

# ADOPTION OF CONVERGENCE TECHNOLOGY FOR SPORTS JOURNALISM BY BRILA 88.9 FM

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## Abstract

This study was focused on knowing the extent to which Brila 88.9FM has adopted convergence devices with specific focus on knowing the devices of convergence available to Brila FM staff, the benefits the devices have on the operations of Brila FM and to know the possible challenges faced by staff of Brila FM in using the available convergence devices for their sport reporting and programmes. Convergence theory and diffusion of innovation theory were for this study. Using a mixed research method, in-depth interview, observation checklist and the questionnaire were the instruments used for data collection. The in-depth interviews were conducted with the heads of stations at Brila FM Abuja headquarters and the Brila FM Kaduna station. The study found out that Brila FM have adopted convergence in its work because almost all the activities carried out at Brila FM, in one way or the other, involve the use of convergence technology. The study also revealed that, there has been provision of latest convergence facilities at Brila FM as staff derive benefits from using convergence technologies for their work. Some of the benefits include quick download of sports stories from any sports website around the world. The engineering department at Brila FM also derives benefits from convergence as it uses ICTs to link up with its partners and affiliate station, Sky Sports Radio, United Kingdom (UK). The study also revealed that staff faced challenges in utilization, as some of the devices are technical to understand and operate, of convergence devices at the station. The study recommended, amongst others, that Brila FM should put more efforts in staff training, organizing seminars and workshops to enlighten and update the knowledge of staff on the latest ICTs used for sports broadcast.

**Key Words:** Adoption, Convergence, ICT, Sports Journalism, Brila (88.9)

## Introduction

One aspect of the media which for long has been regarded as the “toy department” is the area of Sports Reporting or Sports Journalism. This is so because at its infancy, the area of sports journalism was given limited time and space in the news media. According to Domingo (2006), with the recent improvement in sports journalism to a more highly developed stage, sports journalism should be scrutinized using the professional criteria within the news arena. The advent of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) has transformed beyond recognition, the terrain and institution of mass media, most especially in the area of sports journalism. There is an advantageous paradigm shift in the global practice of journalism and the aspect of sports reporting has seen drastic improvement due to the coming of new communication technologies.

The internet according to Talabi (2011) is the fastest growing medium in history. He observed that the digitalization, convergence of computer and telephony technologies which are the most important aspects of the internet have greatly influenced the way news and information are produced and disseminated. In the world today, going by the

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words of Talabi, it can be seen that media production before required both analogue and digital technologies, but in recent times, with the advent of digital technologies, media production has improved including the convergence of technologies as well as corporate integration.

The rapid concentration of ownership and conglomeration, rapid globalization, increased audience fragmentation, hyper-commercialism and steady erosion of traditional distinction among media which today is driven by technology and money is referred to as convergence (Future of Media Convergence, 2011).

Convergence brings things alike together and as it applies to the media, digitalization has led to the convergence of media technologies. This is usually applied to the convergence of media technologies as a result of digitalization (computerization). As media continues to change due to the introduction of information and communication technologies, new paradigms are being developed which includes convergence.

Dominick (2011), buttresses convergence as a word which has been popular for years in different fields of life and academics, but in recent times, it has gained more attention in the media with the paradigm shift it has brought to the practice of journalism and the media at large. Dominic further observes that convergence could be in the form of corporate convergence where companies purchase smaller companies and combine their separate operations into a single effort.

On the most important type of convergence, Dominick (2011) attributed such convergence to device convergence, these are processes where by the functions of multiple equipments and devices are combined into one functional technology which can perform the functions of the other devices simultaneously. The internet today has provided a platform for all media to converge; this is so because almost every media be it print, broadcast or online media are on the internet which is a fast channel for the dissemination of news, entertainment and information. The internet today due to device convergence is preferred than the old and analogue means for dissemination and receiving of media content. Radio stations can now be picked on high definition and satellite radio, while newspapers, books, and magazines can be found online.

With the transformation taking place in the field of journalism, one area of the media according to Mohammed (2014), which has so far been affected and improved is the area of sports reporting (sports journalism). Just like all reporters on special beats, the sports reporter today has so many tools, computers, and media outlets to deliver sporting events to an anxiously waiting audience who would acquire any digital device to keep abreast with what is happening in the sporting world. Millions of dollars are spent on sports, like football, lawn tennis, golf, basketball etc. The media spend a lot to make sure that they get the latest technology available to gather information about sports and spread it to the audience.

In recent times, convergence has made the jobs of sports media more flexible. Many sports reporters today are the editors, reporters, and often times, photojournalists, they do this during different sporting activities like the Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup (Matheson, 2012), Olympics championships, National Basketball Association (NBA) Basketball or during tennis championship. We see journalists with their cameras and their laptop computers; they cover and report the

sporting activities as the event unfolds giving every minute update with audio, picture, and text. This shows the extent to which sports journalism has been transformed.

