issued in other forms, especially CD-ROMs, adding an entirely new dimension to publishing. Publishers in the United States, Europe and Japan are occasionally bypassing the traditional book in favour of alternative high-tech formats, a trend that is likely to grow. Many feel that the extension of the concept of the book brings 'knowledge industries' to a new level of technological sophistication, and that this will have a positive impact on access to knowledge products of all kinds. This extension does provide a more sophisticated means of delivering knowledge and entertainment. Encyclopedias issued on CDROM, for example, have multimedia capabilities that permit the 'reader' to have a different experience than was possible with the traditional printed version. At the same time, the price of such electronic encyclopedias has dropped (although some of the costs in producing such multimedia products are higher).

These innovations, however, may have negative implications for those without access to the new technologies or without the resources to produce expensive multimedia products.

It is likely that we shall see diversification and differentiation as well as economic concentration in the publishing industry. The impact of the multinational multimedia corporations will continue, and there is likely to be increasing concentration of ownership internationally. Economic realities, the high cost of producing media products and the impact of WTO and other trade agreements all point in the direction of concentration. At the same time, there is scope for smaller, locally owned firms that can occupy niche markets. In this way, indigenous publishing will be able to survive in an increasingly difficult market-place. Publishers face an increasingly complex and competitive environment. They are forced to lower their costs. Editing, for example, is often done on a freelance basis, and publishers in some cases are unable to provide the editorial services once considered standard. More and more of the responsibility for book production is devolved to the author. Computer composition makes this possible, as authors are often asked to produce their books ready for printing. The book will be secure in the changing

economy of knowledge production in the early twenty first century. Along with the traditional book, however, will be a variety of products based on the book but utilizing the new technologies for presentation as well as for production and distribution.

Explicatory Analysis of the technological Revolution of the Book publishing Industry in Nigeria: Issues, Constraints and Prospects.

Above all, the internet has become the most powerful driver of innovation the world has encountered. One result has been to change the structure of the communication industry, shifting the focus of innovation away from the old giants and to drive forward communications technology at a formidable pace (Caincross 2001:97).

In line with the above, the book industry is part of the communications industry being transformed by the internet. The conclusion of Caincross on the value of internet-related innovations is that: "Those parts of the world that embrace the internet will find themselves better able to compete than those that lag behind". The internet; a super network of globally interconnected computers, has the capacity to convey any information that can be stored in digital form. This includes books set digitally with the relevant programmes. It is, in fact, the digitization of books and their distribution through the internet that enabled Amazon.com (an American internet bookstore) to account, within five years, for four per cent of American book sales (Caincross, 2001) In fact, in her explanations, she maintained that internet power equipped Amazon.com to do better than off-line bookstores quoted in the stock exchange. Her words: "Amazon.com's capital value overtook that of all America's off-line bookstores, including Barnes & Noble and Borders, put together." In response to the realities of the electronic book marketing era made possible by the internet, America's leading book marketer, Barnes & Noble has found ways to use visits to its physical bookstores to recruit on-line customers" (Caincross 2001: 106) The following are the areas in which the internet is facilitating the publishing of books: Typesetting, layout and editing, On-line distribution, On-line ordering, Marketing, Advertising, Pricing, Payments and Hiring.

Books in digital form, distributed through the internet as on-line books are now common and sold directly by authors and publishers, or through on-line bookshops such as Amazon.com. Recently, publishers have introduced small, book-sized hand-held electronic books known as e-book. To distinguish the downloadable on-line book from the ones printed on demand, the former is increasingly being referred to as D-book. In other words, electronic publishing, as operationalised in this study covers the whole gamut of books distributed by any form of electronic device. They include books on tape, books on CD, microfilm, etc.

From this expositions so far, there is no doubt that innovative ideas in book publishing have served as catalysts to development and civilization. Ubahakwe (1983) cited by Echebiri (2005:198) puts it succinctly: "There is no doubt that the book is one of man's revolutionary inventions and accounts in good measure for the rapid development of man's civilization". The

implication of this statement to this study is that innovations under investigation merit detailed study due to their possible impact on the overall development of the society.

