

Social Media Index Report

February, 2016.

Visit www.penplusbytes.org

Email: info@penplusbytes.org

ABSTRACT

Over the past several years, social media has exhibited an exponential penetration into the daily lives of individuals, operations of businesses, and the interaction between governments and their respective people. It would not be far from the truth to assert that social media has become an important requirement for our daily personal and business life. It is against this backdrop that Penplusbytes, a leader in enhancing the work of journalists and promoting effective governance using technology in Africa, is introducing the maiden Social Media Index (SMI) report on Ghana's print, and electronic media - Radio and Television. The SMI report takes a look at the performance of established newspapers, radio and TV stations in Ghana regarding their activity and following on social media as at February 8th, 2016. Essentially, this report measures how these media entities utilize their online platforms to reach out and engage their target audience by employing a quantitative research module. The module provides relevant numerical figures which informs the rankings.

TABLE OF CONTENT

1. Introduction	1
2. Radio Index.....	2
3. TV Index.....	6
4. Newspaper Index.....	9
5. Conclusion.....	12

1. INTRODUCTION

Ghana is undeniably experiencing an explosion of social media presence where Facebook for instance is 2nd most visited website—above local news sites according to the January 2016 Top websites ranking released by SimilarWeb.com. Ghana currently accounts for about 2,900,000 of all Facebook users as at January 2016.

Consider this, if Facebook were a country, it would be the 3rd most populous country in the world. With an estimated 1.44 billion users, it is the world's largest social network; presenting Journalists with a great opportunity to go about their work of generating and disseminating news information while furnishing communities with tools that can help in reporting. Facebook is simply a powerful storytelling platform. The question is, how well is the Ghanaian Media making the most of this far reaching and easy to use platform?

Social media, among many other definitions, is essentially seen as a collection of online communications channels dedicated to community-based input, allowing for interaction, content-sharing and collaboration. Today, it is very much the issue of the day. Twitter and Facebook for examples have exploded so much, leaving very little space for comfort for those who pay little to no attention to it.

For the media, social networking sites provide some of the newest tools to use in news gathering, networking and promoting their work. There is a general surge in the number of news producers embracing social media as a means of connecting with consumers and raising their newsrooms' profile in the community, and are also encouraging their news staff members to have an individual social media presence.

With Ghanaian news media warming itself into incorporating new media trends in the execution of their job, how visible are such entities on social media? And to what extent are they engaging their audience on virtual space?

It is against this background that Penplusbytes, a leader in the deployment of ICT tools in enhancing the work of journalists and promoting effective governance using technology in Africa, is introducing the maiden Social Media Index (SMI) report on Ghana's print, and electronic media-Radio and Television (TV).

The undeniable growth in influence of social media as an effective communication and marketing tool drives the SMI report to take a cursory look at the performance of established Newspapers, Radio and TV stations in Ghana regarding their Activity status and Followership on social media as at 8th February, 2016.

Aimed at revealing which media outfits are most visible and best represented in virtual space, this SMI will gauge the presence of news media entities on 2 of the most popular social media

platforms in Ghana: Facebook and Twitter; as a measure of how they utilize their online platforms to reach out and also engage their target audience.

The New Media team at Penplusbytes, in a search, revealed the existence of over 120 newspapers brands, 390 registered radio stations and 22 authorized TV stations in Ghana. The SMI, in gauging the social media presence of these entities, will take into consideration 37 Newspapers found to be in active operation and/or most visible in newsstands. It will also factor in 16 out of the 22 TV stations and 309 out of the 390 radio stations currently operating on air.

In checking for the vibrancy of these media entities on social media, the Index will consider the number of ‘Likes’ and ‘Followers’ as key indicators.

This report among many intended outcomes would show in general, the extent to which Ghanaian media recognizes the need to draw closer to their audience, and the ones migrating from traditional and primary news information sources onto the virtual space where news is served in real time and on the go.

2. RADIO INDEX

The Radio Index takes a look at the social media activity of over 300 radio stations in Ghana. Radio remains a crucial means of communication in Ghana and this report looks at how radio stations are leveraging social media to promote themselves and to reach and engage. Table 2 illustrates radio stations and rank on social media according to followers.