With evolution, globalization has since become a buzzword and as such it has brought about improvement, drastic change and competition in the field of sports reporting. The digitalisation of sports reporting made possible by convergence will be well appreciated if the sports reporters are on the side of the digital divide where they can manipulate all given technologies in reporting sporting activities. This implies that the area of sports reporting cannot be well appreciated by both the journalists and the audience unless sports journalists are able to manipulate the recent technologies used in reporting sports like the touch screen television used by Sky Sports television and Super Sports television and also some sports radio and print media.

The touch screen television is a perfect example of media convergence because; it has pictures, audio, and text. It is connected to the internet and sports presenters, analysts make valuable use of it. Sport reporters in the stadium, the commentators, and those at different sport press conferences use it in filing in reports or covering sporting activities. The audience also adjusts to the demands of the converged technologies used by the sports reporters or broadcasters.

Just as sports journalists are very important in the 21st century, so also is the profession of sports journalism. Some scholars have come to recognize this profession as one important department in the field of journalism. Sports Journalism, according to Boyle (2006), was viewed as the most trivial aspect or department in the field of journalism, this believe arose from the fact that sports journalism and reporting at its early stage was not viewed as a serious area of mass communication or journalism as a whole. With the rising trends in the field of journalism brought about by technological convergence, Boyle views Sport Reporting or Sports Journalism as the most engaging writing in the media, unlike political and international diplomacy reporting because there's a bit more latitude given to sports reporting because the writings or broadcast are meant to entertain as much as to inform.

According to the Museum of Broadcast Communication (2008), Sports Journalism involves the coverage of sports as a television programme, on radio and other broadcasting medium. It usually involves one or more sports commentators who add spice to the broadcast by describing the event as they happen. These commentators give more insight on the sport, the stadium and background information on the players. All these information are researched by sports journalists using the ICTs and other digital equipment.

With the emergence of digital plenitude made possible by device convergence, the internet and the World Wide Web (internet and the World Wide Web, 2014) has significantly lowered the production cost of sports programme which in turn as at today, has increased more sports media organizations, clubs and even individual athletes who can produce, and distribute content for the consumption of their audience (Boyle 2006).

Looking at it from the point of view of Ntombovuyo (2006), the emergence, and convergence of information and communication technologies (ICTs) has made the mass media and sports media witness tremendous transformation. This has brought some challenges to the practice of modern mass communication and sports journalism. With

the present sophistication in the information superhighway, the former notion that mass communication is not a science may be having a paradigm shift sports department is no exception.

In Nigeria, the media have played a key role in sports ascendancy as a social, cultural and economic institution and with the recent development in the nexus between convergence and media, there is need to examine and acknowledge the relationship between convergence and sports journalism. This is so, because in Nigeria, there have been more debates on the impact convergence has on the field of mass communication in general, little on sports journalism in particular. Thus, there is need to investigate, the adoption and impact convergence is having on sports journalism in the country as existing literature, for instance, Ifeduba (2011) looked at European football club coverage by newspapers in Nigeria serving as a means of gratifying the audience or, serving as media imperialism. Also, Mohammed (2014) studied the contribution of sports journalism to sports development in Nigeria without specifically narrowing to any particular medium level of adoption, impact and challenges. This study therefore was set to respond to the following objectives:(i) to examine the extent of adoption of convergence devices, (ii)to analyse the impact of the devices on sports journalism in Brila88.9 FM and, (iii) to find out the challenges faced by the staff of the station in their usage of the available convergence devices.

This study was confined to the extent of adoption of convergence devices in the operations of Brila FM 88.9 radio, between the year 2014 and 2015. This is the period in which the study was carried out. The radio station was chosen for the research because according to [www.brilafm.net](http://www.brilafm.net),it claims to be the only known full time sports radio station in Nigeria and the first in Africa. The station was founded in 2002 by ace sportscaster, Dr. Larry Izamoje, in Lagos State, Nigeria. It started a second (2nd) station in 2007 in Abuja. It achieved Pan-Nigeria spread in 2011 with new stations in Kaduna (North) and Onitsha (East) of the country ([www.brilafm.net](http://www.brilafm.net)).

## **Literature Review**

This literature segment comes in three faces. The conceptual review so as to make clear some major concepts of the study, review of related empirical studies within and outside Nigeria for insights into likely findings of this study, and the theoretical review for a framework of analysis and interpretation.

## **Conceptual Review**

Convergence: Technologies have been improving convergence, which has helped in removing the barriers and gaps between different media(Baran and Davis 2012). Today people live in a world were revolution is taking place in the field of communication technology and convergence is believed to be transforming every aspect of life worldwide. With device convergence, the rare possibilities witnessed before of technologies combining to create media systems that can reach great distances is now made possible.