Reviewing the importance of the computer and other digital equipment/processes to the editor, Adejuwon (2003: 20) said that, in contemporary publishing, “there are more opportunities for creative editors on the computer or the internet”, in agreement with Okwilagwe (2001). From Adejuwon’s experience as a senior book editor specializing in scholarly books, he outlines some benefits of digital book editing, as thus:

Electronic editing appears to make it easy to input, reformat, edit, rewrite, spell-check, redesign and print all at one sitting, so solving all editorial problems, but it takes time to make the best use of the computer.(Adejuwon, 2003: 22).

Abegunde, (2003:39) attempted an examination of contemporary developments in Nigeria’s publishing sector. His appraisal was that the adoption of computer for prepress operations is only a milestone along the path of a digital tomorrow. He said,

Today the use of computer has revolutionized prepress in the area of word processing, layout and integration of images and text, colour separation and halftone photograph, page assembly, plate making and imposition

The Internet as a Medium for Dissemination of Information and a Publisher

Communication is a means to success in any activity. However, recently, Information dissemination through the usual traditional methods have experienced some difficulties and setbacks in this new world of globalization. Thus, Internet has through its tremendous and intimidating features reduced these difficulties drastically. This is because it is “live, constantly moving, theoretically borderless, potentially infinite space for the production and circulation of information” (Evans 1996). The Internet has provided Nigerian scholars, researchers, individuals, and their institutions with an opportunity to present their ideas and research findings. Accordingly, they also serve as an alternative for publishing materials, in print media as well as other contributions. These new technologies go beyond providing an electronic version of what is available in print media. It may include other contributions available only in electronic form.

In view of the above, Nget'ch (2003) asserts that electronic publishing on the Internet has provided a greater opportunity for scholars and researchers to publish and present their ideas and research findings. Similarly, the Internet provides access to other scholarly contributions from different parts of the world for Nigerian researchers to scrutinize. It also provides the opportunity

to recognize and access research and work produced by Nigerians, which may have in the past been ignored due to the information divide between developed and developing countries.

Researchers and scholars need the Internet for literature searches, but data can also be collected through this medium. Data can be processed and analyzed on the Internet and findings can be disseminated.

On the same note, Oshikoya and Hussaini (1998) discuss initiatives to provide access to electronic publication in Africa . For example, projects offering distance-learning courses and electronic library services include the African Virtual University (AVU) project. Similarly, African journals online (AJOL) has about more than 250 titles from 21 different countries online as of 2004. These examples have shown the power of modern information technologies to increase access to educational resources.

In addition, Murphy, et al. (2004) discuss initiatives that are underway in developing countries to provide access to current information through the Internet. Babini (2004) discusses how the Latin American Council on Social Science (CLACSO) whose virtual library for social sciences provides access to more than 4,000 textbooks, journals, and papers.

Problems And Prospects Of Book Publishing In Nigeria

According to Nwuzoh I. (2016), book publishing in Nigeria has seen some development. However, it is still facing certain challenges. The art of publishing in Nigeria still needs some adjustment in order to make publishing reachable to many Nigerians who wish to publish their work. Books play a vital role in the development of any society. Promotion of book development and publishing will make the country utilize its potentials. A lot of people in Nigeria publish books without making profits due to piracy. Also, one of the hitches of the publishing industry is paying royalties to authors in spite of the fact that profit is not made in the book published. This has made a lot of Nigerians who would have published their books in Nigeria to get them published abroad.

Problems Facing Book Publishing In Nigeria

The challenges confronting book publishers in Nigeria are enormous.

First is the challenge of power supply in the country. For years Nigeria has suffered epileptic or no power supply at all. This has seriously affected business ventures in the country. Like many other companies in Nigeria, book publishers rely on generator to generate power and to do this every day means spending huge resources on a daily basis. This is killing many businesses in the country as it affects the firm's income and capital by extension. The challenge of power supply also does not encourage e-learning and e-library.