2. i. Facebook

A careful study of the Facebook pages of over 300 radio stations in Ghana reveal an interesting trend with the most active and engaging accounts belonging to Radio Stations in the Greater Accra Region. The list of top ten radio stations with regards to Followers (page likes) was dominated by 8 stations from Accra, namely; Adom Fm, Y FM, Joy FM, Peace FM, Hitz FM, Citi FM, Radio XYZ, and Asempa FM, and 2 stations – Nhyira FM and Angel FM from Ashanti Region. Greater Accra registering more radio stations within the Top 10 bracket of engagers on Facebook can perhaps be partly explained by the relative infrastructure and technological

advantage of the region as compared to the rest as it is the capital. See chart in Figure 1i below.

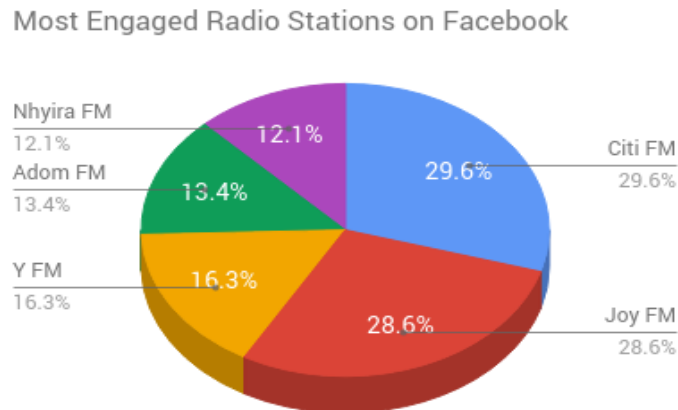


Fig. 1.i: Most engaged radio station on Facebook.

It is important to note that, this list is by no means an exhaustive one as there are a significant number of stations across the country with some visibility on Facebook. An overall rank however puts Citi FM ahead as the station with most following with 561,118 ‘Likes’ with 29.5% share, followed closely by Joy FM with 542,720 (28.6%). Y FM, with 308,204 (16.3%) ‘Likes’ comes in at 3rd; Adom FM with 253,048 (13.4%) ranks 4th while Nhyira FM with 230,155 followers (12.1%) ranks 5th as the only station outside of Accra in the Top 5 bracket of Facebook accounts.

Figure 1.ii (below) gives a picture of the rank involving Ghana’s Top 10 Radio stations on Facebook.