According to Hoffman (2007), convergence has made it possible for two or more

different devices like the television and personal computers (PC) to complement each other in one frame or as one device. This has also led to both the computing and broadcasting industries to enjoy great trends in technology and convenience. To McQuail (2007), digitization is the most reliant and dominant area of information and communication technology (ICT) because it has simplified the process of production, distribution, and storage of media content. According to him, convergence has eroded the dynamics that existed even amongst the different areas of journalism before such as in the aspect of their organization, distribution, reception, and regulation of media content.

Convergence has made different forms of mass media to survive, retain their separate identity, and even flourish because; new electronic media is an addition to the existing spectrum rather than a replacement. McQuail observes that convergence has to be considered to have much more revolutionary consequences.

In addition to convergence smoothening media practices, Baran, et al (2012), believe that people can now see the difference in the technologies used before and the available convergence device. He stressed that people believe that the analogue devices used before for mass communication were expensive, clumsy technologies because of the limited they had in reaching out to a large audience. While Deuze (2007), puts convergence as a word that revolves around contemporary media environment, Genovese(2013) is of the opinion that, it is safe to state that the media professionals must accept technological convergence as a part of their work in the digital age because convergence have also improved the managements control over media work.

Genovese buttresses the point that convergence affects four main facets of the mass media industries which includes content, relationships between producers and consumers of media, the structure of media companies and how media professionals do their work. He argues that convergence is blurring the lines between production and consumption, between making and using media, and between active or passive spectatorship of mediated culture. "Convergence has begotten the need for multi skilling in many news rooms, essentially increasing the work loads of many media workers with no improvement in the resources allotted to them" (Deuze, 2007:142). Some journalists view multi skilling as a way to increase their versatility and, thus, as a form of professional enhancement (Chapman and Kinsey, 2009).

Hesmondhalgh (2002), point out that scholars have shown that the contemporary media worker faces a less secure work situation, more responsibilities and more autonomy. Hesmondhalgh in particular notes how those in the cultural industries work long hours under tough conditions and give up compensation and job security for creative autonomy. According to Chapman and Kinsey (2009), the potential negative effects of convergence spurred by technological development were recognized back in the 1990s. Scholars noted the likelihood that journalists would be burdened with heavier workloads and pressures because of the expectations of working in a multimedia environment. Perhaps, the biggest concern was that the quality of journalism would suffer as the need to produce more news increased (Cottle and Ashton, 1999).

## **Review of Empirical Studies**

This section covers a review of empirical and related studies with a view to pointing gaps and knowing the likely findings of the present study. The segment is subdivided into two main sections covering the major focus of the study. Thus, studies on adoption and benefits of convergence devices by media organizations, and those on the challenges of adopting convergence devices were reviewed.

### **Adoption and Benefits of Convergence Devices**

In a preliminary study by Domingo, Salaverría, Aguado, Cabrera (2007), they are of the view that the internet has transformed into a news medium which is viewed and believed by stakeholder in the field of journalism to be the savior of journalism in the 21st century. The study looked at “convergence as a very polysemous concept that has been used to describe various trends in journalism that have something in common, the blurring of limits between different media, professional skills and roles” (Domingo et. al 2007. pp1).

Domingo et.al (2007), structured convergence into four dimensions; they are intergraded production, multi skilled professionals, multiplatform delivery, and active audience. The analytical grid as put forward by the researcher “can help in exploring convergence, avoiding deterministic assumptions and allowing to map its development in different media companies as an open process with diverse outcomes” (Domingo et.al 2007, pp1-2).

Domingo's study was carried out in Spain with a sample of 58 Spanish cases scrutinized using the conceptual framework. Their results showed that multiplatform delivery is the most popular convergences strategy, the researchers buttressed that any given dimensions' developments tend not to radically change established professional routines and values but to Domingo et. al, the dimensions which include integration and multi-skilling seem to be closely related and mainly developed in local and regional media with small staff, while delivery and audience strategies are more complex in natural media. One basic importance that Domingo's study postulates is that the conceptual framework used in the study can be useful to international comparisons of journalistic convergence.

In a study by Price, John, Farrington, Neil and Hall, Lee (2012) on the impacts of new social media on sports journalism and the education of sports journalism students. They focused on how twitter is influencing journalism in the area of sports reporting. Through interviews with members of a press pack, the study found that, the new technology, twitter, is creating some problems and divisions among journalists partly due to lack of clear guidelines and best practice. They pointed out that while twitter undoubtedly offers new journalistic opportunities in terms of sourcing, publishing, and accessing audiences, it poses a number of potential problems including workload, loss of exclusive source access and content, and abuse from readers. They therefore, recommended that training in the use of twitter should form an essential part of any sports journalism course if future reporters are to get the best out of this social media.

