

1st QUARTER SOCIAL MEDIA INDEX REPORT MARCH 2019

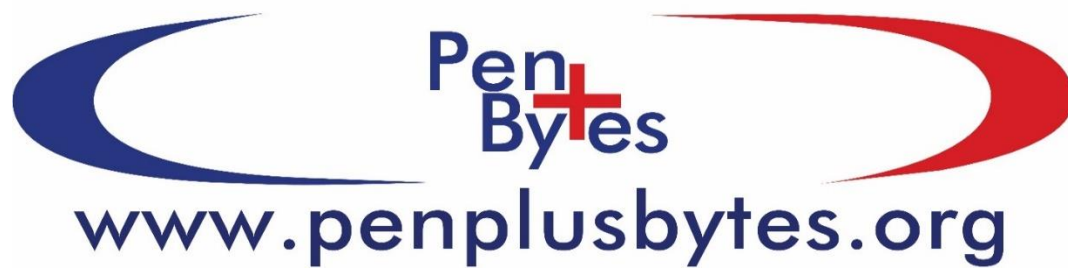


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Social Media Index Report
(Radio, Television and Newspaper)

March, 2019

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1. INTRODUCTION

The rise of social media has changed the world of communications of all sorts. Social media is now influencing all spheres of life, wherever human communication is involved. Immersive social media tools have shaken the world of journalism as well. Now social media determines how people receive and share news. Many journalism experts think that social media has given new dimension to journalism, getting news has become faster and easier. However, some journalism scholars believe that excessive reliance on social media has decreased the quality of journalism as there is no content monitoring and editorial control over the materials retrieved online. Social media experts assert that now most of the journalists all over the world rely on social media websites, network apps etc. for collecting news stories, as they are the fastest news sources.

Social network website Facebook and micro-blog site Twitter are considered great sources of breaking news. By virtue of their interactive and multi-media features, these sites have become highly popular among people of all kinds and are being used by the news media to interact with their audiences. Some social media enthusiasts even say the future of journalism lies in the social media territory. But to what extent are media houses in Ghana taking advantage of this novelty (which is not so new in the global news space)?

With a primary goal of improving mainstream journalism in Ghana using technology, Penplusbytes' 1st Quarter Social Media Index (SMI) report for 2019 reports the extent to which media houses in Ghana are using social media to augment their work and reach the masses locally and beyond.

The March 2019 report reviews the outlook and performance of Newspapers, Radio and TV stations in Ghana based on their presence, followers and likes on social media; particularly Facebook and Twitter.

With collected data remaining valid as at the 31st March, 2019, this report rates how media establishments have made good use of their social media platforms particularly Facebook pages and Twitter handles to reach out and engage audiences by employing a quantitative research module. The module provides relevant numerical figures which informed the rankings.

Not disregarding the existence of other social media performance metrics, this index report assesses the presence and performance of the media brands primarily based on number of page "Likes" and "Followers" with key considerations on content updates i.e. frequency of posts and engagement on Facebook and Twitter.

It is worth noting also that this study was conducted on registered media organisations in Ghana as captured by the National Communications Authority in their quarterly list of authorized media entities in the country. Thus, over 60 newspapers, 350 registered radio stations and 40 TV stations guaranteed operations in Ghana and on air were captured; from which a rank of the best

10 performing media brands in each category is highlighted. It is also worthy to mention here that international media houses that have registered outlets in Ghana were not captured in this data (i.e. BBC, RFI, DSTV etc.)

Key outcomes are outlined in the ensuing pages

2. TV INDEX

2. i. Facebook

Over the period of reviewing television stations performance on social media, not so much significant change has not been recorded. The top 10 list has seen no new entrant but rather has old stations adding on to their numbers and changing positions on the list.

Kwese TV remains in the lead and is closely followed by U TV Ghana. E-TV Ghana was replaced in third place by TV3 and TV Africa remains at the bottom 10th position.