Secondly, the problem of piracy also makes it difficult for e-learning and e-library because by the time you upload your works online, pirates would easily and quickly feast on them. Thus, leaving the publishers disadvantaged and suffering in vain for other lazy individuals. There are many pirates in Nigeria who disrupt the art of publishing in the country. Pirates actually reduce both the profit realized by the author and that realized by the publisher. Many pirates thrive in Nigeria using different methods and techniques. They take advantage of the inefficiency of the government in tracking down this menace to be a problem to the publishing industry in Nigeria. The activities of pirates in Nigeria have disrupted publishing of educational books and this has discouraged a lot of Nigerian authors from publishing more educational books for various institutions across the country. Piracy is a disease to publishing and the more the government checks this menace, the more the art of publishing will be promoted in Nigeria.

Another challenge is the huge tax being charged by the government. I am not saying that the government should not collect tax from publishing houses but they should be lenient with the publishers because they are helping to correct social issues and consequently assisting the government to lessen their problems.

More so, government negligence can serve as a big deterrent: The government of Nigeria has not taken the necessary steps to promote the book publishing industry in Nigeria. The steps involve supporting both government-owned publishing companies and other publishing agencies in their quest to promote the art of publishing in Nigeria. The government can also set up agencies to check those who are messing up the publishing industry in Nigeria. One of the ways of promoting the educational sector in Nigeria is to promote the art of publishing since better books on education now have better chances of being published.

Finance is the next on the list of these problems. Publishing business is capital intensive and when you approach the banks for loan, they would ask for collateral and several other requirements. This is making it difficult for many people with lofty ideas to thrive. Virtually all technologies required for the establishment of book publishing are capital intensive. This also include the processes of running these business. That's why, this is one area the government must look into if they must help entrepreneurs, book publishers inclusive.

Low economy: The economy of Nigeria does not actually support the art of publishing in Nigeria. The low economy of Nigeria has led many publishers to see publishing their work as waste of time and energy as they consider the fact that they do not make adequate profit by engaging in this activity. Also, many authors in Nigeria who wish to publish their books do not get enough incentives that can make them consider publishing their books as a reasonable option. The Nigerian economy actually has a negative impact on the art of publishing in Nigeria. Promoting the Nigerian economy will surely promote publishing in Nigeria as both authors and publishers will now venture effectively into publishing. This will have positive impact on education in Nigeria. The Nigerian economy has also made a lot of foreign publishers not to

invest in Nigeria. However, change in the Nigerian economy will definitely encourage foreign publishers to invest in Nigeria.

Steps To Promote Book Publishing In Nigeria

Digital publishing should be encouraged: Digital publishing is now the new trend in the publishing industry and Nigeria ought not to be left out as the digital planet has a lot to offer the publishing sector if they are effectively utilized in Nigeria.

A lot of authors in Nigeria have also discovered that the digital planet offers them a lot of chances and opportunities to expand their publishing business and reach a wider audience. A book that is published in just a particular location has less outreach than a book published on the internet since the internet offers more outreach to more audience as the publisher is not limited much by geographical or location factors. Another benefit of digital publishing is its reduction on production costs. The cost of publishing books manually is much compared to the cost of digital publishing of books, yet it comes with more audience outreach.

Authors and publishers who find manual publishing too limited for them can venture into digital publishing as an option. This will also promote the publishing industry in Nigeria. As more and more things are going digital, it is very necessary that the publishing industry in Nigeria gets the necessary adjustments. The digital planet offers the widest employment opportunity and digital publishing is surely a means of encouraging employment as these books can be published and sold online to anyone in any part of the globe.

Use of better publishing policies: The government of Nigeria should introduce better policies that can favor both the authors and publishers. Policies that make things hard for the publishing industry should be avoided.

Encouraging private publishers: Private publishers should be encouraged. The government should not only sponsor government-owned publishing companies but also private publishing companies as doing this will promote the publishing industry and also the educational sector. This will also encourage employment as more publishing companies will be encouraged to exist. The more the private publishing companies, the more employment is promoted.

Increasing strategies that check book piracy: Book piracy in Nigeria need to be checked as this is downgrading the publishing industry. The government can introduced more methods that can track down book pirates in Nigeria. This is one of the methods of promoting the publishing industry in Nigeria. Methods which are tighter in checking book pirates in Nigeria should be encouraged by the government.