As broadcast, audiovisual and print media converge with telecommunications, computing, and information systems, research carried out by Livingstone, Couvering

and Thumin (2008) on media literacy and information literacy, shows that both audio and visual could hardly separate despite their contrasting disciplinary backgrounds, theories, and methods. They looked into the public's understanding of an effective engagement with media information and communication technologies of all kinds. They advocate a converged or at least dialogical concept of media and information literacies, arguing that each tradition has much to learn from the other, although the researchers accept that some differences must remain.

Brenna (2010), in her study of traditional news media and the internet carried out in Nigeria, buttressed that the internet offers a tremendous opportunity for traditional media to expand and or enhance news. She carried out an exploration of the convergent journalism practices of three-news organization in a medium-sized market. One good thing about this study is that the researcher used content analysis and in-depth interviews to compare the news stories of a newspaper, television station and radio station with content on each organizations internet website.

The research shows that while the three media organizations had different approaches to convergent journalism, they each utilized some type of multimedia techniques on their websites including slide shows, videos, audio, hyperlinks, and reader interactivity. For the most part however, online news stories were replications of their traditional counterparts and the study was able to show the major factors affecting how traditional media used the internet to tell news stories including available resources, training and organizational priorities.

Indeed the internet is a growing source of news for many Americans, having surpassed newspapers and radio, and shortened the gap with television news in terms of popularity of platform. According to a study by the Pew internet and American life project (2010), 61% adults said they get some kind of news online compared to 78% from a local newspaper. The result confirm Merrill and Lowenstein(cited in Brenna, 2010) theory of media evolution, whereby a new medium is developed and adopted by a mass audience so that it becomes competitive with older media. The older media must then specialize or find some other way to survive.

Brenna in her submission notes that more than a decade has passed since journalism organizations first began developing news websites, but the use of online story telling techniques has been slow to catch on. Technology continues to evolve and will not wait for traditional media. She added that the imperative need for media organizations to continually evaluate their convergent practices while still producing quality journalism. Management and reporters according to the study need to understand how to use changing equipment and software, and more training will be necessary.

In another research, early studies on sports reporting and social media (twitter) show how twitter is used to reproduce or contest the Super Bowl XLVII, in reaction to real time televised broadcast (Hyeaoncheel, YounGsub, Kwangmi and Yanggon, 2014). The diffusion of innovation theory was adopted by the researchers as a framework for the study since it provided a systematic explanation of how an innovation is communicated through channels of communication in a social system. The study adopts a hybrid approach, combining a data mining approach to collect, filter and analyze a massive amount of tweets with manual content analysis. The study used all possible Twitter feeds

of high profile organizers such as the NFL. This macro level analysis shed light on when people are more engaged during broadcast. The research points out that as more audiences are multitasking during TV viewing, it becomes important for media marketing and advertising professional to gain a better understanding of audience behavior, focusing on how they use specific platforms like the twitter which is one of the fastest growing form of new media.

Similarly, Price, Farmington and Hall (2013) found out twitter is creating some problems and divisions among journalists due partly to a lack of clear guidelines and best practices in using twitter as a tool for journalism. While they argue that twitter undoubtedly offers new journalistic opportunities in terms of sourcing, publishing, and accessing audiences, they were of the view that it poses a number of potential problems including workload, loss of exclusive source access and context and abuse from readers. As a result, they came up with solutions that, training in the use of twitter should form an essential part of any sports journalism course if future reporters are to get the best out of it.

Boyle (2006) concludes that digital and new media are significantly changing the environment within which sports journalists operate. Areas of particular interest raised by him was the rise of online sports journalism, the impact of the internet on sports sources, and the evolving conflicts between journalists and sports clubs as they attempt to not only exert greater control over their perceived intellectual property and image rights, but also reshape contemporary sports journalism in a more corporate age of sport. That is why in today's practice of sport reporting, people see sports clubs like Real Madrid, Arsenal or Manchester United, having their own media outlet so that they can also broadcast their clubs sporting activities through their media, but not withstanding, they always make sure journalists from other media are carried along through press conferences.

Huang, Davison, Shreve, Davis, Bettendorf and Nair (2006) in their study, argue that, just a few years ago, every discussion on the future of the media use to include the term 'electronic superhighway' inspired by the rapid advances of computer technologies and the equally impressive increases in personal computer penetration, which described the path to a digital world in which computers dominate and have replaced the established media. According to them, today, electronic superhighway sounds oddly old fashioned and the term has been replaced by a new equally ubiquitous one known as "convergence". Huang say convergence would be or mean new appliances and new companies but not a new way to relax and be entertained because even with the interaction between new media and the old media on separate appliances, which may become predominant convergence pattern, there would be no convergence revolution in the consumer behavior any time soon.

In Nigeria, Talabi (2011) found that the internet has benefited journalism practice in the area of production, dissemination, and reception of information. Though library sources were mostly relied on for data gathering, the study found that the interactive nature of the internet is a crucial factor while some believe its role of citizen-journalism is unethical in journalism profession. The study buttressed the fact that no new medium can send an old one into oblivion; it will only be an extension of the old medium.