Figure 1 below gives a graphical representation of the list of top 10 TV stations on Facebook ranked by number of ‘Likes’.

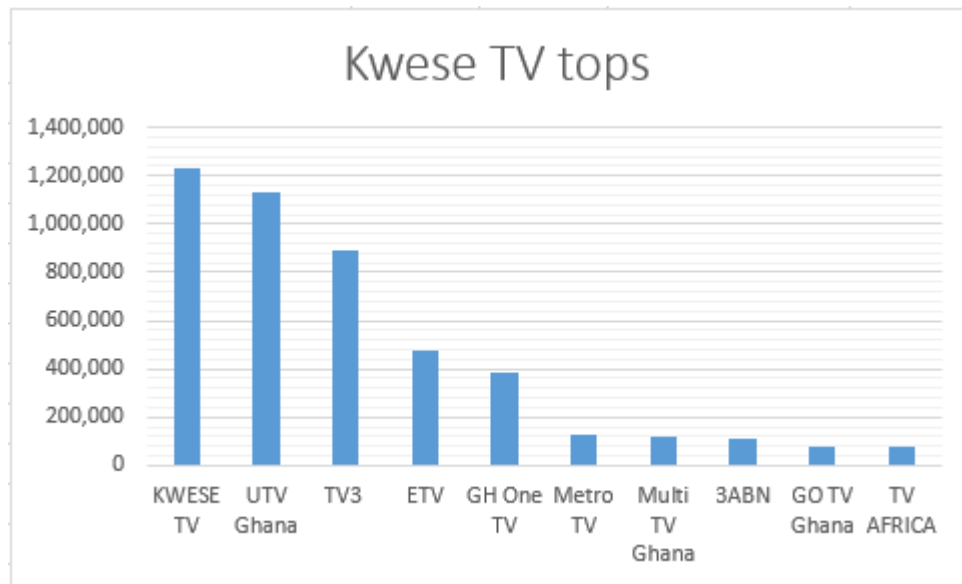


Figure 1: Top 10 TV stations on Facebook

2. ii. Twitter

There are almost the same number of TV stations on Twitter as there are on Facebook. However, not all TV stations on Facebook necessarily have Twitter handles and particularly active and regularly updated handles. Again, the pattern remains same as the top 10 list retains its usual members.

GH One TV with 553,841 followers sits top as the most followed TV station on Twitter. At a not so near second place is TV3 Network with 109,719 followers.