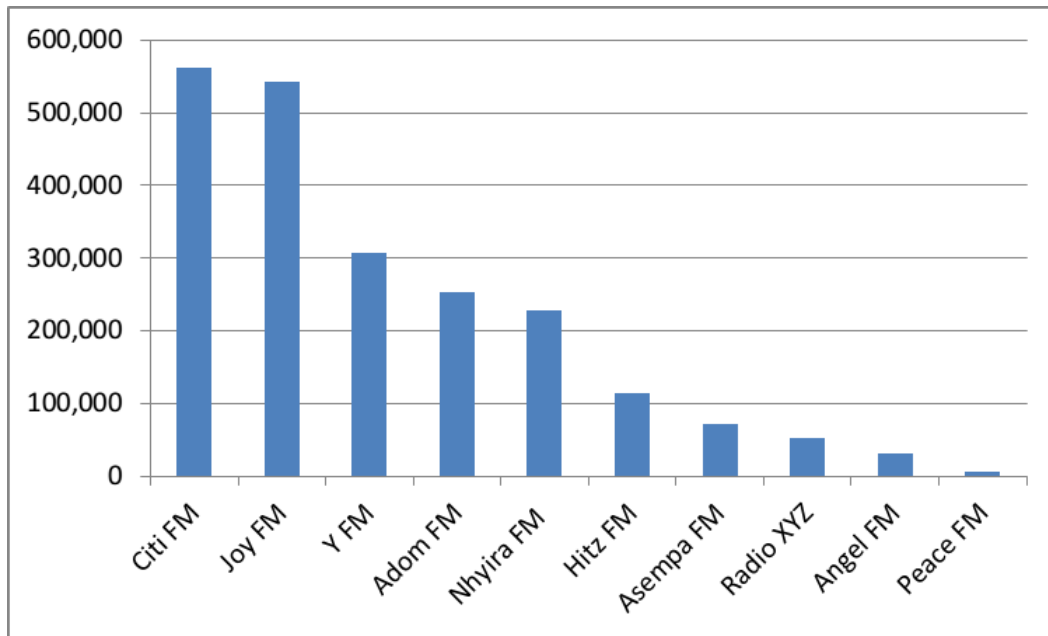


Fig. 4.ii: Radio stations with the most following on Facebook.

2. ii. Twitter

Similar to the outcome with newspapers, few radio stations nationwide, had Twitter accounts as compared to their subscription to Facebook. With Joy FM maintaining its edge over the others as the handle with the most followers, not all stations in the top 10 bracket of Facebook engagers have either Twitter accounts or the best following with names such as Nhyira FM, Hitz FM, Angel FM and Radio XYZ all missing. Taking their slots and in no particular order are Live FM, Starr FM, PLUZZ FM, Kapital Radio and Ultimate Radio.

Figure 2 shown below depicts Ghanaian Radio stations with Twitter presence; ranked according to the number of their followership.

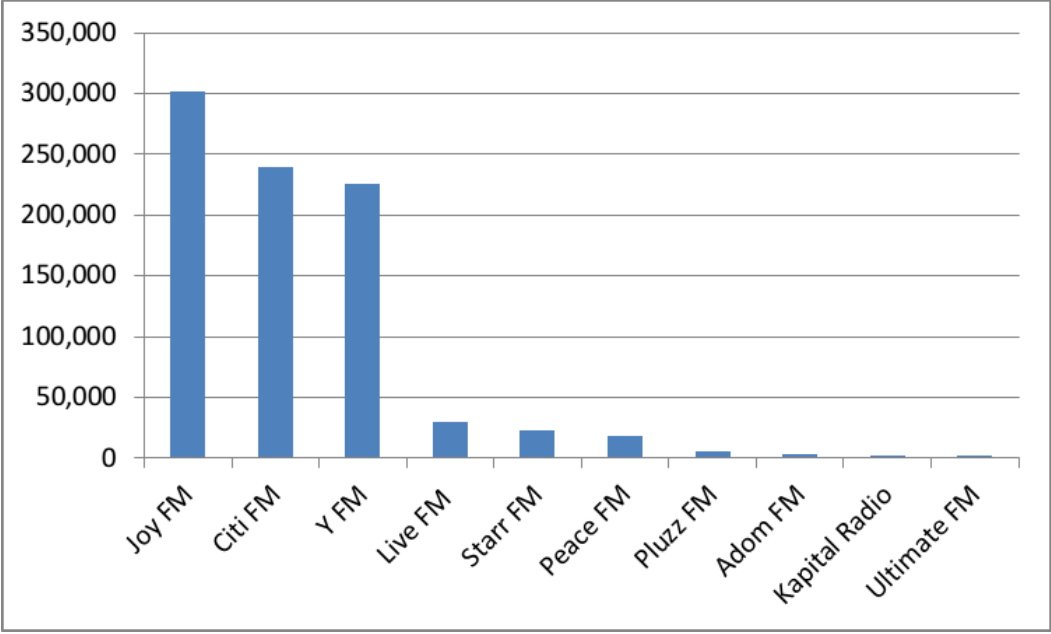


Fig. 2: Rank of Radio stations on Twitter.

The top 10 Ghanaian Radio stations on Twitter in descending order are Joy FM (302,000 Followers), Citi FM (239,000 Followers), Y FM (226,000 Followers), LIVE FM (29,400 Followers) and Starr FM (23,300 Followers) completing the top 5. The rest are Peace FM (18,600 Followers), PLUZZ FM (6,025 Followers), Kapital Radio (2,501 Followers), Adom FM (2,993 Followers) and Ultimate Radio (1,864 Followers)

A careful observation of the radio index also shows a general cut down in numbers of followership on Twitter in comparison to Facebook. The underlying reasons for this are varied and includes, though not limited to, the relatively high popularity of Facebook usage among Ghanaians compared to Twitter, although the latter’s usage has gained popularity over the past few years.