Ifeduba (2011) looked at the content, uses, and gratifications of football club newspaper as an emerging phenomenon and found that the birth of these newspapers has led to an increasing number of Nigeria football fans shifting their support to foreign football clubs. However, the study could not explain the fact that not every football fan in Nigeria is literate and that, there are other local football newspapers like the 'complete sports', 'soccer star, and 'sporting life' sold here in Nigeria. The researcher did not bother to look at the Nigerian newspapers' roles, whether or not they added to the shift of sports fans to European football.

### **Challenges of Convergence Devices to Practicing Journalists**

Studies have shown that journalists find it challenging to adapt to the use of digital technology and without proper training, this could prove more difficult to curtail. Tarcia and Simao (2008) found that, in Brazil, there is the need for journalism institutions and education to act together with the students in the search for alternatives of accompanying the changes brought by digital technologies while also taking into consideration the users interactive and participatory possibilities.

Chalaby and Segell (1999) stress the implications facing broadcaster in the use of digital equipment in their operations. The study showed and explained that despite predictable development, digitization increases the sources of uncertainties and the level of risks for the expanding number of players involved in broadcasting. Other arguments were put forward by the research. That the process of digitization is challenging public service broadcasters and may contribute to weaken their presence in the public sphere. Technological mastery increasingly tends to rest in the hands of commercial firms and digital broadcasting furthers the commercialism of television. Also fuelling the growth of condition access, digitization threatens universal access, one of the key principles of public broadcasting. Giving the risk digitization poses to broadcasting and being in line with the arguments of the researchers in the study, one can share the views and arguments of the study which explains the facts that when digital broadcasting will be fully operational, watching television will cease to be a common experience, to become a shared activity that individuals experience separately.

### **Theoretical Framework**

For the purpose of this study, two theories, Convergence Theory and the Diffusion of Innovation Theory were adopted to serve framework for the study. Just as many magazines and media refer to Marshal McLuhan as the patron saint of digital revolution, we might as well describe the late MIT political scientist, Ithiel de Sola Pool as the prophet of media convergence. Pool's 'Technology of Freedom' (1983) was probably the first book to lay out the concept of convergence as a force of change within media industries. Jenkins (2006:62), quoting Pool states that:

A process called the 'convergence of modes' is blurring the lines between media, even between point to point communication, such as the post, telephone, and telegraph, and mass communication, such as the press, radio, and television. A single physical means, be it wires, cable or airwaves may carry services that in the past were provided in separate ways. Conversely, a service that was provided in the past by any

one medium, be it broadcasting, the press or telephony can now be provided in several different physical ways. So the one to one relationship that used to exist between a medium and its use is eroding.

Jenkins observes that new technology bring together different mediums and consequently redefines the media environment, creating changes in communications and information technologies which in turn reshape and change everyday life, altering patterns of creation, consumption, learning and interpersonal interaction.

Jenkins (2006) popularized the concept of convergence culture in the media. He analyzed many aspects of media convergence currently redefining the technological, economic, aesthetic, organic and global media environment. According to Jenkins, convergence is both a top down and bottom up phenomenon. When a new technology is created, both the manufacturers and the users of the product influence the way it is used. He assumes that convergence is:

The flow of content across multiple media platforms, the co-operation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behavior of media audience who would go almost anywhere in search of the kinds of entertainment experiences they want. (p. 62)

Advances in technology bring the ability for technological convergence that can alter social side effects, in that, virtual, social and physical world are colliding, merging and coordinating. In looking at Jenkins perspective of convergence theory, the theory does not just look at media convergence as just a technological shift, or a technological process, but it also includes the shift within the industrial, cultural, and social paradigms that encourages the consumer to seek out new information. Media convergence here in reality alters relationships between industries, technologies, audiences, genre and markets and it also changes the rationality media industries operate in, as such media convergence is essentially a process and not an outcome. As mentioned earlier, according to Mohammed (2014), with the transformation taking place in the field of journalism due to convergence, one area of the media, which has so far been affected and improved is the area of sports journalism (sports reporting). Just like all reporters on special beats, the sports journalist today has so many digital devices to aid him in his reportorial, such tools as computers, camera, the internet, mobile phones and other media outlets to deliver sporting events to an anxiously waiting audience who would acquire any digital device to keep abreast with all what is happening in the sporting world.

Jenkins (2001) critiques the convergence theory saying, although new media technologies have lowered production and distribution costs, they expanded the range of available delivery channels and enabled consumers to archive, annotate, appropriate and recirculate media content in powerful new ways, there has been an alarming concentration of the ownership of mainstream commercial media, with a small handful of multinational media conglomerates dominating all sectors of the entertainment industry due their ability to purchase convergence facilities.