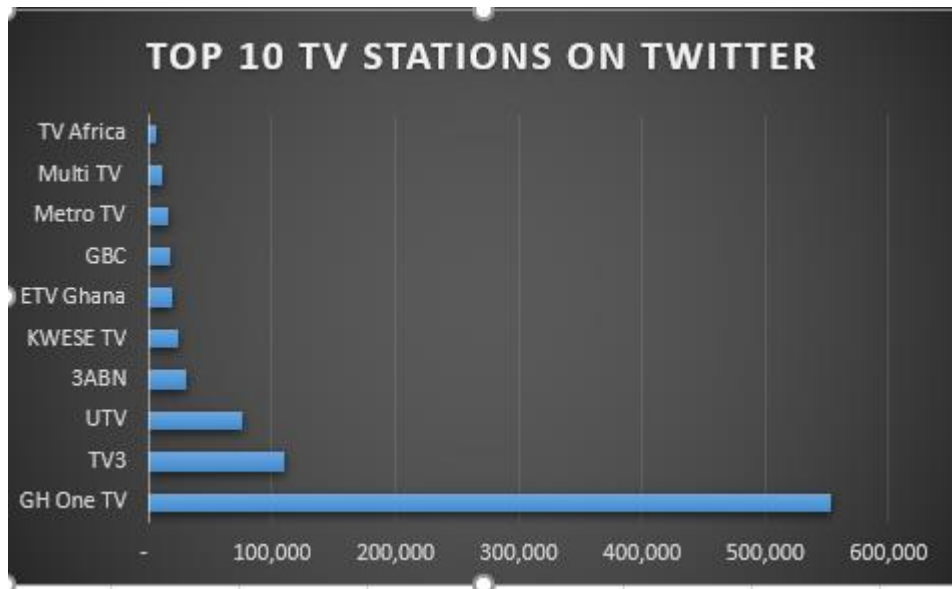


Figure 2: TV stations with highest following on Twitter

3. NEWSPAPER INDEX

3.i. Facebook

Evidently so, most newspapers in Ghana do not operate a fully engaging social media platform even though in recent times a lot more have launched online platforms where daily updates of news are published. Daily Graphic continues however, to have a worrying trend of being the top brand from the Graphic Communications Group on social media i.e. Facebook and Twitter to the detriment of other brands of the Group such as Junior Graphic, Graphic Showbiz amongst others. *Figure 3* (below) depicts the top 10 performing Ghanaian newspapers on Facebook ranked according to the number of page 'Likes'.

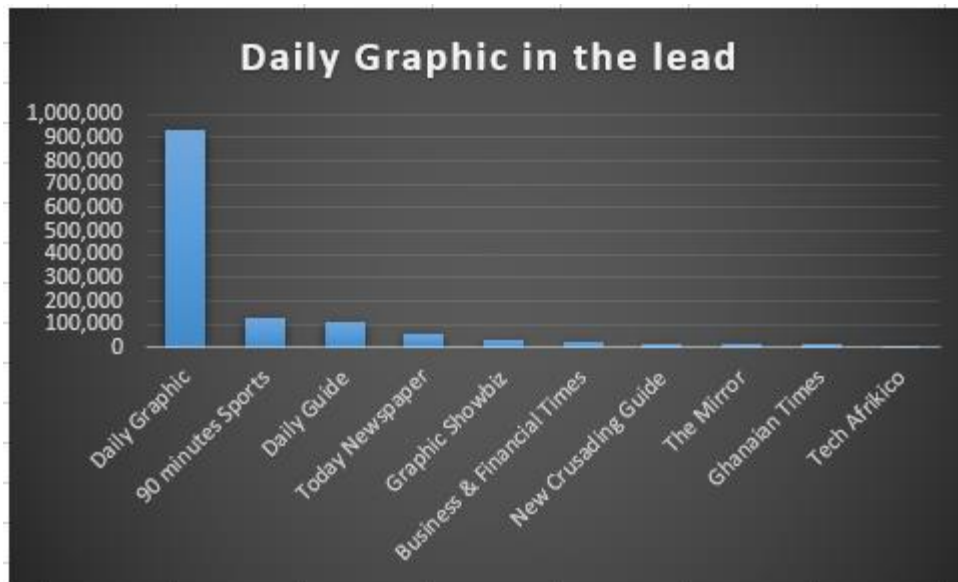


Figure 3: Rank of top 10 Newspapers on Facebook

3. ii. Twitter

As with other quarter reports, Daily Graphic retains its glory of the esteemed first position with new entrant Today Newspaper following closely. The Daily Guide beat Business and Financial Times to the third place this quarter and was closely followed by the Ghanaian Times.