3. TV INDEX

In this new age of technology, television stations unsure about how best to respond to many of the challenges they face today. By experimenting with different methods of keeping viewers interested, the news industry is working tirelessly to keep journalism alive, especially through the use of social media tools.

3. i. Facebook

In the Television category, 16 stations were found on Facebook. They are, in no particular order, Ghana Television (GTV), TV Africa, Top TV, GH One TV, Kantanka TV, U TV Ghana, TV3 Network, and Crystal TV. The rest are E-TV Ghana, Light TV, GoTV, Metro TV, Net 2 TV, VIASAT 1 TV, Coastal TV and Multi TV.

Table 1 illustrate Television stations ranked according to page likes and followers on Facebook.

Television Station	Facebook 'likes'
Viasat 1	637,773
UTV	265,020
GTV	191,204
TV3	190,851
Multi TV	121,278
GH One	97,553
Metro TV	66,908
GoTV	45,241
Kantanka TV	12,749
Net2 TV	3,324

Table 1. Television stations ranked according to number of page likes on Facebook

Figure 3 below gives a graphical representation of the top TV stations by number of 'Likes' and Following (Number of Likes in bracket):

VIASAT (637,773), UTV Ghana (265,020), GTV (191,204), TV3 (190,851) and Multi TV (121,278) completes the top 5 whiles GH One (97,553), Metro TV (66,908), GoTV (45,241), Kantanka TV (12,749) and NET2 TV (3,324) exhausts the list.

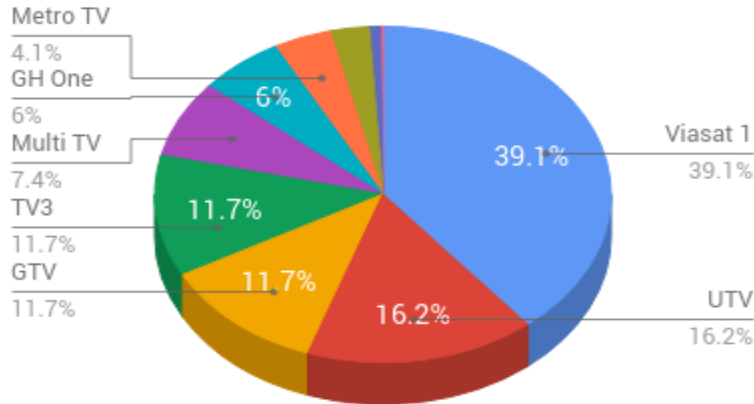


Fig. 3: TV stations on Facebook.

3. ii. Twitter

Interestingly, out of all the Television stations assessed on Twitter, Ghana Television (GTV), turned out to be the only station out of the 16 to not have a dedicated Twitter handle.

Figure 4.i shows Ghanaian TV stations with accounts on Twitter.

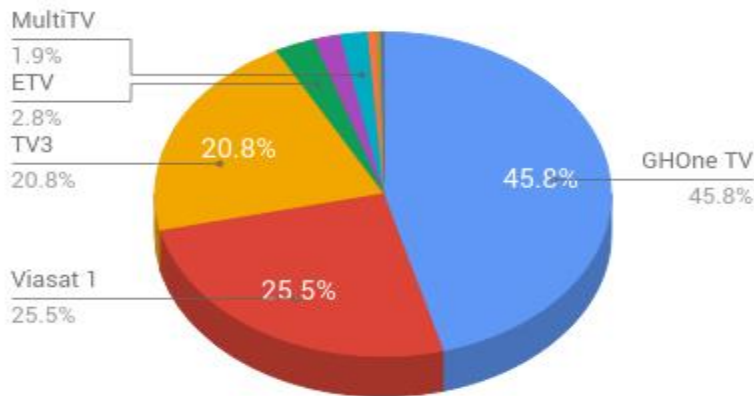


Fig. 4i: TV stations with accounts on Twitter.