According to Jenkins, the range of voices in policy debates will become constrained as media ownership concentrates. He points out worries that fragmentation of the web is

apt to result in the loss of shared values and common culture. Convergence theory is criticized because it raises the fear that media is out of control or too controlled. Putting the world without gatekeepers or giving gatekeepers unprecedented power.

On the other hand, Diffusion of innovation theory was propounded by Everett Roger's and Shoemaker in 1973 and was later developed by Roger's in 1986. The theory was used in this research to explain the extent of adoption of convergence devices by Brila 88.9 FM looking at the challenges they face in the adoption process and the benefits they derived from adopting convergence at the station.

The concept innovation as buttressed by Rogers and Shoemaker (1973) is the idea, practice or object perceived as new by an individual. The newness here, as the scholars argued does not presupposes that such idea, practice or object is entirely novel to members of a social group, it rather means that though members of the target group may be aware of such idea, practice or object, prior to the launching of the campaign for social change but are slow to accept it. On the other hand, diffusion according to Katz (1974), refers to the process of the spread of a given new idea or practice over time, via specifiable channels through social structure such as neighborhood, factory or tribe. In simple terms, diffusion to him means internalization, adoption, practice and preaching of new idea by man either as an individual or member of a social group. Innovation and diffusion therefore would mean strategic exposure to change, target a new idea, object or practice which is innovational in a manner that the recipient would pay attention to understand, internalize and adopt the new object or practice which is diffused for their own benefit.

For Rogers, the adoption of an innovation is a process in which eventual adopters pass through five stages:

- i. Awareness of the innovation.
- ii. Interest in it.
- iii. Trying it out.
- iv. Making a decision to accept or reject it.
- v. Adoption or adapting the innovation to one daily life or to the media operations.

This theory will help explain where Sports Radio 88.9 Brila FM lies in the process of adopting new innovations of convergence in the operations of their media organization. It will also reveal the awareness level of staff of Brila FM to the available convergence devices to them and their interest in applying them to their work at Brila FM, it would reveal if the station have tried out their ICTs and convergence devices. The theory will also check if Brila FM has the intention of accepting or rejecting convergence while assessing if the station have adapted to the challenges brought about by convergence if adopted already.

In shedding more light on the thesis of the theory of diffusion of innovation, Imoh (2007), provides insights into the factors that influence the decisions to adopt new communication technologies, innovations, ideas, or practice which eventually led to convergence in a specific population or organization.

They include:

- i. Relative advantage of the new idea over the existing ones that it aims to replace.
- ii. Complexity which shows how simple or difficult the new behaviour or technology is to understand, act on and to adopt how many sub-steps or actions are necessary to complete the behaviour.
- iii. Triability which shows how much the desired behaviour is to be tried out before making a commitment to act on or adopt it.
- iv. Observability which shows visible the result and outcome of the desired behaviour or innovation to the intended media.

The above outlines show that for Sports Radio 88.9 Brila FM to claim the use of innovation, the processes listed above must have been undertaken because the issue here is to scrutinize convergence impact on sports journalism by Sports Radio 88.9 Brila FM, looking at how Brila FM is utilizing technological innovations in carrying out their broadcast.

Diffusion of innovation theory has been criticized for its limitations, for example, according to Imoh (2007), it facilitates the adoption of innovations that were sometimes not well understood or even desired by the adopters because diffusion of innovation does not guarantee long-term success and this can be seen in some Nigeria media organizations because they might have adopted new innovations, the question here is, does it guarantee the long-term success hoped for?

McQuail (2005) opines that, for media to be effective, other condition of modernity must also have to be present, such as individuation, trust in bureaucracies and in technology, and understanding of the basis of media authority, legitimacy and objectivity.

It is based on the above facts and arguments of diffusion of innovation theory that the researcher considers it as one of the theories for this study because the central thesis of the theory of diffusion of innovation is the need to change from the old cultural ways of doing things, applying it to this study, will reveal how well or best Brila 88.9 FM can adopt convergence and innovations in its media activities.

### **Methodology**

This study adopted quantitative and qualitative survey methods relying on the instruments of the questionnaire, observation checklist and interview schedule for data collection. The methods were used because they were appropriate and provided the chance to check the distributions and interrelations of variables and for the sake of clarity. The population studied comprised of staff of all the four FM stations owned by Brila FM 88.9. These are: Brila FM 88.9, Lagos, Abuja, Kaduna and Onitsha. The population size was 140 in number. The Lagos station had 40 staff, Abuja 40, Kaduna 30 and Onitsha 30. This number includes freelancers who work for the organisation. These data were gotten from official sources at the Kaduna station. All the staff were studied because the number (140) was considered manageable thereby making it a census study. However, the purposive sampling technique was adopted in the case of the interview adoption of the purposive sampling technique in selecting the members of the