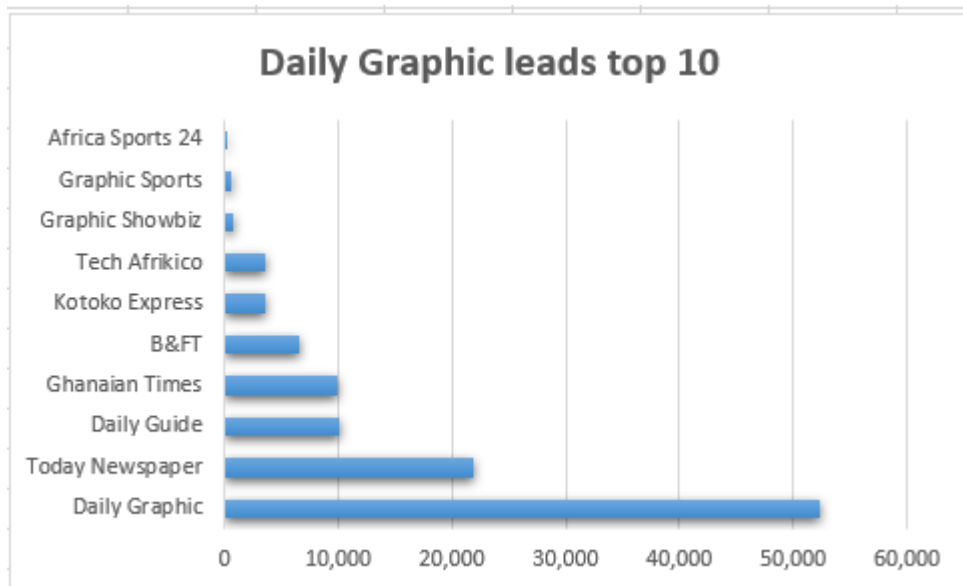


Figure 4: Newspapers ranked according to followers on Twitter

4. RADIO INDEX

4. i. Facebook

The regional divide in the use of social media persists in the media particularly among radio stations in the country. Greater Accra dominates the top 10 bracket of the most active and best followed accounts on Facebook with 7 stations as listed in the table below. Ashanti Region's Nhyira FM and Central region's ATL Radio are also showing considerable progress beating the likes of Accra based Adom FM and Peace FM respectively.

RADIO STATION	FACEBOOK LIKES
CITI FM	1,196,752
JOY FM	1,114,551
NHYIRA 104.5 FM	839,763
ADOM FM	694,117
Y FM 107.9	483,812
HITZ FM	350,543
ATL FM 100.5	261,707
PEACE FM 104.3	252,392
ASEMPA FM	211,509
ULTIMATE 106.9 FM	207,113

Table 1: List of Top 10 Radio stations with the most followers on Facebook

Accra based Citi FM remains at number 1 on the table and is being closely chased by Multimedia's Joy FM at number two with over a million likes on Facebook. These two have consistently maintained the top 2 spots on the index.

4. ii. Twitter

Joy FM maintains the top spot while drawing closer to the 1 million followers mark on Twitter. Citi FM follows the order in 2nd place with over 800,000 followers.

Figure 6 below shows the Top 10 performing Ghanaian Radio stations on Twitter; ranked according to the number of Followers.

