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DIGITAL BROADCASTING IN NIGERIA BY THE EYES OF ITS USERS: HISTORY OF DEVELOPMENT AND CURRENT STATE

The article reproduces some aspects of history of implementation of digital broadcasting in Nigeria, also it contains the evaluation of its current state. The theoretical and methodological base of its conduction was the "diffusional" theory of innovations, which allowed determining the true situation of readiness of Nigeria for digitalization of national mass media. As part of this research the interviewing (the survey) of 184 digital broadcasting journalists from 150 media companies of three Nigerian provinces (Enugu, Ebonyi and Anambra) was conducted. Its results indicates that main obstacles to the development of digital broadcasting in Nigeria are limited funding, unsatisfactory state of mass media digitalization, lack of qualified specialists and required equipment and lack of political will. Relating to this, there is every reason to affirm that modern level of digitalization of broadcasting in Nigeria is quite low and does not correspond to the development requirements of country at the current stage. At the same time, the results allow to claim that the great majority of respondents has a high level of personal awareness of digital broadcasting. Most of them revealed their readiness to become the first users of the digital broadcasting after its full implementation in country. Before that time, Nigeria has made insignificant progress in the digital broadcasting area, its further development requires the solution of complicated tasks connected with digitalization of the television media by the government of Nigeria. The Nigerian government should solve the issues of funding for ensuring the development of digital broadcasting in Nigeria, as well as propose the strategy of its implementation, provide the education of staff and find an opportunity to install modern technical equipment. The expanding of the area and geography of the further researches on this subject with the aim of coverage of all country's provinces for better understanding of the problem.

Key words: *adaptation; electronic mass media; broadcasting; digitization; journalists.*

Introduction

One of the characteristics of the 21st century is the dominance of technology. New technologies have continued to evolve, thus, affecting almost every facet of the society. The media industry has often been driven by new technologies. As technologies evolve, so does the media considering the prominent role of the media in any society. Defleur and Dennis (1991: 229) corroborate that technology has often been an instrument for change in the media industry. Defleur and Dennis recalled that as far back as Gutenberg, it was technology: the movable type that spurred change. Later, fast printing presses, the telegraph, zinc engraving, modern photography, radio, television, fibre optics, and other technologies heralded new developments for media and their audience. The trend regarding the influential role of new technologies on the performance of the media industry has continued to play out, affecting all media genre-broadcast and print media.

Advancements in technology have also led to changes in broadcasting. The broadcast industry has dramatically changed even as recent as twenty years ago and at the

heart of these changes are new technologies. Nyekwere (2009) corroborates that the invention of new media technologies has always been a catalyst for change in the broadcast industry. Nyekwere adds that the advancement in media technologies has cut the barrier of time and space in the broadcast industry; it has also made communication easier and more democratic and the creation and distribution of media content easier. As technology continues to evolve, the phases in technological advancements have led to what is called analogue, and digital technology with the latter considered as most sophisticated, more user-friendly and with better features. Hence, the issue of digital broadcasting.

Digital broadcasting is an improved way of transmitting broadcast signals to the target receivers. It works by translating sound and picture into digital data rather than analogue waveforms. There has been increased clamour for the adoption of digital broadcasting because of the perceived benefits inherent in it. Plum (2014) argues that digital broadcasting offers an increase in the capacity of broadcast transmission networks by improving spectrum

efficiency (i.e. more data can be transmitted per unit bandwidth); provision of better signal quality which increases robustness to interference and picture degradation; a potential reduction in transmission network energy usage; the implementation of single frequency networks (SFNs) instead of the independent parallel networks which are common in analogue broadcasting, among others. Suffice it to say that digital broadcasting offers better programme contents than analogue, it then means that it should be integrated into the broadcasting system of countries by way of full adoption.