population to be interviewed because they possessed the characteristics of indebt knowledge which helped to gain insights into the work routines at Brila FM. Two key informants; the station managers of Brila FM Kaduna and Abuja respectively were interviewed. In using all the instruments for this study, the confidentiality of respondents were guaranteed. The researchers employed research assistants in administering copies of the questionnaire to the Lagos and Onitsha stations because they could not be physically present to administer the questionnaire over there. Those of Abuja and Kaduna stations were administered by the researchers. To ensure validity, a pilot study was carried with 10% (14) of the total copies of the questionnaire, the observation checklist and the IDI schedule respectively, were subjected to face validity and reliability test with a satisfactory results. Data were gathered analyzed using descriptive statistical method. The responses to the questions were built into simple frequency distribution tables and analyzed. Responses from the interviews were transcribed and used to beef up the analysis of the frequency tables, likewise the data from the observation.

### Results and Discussion

At the end of data gathering, 128 copies of the questionnaire were retrieved for the study and used accordingly for the analysis, supported also with the data from the IDI and observation. The section is subdivided into two, with the demographics of the staff in the first sub and the second sub covers the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the major data for the study.

In respect to sex distribution, results show that majority (87.5%) of the staff of the station are male at Brila FM, while 12.5% are female. In terms of educational distribution, 53.1% of the respondents have obtained first degree while others have Diploma/ OND, HND. There are also others with second degree. As expected of a media house, Brila FM has a literate workforce. Majority of the respondents, constituting 27.3%, falls under the multi-tasking journalists' category. This category covers journalists who do more than one job at the station. They can do what all the other categories can. In the multi-tasking category, a field reporter can also be a producer or even a presenter, some edit their stories and post directly for the web pages, and some also file in edited works which are aired without needing re-editing. There is also the freelance category. It is third major category with 19.5% of staff, which indicates a high level of dependability on freelancers at Brila FM. This may be cost beneficial but professionally risky to the station in the area of total commitment as it is with full-fledge staff.

The next segment will cover the presentation of data, analyses and interpretation for the purpose of establishing results.

**Table 1: Convergence Devices used at *Brila* FM**

Devices	Frequency/Percentage
Analog	Nil
Digital	117 (91.4%)
Both	11 (8.6%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>128 (100%)</b>

The results of the analysis in table 1 reveal that there is digital presence at *Brila FM*. Majority of the respondents constituting 91.4% use digital device for their jobs at *Brila FM*. It is a positive sign for *Brila FM*, it shows that there is a high level of adoption ICTs at the station. Furthermore, this was buttressed by respondents when they added, in the general comment section of the questionnaire, that there were latest devices provided by *Brila FM* to aid their activities. These devices according to them include; a digital studio (state of art), boom microphones, laptop CD players, strong mixers and amplifiers, digital midgets, computer automation software, smile 4 GLTE, power protection unit / Ups, stronger transmitters and receivers, modem/internet facilities, and transmission phone lines. This is a clear indication that there is the availability of convergence devices in the operations of the station. The analyses in table two show the adoption (usage) level of the devices.

**Table 2: Adoption Rate of Convergence Devices at *Brila FM***

**Convergence Devices at *Brila FM***

<b>Adoption Rate</b>	<b>Frequency/Percentage</b>
Low	Nil
High	97 (75.8%)
Very high	31 (24.2%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>128 (100%)</b>

The results of the analysis in table 2 show that the level of adoption of convergence devices for broadcast at *Brila FM* Nigeria is high as majority of the respondents constituting, 75.8% indicated so, 24.2% indicated very high. This was confirmed via the IDI and observation at the different stations; all the equipment in use are digital/ICT (convergence) devices. In fact, responses from the interviews describing the adoption of ICTs at *Brila FM* revealed that, it is at 100% adoption rate due to the fact that almost everything staff of *Brila FM* do involve the use of one ICT or the other. According to their responses, devices are even much useful than humans, that is because using their weekend programme, football live as an example, it is a syndicated programme and runs from *Brila FM*'s partners in the United Kingdom (UK). What it means is that for about six hours, computers go on and on without operators, what they do is to programme, link and then stream. And that is how they provide live content for about six hours, which is a basic necessity for the stations survival. Also, from the researchers' observation, the station has the Outside Broadcast Van (OB Van) equipment which they use to go for live match coverage and commentaries. They also have recorders, midgets, state of the art equipment like the digital studio at the Kaduna station. In a nutshell, there is a great deal of ICT adoption at *Brila FM*.

**Table 3: Nature of Impact of Convergence Devices to the Working Activities of Respondents**

<b>Changes Caused</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Negatively	NIL
Positively	115 (89.8%)
Indifferent	13 (10.1%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>128 (100%)</b>

The results of the analyses in table 3 revealed that majority of the respondents constituting 89.9% have had a positive impact from the use of analogue devices to digital devices and this has improved the quality of their work. This can be attributed to the fact that one can learn to appreciate the efforts put together by Brila FM in increasing the presence of ICT facilities at all their stations across Nigeria.