Ranked according to their following on Twitter, GH One TV emerged top with 172,000 followers. It is followed by Viasat 1 with 95,900; TV3 has 78,300 followers; ETV comes in 4th with 10,700 and Multi TV at 5th with 7,303. Continuing, UTV Ghana comes next with 7,057, Kantanka TV has 2,149, Metro TV 1,229, TV Africa 861 and lastly, Net 2 TV with 113 followers. See chart below.

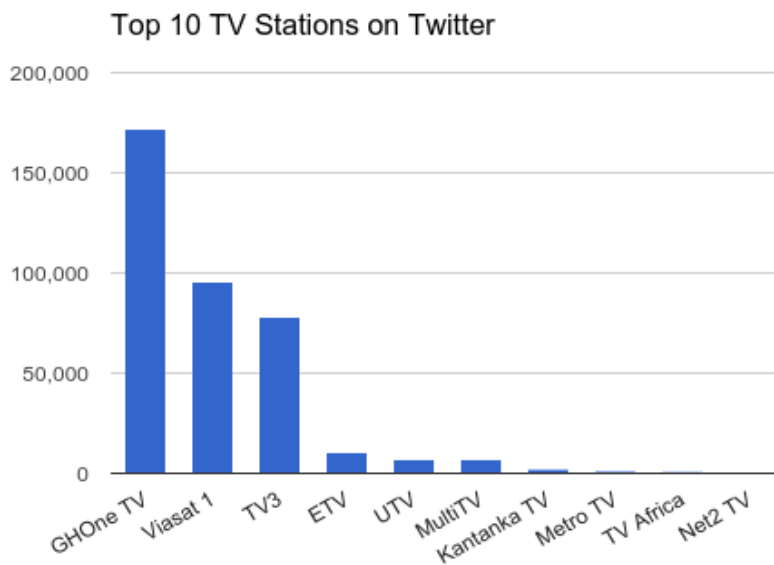


Fig. 4.ii: Top 10 TV stations on Twitter.

4. Newspaper Index

Social media is fundamentally changing the nature of the 'news cycle' and putting more pressure on editors over what to report and when. Consequently, newspapers have embraced Facebook and Twitter platforms, and are using it to create an important extra layer of information and diverse opinion.

4i. Facebook

Out of the 37 newspapers accessed, 20 of them have Facebook pages. It is however, important to note that some newspaper publishing companies have more than one newspaper brand. In this case, the Media Company can either have a single Facebook page for all the newspapers under it or each of these brands outlets could have their individual Facebook pages. For example, the Western Group publications have a single Facebook page for all the four newspapers (Daily Guide, Business Guide, News One and Guide Young Blazers) while the newspaper outlets The Daily Graphic, Junior Graphic, Graphic Showbiz and the Mirror - making up the Graphic Communication Group - have individual Facebook pages.

Table 2 (below) depicts Ghanaian newspapers with Facebook presence ranked according to the number of page 'likes' (followers).

Newspaper	Page 'likes'
Daily Graphic	518,956
90 Minutes	133,269
Daily Guide	16,946
Vibe Ghana	11,715
The Mirror	10,758
Focus	7,519
B&FT	7,003
Ghanaian Times	6,530
Graphic Showbiz	5,048
Junior Graphic	4,798

Table 2. Newspapers ranked according to followers on Facebook

As at February 8th, 2016, Daily Graphic is the leading newspaper by number of ‘Likes’ (Followers) on Facebook, as depicted by the chart of the top 10 newspaper pages in fig. 2 (above) and commands over 500,000 Followers. 90 Minutes Sports Paper with 133,269 page ‘Likes’ is the second most followed newspaper on Facebook.

The first 2 outfits sets themselves apart from the rest as the other 3 outfits completing the top 5 are left behind with a staggering gap in the number of ‘Likes’. Daily Guide has 16,946 page ‘Likes’ while the remaining two - Vibe Ghana and The Mirror – make do with 11,715 and 10,758 respectively to close out the top 5. It is no surprise that these 2 newspapers emerged top as they remained the most active in terms of regular updates of their Facebook pages. Daily Graphic and The 90 Minutes newspaper for instance remained consistent with the most regular update of their pages. Such updates are done most regularly with at least new content pushed out every day. The other pages manage at least daily news content for their followers with the exception of weekends. 90 Minutes however was found to have the most interactive Facebook account among all the Ghanaian newspapers with its individual posts/updates gathering the most number of comments and ‘Likes’ from its audience on the average.