Two issues are critical to the adoption of digital broadcast. The first is that transmission from analogue to digital and the second is that of the audience acceptance of digital contents. These two issues are essential to the discourse on digital broadcasting because they determine the success or failure of digital broadcasting. For Nigeria, these issues are essential because of the country's raising poverty rate, low media literacy, low technological advancements as well as lack of political will (*Kombol, 2013*). Digitization is championed by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). ITU, at its Regional Radio communications Conference, RRC held in 2006, set a deadline for a total switchover of all broadcast channels from analogue to digital. The body set June 17, 2015, for all UHF channels to have gone digital. It equally set the digitization of all VHF channels for 2020 (*Aihe, 2008*).

Nigeria has had challenges meeting the deadlines for transmission from analogue to digital broadcasting. For example. The International Telecommunication Union, ITU, set 2015 for the entire broadcasting stations in the world to go digital. Nigeria set June 17, 2012, for broadcast stations in the country to be digitized. That deadline was not met. Again, June 17, 2015, was chosen, but Nigeria still could not meet up with the deadline. Nigeria, again, chose June 17, 2017, for the completion of the digital switchover process, but still could not cover 95 per cent digital access across the country, as at June 17, 2017, even though the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), the government agency responsible for driving digital switchover in Nigeria, is insisting that so much have been achieved in the entire process of digital switchover since 2016 (*Limmer, 2017*). Apart from the problem of switching over to digital broadcasting, there lies the problem of the audience. The broadcast audience is critical stakeholders in the switch over process. The audience are the consumers of broadcast contents. Therefore, just like in a typical production chain, broadcasting is not complete until broadcast messages get to the receivers. Therefore, this study examined the adoption of digital broadcasting in Nigeria with focus on challenges, level of progress as well as broadcast audience readiness for adoption.

Statement of the Problem

Digital broadcasting is considered as critical evidence of technological advancements. Digital broadcast contents are regarded as having superior quality in addition to other advantages that come with digital broadcasting. It is perhaps, to promote better broadcast contents that the International Telecommunications Union's (ITU) Regional Radio-communication Conference (RRC-06) in Geneva, Switzerland in June 2006, made a case for switching from analogue to digital broadcasting. Since then, issues concerning digital broadcasting have continued to be attractive to researchers. While researchers from developed countries like the United States of America, United Kingdom, Canada, among others, may be concerned with other is-

ues beyond adopted and switch over, the case is different with less developed countries like Nigeria. Although studies (e.g. *Alalibo, 2017; Eze, Orekyeh & Ezeanwu, 2017; Obot & Inwang, 2017*) have been conducted on digital broadcasting in Nigeria, few of such studies combine issues relating to challenges, progress level as well as readiness for adoption among the broadcast audience, hence the need for this study.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to examine the adoption of digital broadcasting in Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to achieve the following:

1. Ascertain the challenges of digitization in Nigeria.
2. Examine the progress made in the digitization drive in Nigeria.
3. To examine the level of awareness of digitization among the broadcast audience in Nigeria.
4. To ascertain the extent of readiness to adopt digitization among broadcast media audience in Nigeria.

Research Question

This study sought answers to the following questions:

1. What are the challenges of digitization in Nigeria?
2. What is the progress level of digitization broadcasting in Nigeria?
3. What is the level of awareness of digitization among broadcast media audience in Nigeria?
4. What is the extent of readiness to adopt digital broadcast among the broadcast audience in Nigeria?

Technological advancements and Digital Migration

The 21st century has witnessed and continued to witness advancements in technology. New technologies are being invented almost on a daily basis. Technology has continued to evolve from time immemorial. Zewail (2002) argues that since the beginning of human civilization technology has progressed in a continuous process. Zewail notes further that fire must have been an exciting new technology for the first humans. Changes in technologies are greatly affecting the twenty-first-century society in different areas-politics, business, education, media, among others. Thiebaud (2010) corroborates that since the appearance of technology, human beings have neglected each other and themselves. Technology, together with commerce, has slowly robbed humans of their innate abilities and amputated them of their capacities. One of the areas that has been affected by technology is broadcasting. Following the advancements in technology, there has been agitations for the migration from analogue to digital broadcasting. Different countries have been making efforts since the Geneva conference of 2006 when the migration to digital broadcasting began.