In general, the respondents attributed their position in table 3 above to the impact of ICTs (convergence devices) in the following areas of operations:

- i. Transmission of live sports programme across the four Brila FM stations in Nigeria
- ii. Linking with Sky Sport radio in the United Kingdom. (UK).
- iii. Edit, cover and send stories from the field without needing to come back to the station for re-editing.
- iv. Multi-tasking.
- v. Sourcing for valuable information interview and it improves fast connectivity to www.
- vi. Improvement of the online edition of Brila FM.

To buttress the impact convergence devices have on the standard and operations of Brila FM and how important they are to sports journalism, the interview reveals that, the devices are the live wire in radio broadcast and one cannot do anything without them. According to the respondent, convergence devices are the basic tools used in sports journalism. It helps in the generation of information, processing of information and transmission of that information. They are all, encrypted in the whole broadcast process of encoding and decoding. So, basically Brila FM staff use them for everything like generating materials, for interviews and use them to work on the materials through editing before they go on air

However notwithstanding this feat, some of the respondents pointed out some organizational and institutional factors within Brila FM which they think limit the adoption level of convergence devices in the operations of the station to include: lack of training and retraining of staff, lack of finance, dependence on freelancers, slow and late integration and, lack of technical knowhow. They continued to affect the total adoption of the devices in the station especially in the case of slow integration of ICTs when purchased by management for work at Brila Fm. Of what use will an ICT device be when there is no one to put it into proper use? This, according to the respondents, is due to the lack of technical know-how as a result of lack of training and retraining of staff in that

respect. Also, some respondents showed that dependence on freelancers at the station affects adoption of ICTs as some of the freelancers are experts, who can use and manipulate ICTs but when they are not around, the devices are left idle by those at the station who can't properly use them.

### **Summary of Findings:**

- i. From the results of the analyses in table 1, the IDI and observation, it is evident that Brila FM Nigeria has adopted convergence devices in its operations. The devices include a digital studio (state of art), boom microphones, laptop CD players, strong mixers and amplifiers, digital midgets, computer automation software, smile 4 GLTE, power protection unit/Ups, stronger transmitters and receivers, modem/internet facilities, and transmission phone lines. In fact, the results in table 2 indicate a high level of adoption of the listed convergence devices.
- ii. The above convergence devices have indeed impacted on the operations of the station positively as it has helped to ease the work for them in areas of live transmission of sports programme; linkage with Sky Sport radio in the United Kingdom (UK) for live sports programmes and analyses; use to edit, cover and send stories from sports events; Multi-tasking; help in sourcing for information and it improves fast connectivity to www; improvement of the online edition of Brila FM.
- iii. However, in spite of the fact that Brila FM has provided some convergence facilities to help ease their works, there are challenges. The sophisticated nature requires training for staff members to be able to manipulate them and put them into full usage.

Using the diffusion of innovation theory to explain this point as buttressed by Miller (1997), the more complex the behaviour termed ICT is, the longer it takes to be accepted, and the more inconsistent the current practices, beliefs and norms, the longer it will take for acceptance. He went further to explain that, the more individuals can practice or try out a new behaviour and see the visible effect or benefits of their actions, the more likely they are to adopt the new technology. Such is the case at Brila FM where majority of the needed technologies for convergence are provided but not all have been fully put into use. One can relate this to the fact that some of these technologies are too sophisticated, and it can lead to inconsistent practice at Brila FM. This is in line with Domingo and Heinonen (2008) position that, it difficult to adapt to the use of digital technology for their jobs. And without proper training, they argue, this could even be difficult to curtail.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings, there is no doubt that Brila FM 88.9 has adopted convergence devices to a large extent which has improved better sports journalism by Brila FM. In as much as convergence brings great gratification to sports journalism if adopted fully, it should be acknowledged that purchasing even latest ICT facilities would better and ease the sports journalist's duties as seen in the case of Brila FM. In addition, sports journalists as revealed by the study, can only put these devices into full use if they have basic or advanced knowledge of how to manipulate them as it was found among others low knowledge of the application and manipulation of the devices is a major challenge facing

the staff of the station.

**Recommendations:**

From the findings of this work, the following are recommended:

1. In order to enjoy the dividends of adopting convergence at Brila FM, the station should put more efforts in staff training, organizing seminars and workshops to enlighten and update the knowledge of their staff on the latest ICT trends in the area of sports journalism.
2. Journalists at Brila FM must not wait for the management to send them for IT training even when promised, they can seek the training on their own, as the knowledge they will acquire will remain with them forever. These efforts can give them an edge within or outside Brila FM.
3. There should be speedy integration of convergence tools when purchased. It is not a matter of purchasing ICTs but putting them into use immediately.

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