In view of the above expositions, Duru (2015) opined that, the principal reasons print jobs in Nigeria still find their ways abroad is global competition; Nigerian printing companies

are not faring well in this game of globalization. The Nigerian printing industry is operating in a hostile environment bereft of government support and investment-friendly policies unlike what obtains in Malaysia or any other country to which print jobs are taken to from Nigeria. Our paper industry is in a comatose state while competitive markets (Malaysia, China and others) are bolstering their paper industry for global competitiveness. To make matters worse, there are no significant achievements in the area of foreign direct investment in Nigeria's printing industry. All these (and much more beyond the scope of this article) make it an uphill task for the industry to offer competitive pricing at the global level.

Theoretical framework

This study was anchored on the *Technological Determinism Theory*. The theory was propounded by Marshall McLuhan in 1962. It helps to explain how innovation in modern technology helps to engineer some forms of change in society or in the ordering of things. It posits that communication is used to transfer technological innovations from development agencies to their clients so as to create an appetite for change through raising a climate for modernization among members of the public.

Baran and Davis (2006, p.302) averred that “McLuhan’s theory is actually a collection of lot’s of intriguing ideas bound together by some common assumptions. The most central of these assumptions is that changes in communication technology inevitably produce changes in both cultural and social order... McLuhan seemed ready to accept whatever changes were dictated by and inherent in communications technology... Technology inevitably causes specific changes in how people think, in how society is structured, and in the forms of culture that are created”.

McQuail (2010, p.103) itemised the basic assumptions of this theory, as follows:

1. Communication technology is fundamental to society.
2. Each technology has a bias to particular communication forms, contents and uses.
3. The sequence of invention and application of communication technology influences the direction and pace of social change.
4. Communication revolutions lead to social revolutions.

The basic tenets of this theory is that the invention of new technology can alter the way society responds to events or what they use to do in an old way.

This theory is relevant to this study because it provides alternative approach for journalists, particularly the book publishers, to use modern technology to reach their target audience. This simply means that they would not have to use only the traditional mass media but adopt the new forms of communication platforms offered by the new technology and social media to execute their business of information gathering, book publishing and dissemination. Some book publishers are now present and active on social media platforms such as Facebook,

Twitter, Whatsapp and others. New technological formats have been developed that use these platforms to enable authors, printers and readers to directly and easily interact with the running of book publishing and dissemination. It facilitates the link among the authors, audience, and the main book publishing service and which promotes the books' brands and content.

Methodology

The Researchers adopted qualitative research design for this study. The approach used for the generation of research data was desk study; data collection from secondary sources. Newspapers, Magazines, Libraries, Internet and Archives were among the sources the researchers consulted to drive home his points. Descriptive statistics tool was used for the data analysis.

Conclusions

Publishing, because it is absolutely essential to the cultural, scientific and educational life of nations, has an importance beyond its limited economic role. While it may be appropriate to import textiles or even computers, the production of books that directly reflect the culture, history and concerns of a nation or people is something that cannot be left to others. Societies cannot afford to lose the ability to publish books of social and cultural importance. It is a vital part of a culture. In this respect it is different and deserves special consideration in every nation to meet up with the global challenges and the technological revolution .

Book publishing is a small but complex industry. It faces significant challenges from changing patterns of ownership, from changing markets and from the implications of new technologies. It is unlikely, as some have argued, that the book will become obsolete in an era dominated by computers and the Internet. Books are simply too convenient and too affordable. Books permit easy access to information. And in many parts of the world, there is little or no access to the new means of communication. The book as a cultural icon and as a knowledge product is here to stay.

Digital publishing innovations have, no doubt made an in-road into Nigeria's conservative publishing practices but have little or no effect on the book-sky public who have several reasons to remain adamant to change. Among their reasons are perennial energy problems, low computer ownership density, hinted access to internet facilities. These are genuine problems which, if not overcome, will make sustainable digital publishing difficult if not impossible.

In line with the above findings, the study recommends government urgent improvement in the areas of power sector and its affordability. Secondly, subsidize or free open internet access/ facilities at least within every government institution and ministries. Third, mobilization of aggressive and active taskforce against piracy and plagiarism.

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