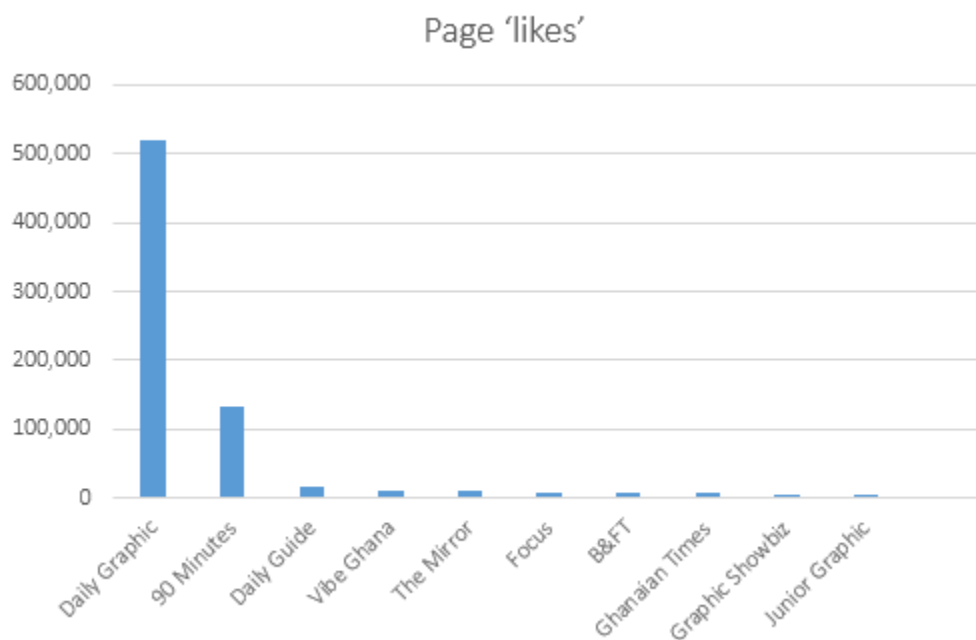


Fig. 5: Rank of top 10 Newspapers on Facebook

Among the least active newspapers on Facebook whose accounts are dormant are the People & Places newspaper, the Accra Daily Mail, the Finder, Ghanaian Observer and The Ghana Gazette.

4. ii. Twitter

As an instant way to break news, Twitter has altered the journalistic landscape. Although seen as a virtual notebook — using it to collect and provide real-time updates on breaking news, we found enough evidence suggesting that Ghanaian newspapers are yet to fully utilize Twitter as means of reaching out and engaging their online audience and also as a platform that forms part of their news production process. Of the 37 newspapers researched for this index, only 6 were found with active twitter handles as seen below in Table 3.

Newspapers	Twitter ‘followers’
Daily Guide	11,800
Daily Graphic	3,849
B&FT	1,433
Ghanaian Times	662
Graphic Showbiz	179
90 Minutes	123

Table 3. Newspapers ranked according to followers on Twitter

The leading newspaper in terms of followers is the Western Publications Group which, just as we saw on Facebook, uses one handle (@dailyguideghana) for its 4 newspapers (Daily Guide, Business Guide, News One and Guide Young Blazers) and had 11,800 followers as at February 8th, 2016.

Ghana's leading newspaper publishing house, Graphic Communications Group, in quite a departure from its strategy for Facebook where it has pages for its various publications, is all represented by just a single handle, @Graphicgh on Twitter with 3849 followers. Ranking third on the list is the Business & Financial Times with the handle, @bftghana and with 1, 433 followers.

The Ghanaian Times newspaper, handlers of @GhanaianTimes on Twitter comes next with an unimpressive followership of 607. The handle, however, has been dormant since May 2013. The other 2 Ghanaian newspaper handles are Graphic Showbiz with a following of 179 and 90 Minutes Sports newspaper which has 123 Followers; a stark disparity with its rather relatively large followership on Facebook.