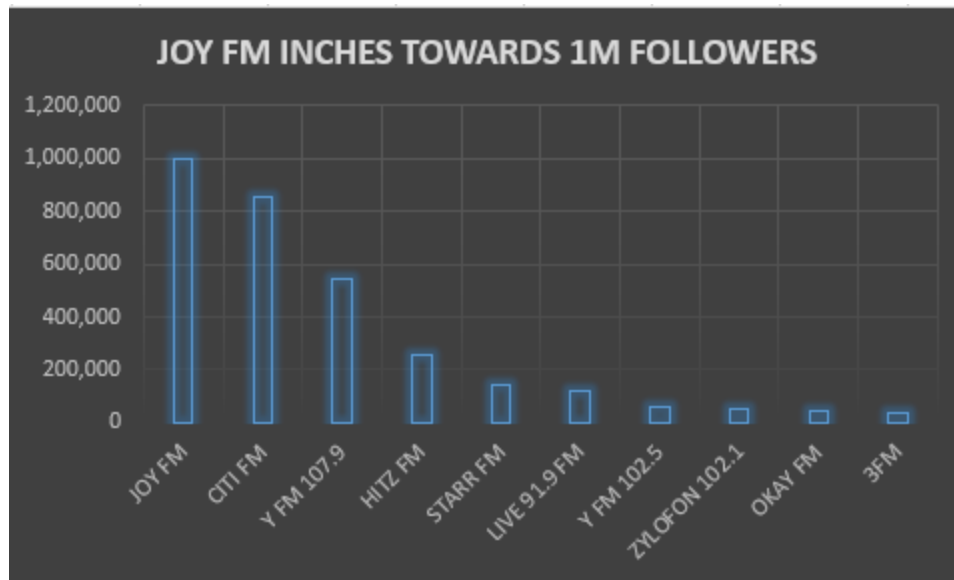


Figure 6: Rank of Top 10 Radio stations on Twitter

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Social media has redefined how people access information, and doors have been opened for a better distribution of content and a wider reach of audience and has presented an opportunity for media companies to gain business benefits by reaching their clients online.

Social media has greatly affected the traditional media industry, especially regarding content delivery and creation. This has caused legacy media companies to look into the feedback and interactions of audience on the social media sites of their brands, in order to gain insights to improve their core business.

The critics of social media, on the other hand, believe social media is negatively affecting the practice of journalism. They argue that social media has threatened the basics of journalism, credibility and reliability. They point their fingers to the many instances of false and fabricated information generated on social media sites. They also find lack of objectivity in these social network sites as most of the people who float the information there, are either unaware of the idea of objectivity or they themselves are activists within the communities they write about. However, there is the third group of journalism scholars who feel that the immense power of social media cannot be ignored in any way and it must be taken as an opportunity particularly when the journalism industry is struggling to survive due to financial reasons. They argue that social media should not be used as mere tools. Rather, journalists should try to find ways to bring journalistic values into the vast world of social media. They believe by understanding the nature of social media and redefining the roles of the journalists accordingly, the journalism industry will be benefitted.

Overall, there have been enormous improvement and continuous growth in social media use among media houses in Ghana as seen from previous index reports and their data trends. It is however worth noting that a significant number of media houses are still missing in the social space particularly those in the peri-urban areas outside of the capital cities of regions. This presents a somewhat wide gap in the use of social media by media entities. Infrastructural and accessibility issues remain pertinent in the country's digital space; thereby hindering a number of media houses approach to the digital revolution currently happening.

For media houses already within the digital and social network space, there remains a challenge of garnering enough followership for engagement and staying relevant on there. Media houses should make it a point to adopt various means of measuring metrics on their platforms just to check for consistency in growth or otherwise. If your organization's engagement and growth numbers are currently lower than industry standards, use the industry standards as your end goal. Set a reasonable timeline (6 months is a good start), and divide the difference between your current numbers and industry numbers by the number of months you have to reach your goals. Then you have a benchmark to measure yourself by for each month.

Setting monthly benchmarks allows you to have enough time (30 days) to test out new content, post frequency and any other factors that may influence growth and engagement. You can then figure out what's working, implement it and reach your monthly goal.

What remains clear is that in the end, there will always remain an appetite for journalism that is based on the following values: truth, accuracy, integrity, verification, independence, and in recent times: speed. Social media adds, among other things, a speed value.

When social media is used correctly, it connects journalists and reporters to people and information. Just like the telephone didn't replace the face-to-face meeting and e-mail didn't replace the telephone, social media doesn't replace other forms of connecting with people. It adds value to them.

This report evidently shows impressive performances by media entities such as Joy FM, Citi FM, Daily Graphic and Kwese TV who have maintained their positions on the Top 10 list for a while. They represent a small percentage of best managed pages that are easily identified as official on social media with up-to-the-minute post updates and interaction with their audience.

Rebranded media houses have also not pulled their weight along on the social media front. A lot more investment is required to stay significant on social media and these media houses need to pay attention to such to make more impact.

Hopefully, as per the objective of this Index, Ghana's media entities and newsrooms would by this report commit a lot more to building quality online presence to engage their online audience on social media.