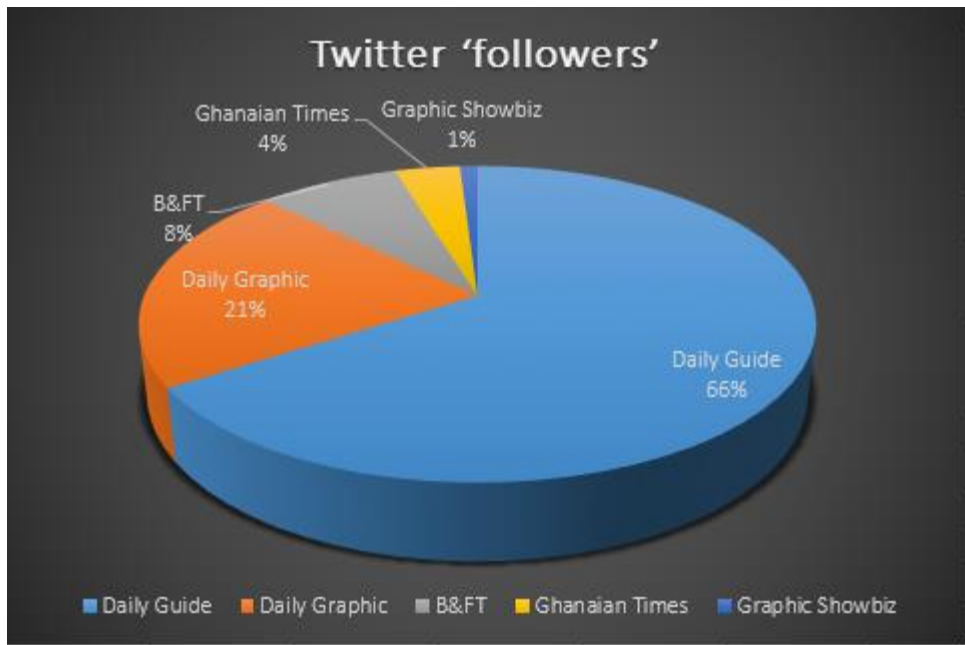


Fig. 6: Newspaper Followership on twitter.

5. CONCLUSION

It is an undeniable fact that Ghana is a growing economy and with this growth comes a rise in social media and internet usage. With more and more Ghanaians migrating onto virtual space particularly through their mobile devices, it has become necessary for newsrooms to extend their reach to such audiences in a fast and timely manner. The SMI seeks to bring to fore some of the efforts being put in by local media entities to embrace the future and to track the extent of their performance.

Though Ghanaian media entities are yet to fully grasp the essence of keeping a vibrant and up to date social media presence, this index has shown that there is the recognition and an appreciation of the need to do so.

Admittedly, many media houses owning various social media platforms have fallen short in the area of managing those accounts with some of them having last updated their pages in over months and even years, defeating the purpose for which such platforms are needed. This may come across as a tad disturbing as one might think that creating a Facebook and/or Twitter account and managing it effectively shouldn't be that hard for a media organisation with so much to share by way of content.

New Media represents the future and social media has come to stay. More effort is needed to shore up Ghana's internet infrastructure which is presently either slow or costly and has translated into low internet penetration. If data networks were faster and more affordable, online activities would be less cumbersome. There is therefore the need to build and sustain the capacity of Ghana's news media enclave to ensure optimum benefit from all what new media tools have on offer. There is also the need to build and sustain the capacity of Ghana's news media enclave to ensure optimum benefit from all what new media tools have on offer.

With a surge in the number of people turning to Facebook and other social-media platforms globally as a place to gather and share ideas, journalists and newsroom managers should be encouraged to use these spaces as a place to share their work and connect with the public within and beyond their physical spheres of influence. The influence of social media in connecting to news audience cannot be overstated. In order to reap the desired outcome of reaching old and new audiences, assert greater influence and receive positive reviews, news organizations should, themselves, be interested and aware of journalists' social media activity. This can potentially affect the professional reputation and alter perceptions of not only the journalist but also that of their news products.