Although not all countries are signatories to ITU's digitization treaty as evidenced in South/Latin America and Asia (*APC/Balancing Act, 2011*), it has become a general trend in broadcasting (*Mbatha & Lesame, 2014*). Migrating to digital broadcasting entails the complete shift from analogue to broadcasting format in which data, graphics, sounds and images are converted into a digital binary language (zeroes and ones) for computer use (*Suarez-Candel, 2007*). According to Berger, (2010), digital migration is the transition from analogue to digital broadcasting. Njogu (2016) reveals that digital broadcasting is transmitted on radio frequencies through terrestrial space just like the standard analogue television, with the main difference being the use of multiplex transmitters to allow reception of multiple channels on a single frequency range (such as a UHF or VHF channel) known as sub channels. Unlike analogue coding method which transforms images

and sounds into an electric signal in a proportional way to their natural physical characteristics. Digitization is currently considered as the most effective and efficient way of delivering broadcast contents to receivers and digital migration is considered as a critical issue that must be a topmost issue to all people and governments. This partly explains why digital migration has received the attention of successive governments in Nigeria.

Nigeria's Quest for Digital Broadcasting

Since the Geneva conference of 2006, Nigeria has been making efforts to migrate to digital broadcasting. For example, in 2007, a year after the conference, the then Nigeria's President, Umaru Yar'Adua (now late), approved the kick off of the digitization of the broadcast industry in Nigeria (Ocholi, 2009). Following the Presidential approval the then Minister of Information and Communication, Mr. John Odey inaugurated the Presidential Advisory Committee (PAC) on the transition from analogue to digital broadcasting on 31st October, 2008 to come up with a blueprint on how to achieve digital broadcasting Nigeria (Olalere, Oyeyinka, Lateef, Olakunle, Kenneth, Rauf, & Nancy, 2013). Membership of the committee included representatives from the Ministry of Information and Communications, Ministry of Science and Technology, Ministry of Environment, National Broadcasting Commission (broadcasting regulator), Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) - Government-owned National TV Broadcaster, Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) - Government-owned National Radio Broadcaster, National Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB), Consumer Protection Council (CPC), Nigerian Communications Satellite Ltd (NIGCOMSAT), Nigerian Film Corporation, Nigerian Communications Commission, Nigerian Copyright Commission and a host of Private broadcasting stations (Olalere et al., 2013). The committee was headed by Engr. Isaac Wakombo, a former Director of Engineering at NTA. The terms of reference of the committee were: to recommend appropriate regulatory mechanism, draft a national broadcasting model, assess the effect of digitization on consumers and recommend possible government intervention, among other issues relating to digital migration (Olalere et al., 2013). Despite this, Nigeria did not meet up with the June 2012 deadline. In December 2012, the federal government, under the regime of Goodluck Jonathan, inaugurated a 14-man team tagged "Digiteam Nigeria", with Mr. Edward Amana as the Chairman to drive the process of digital migration. (Olalere et al., 2013). Again, the Digiteam did not actualize the task (Okonji, 2017). Also, Nigeria did not meet up with the 17th June 2015, deadline. As a result, ITU set June 2017 deadline for Nigeria to switch-off analogue broadcasting (Okonji, 2017). The administration of President Muhammadu Buhari has commenced the digitization process in Nigeria but in phases. The first phase was on April 30, 2016, when Nigeria commenced the pilot launch of digital broadcasting in Jos, the Plateau State Capital (Okonji, 2017). As at the time of this study Nigeria is yet to commence full digitization in the country.

Empirical Review

In this segment of the study, the researcher reviewed previous studies that are related to the current one in content and design. Eze, Orekyeh and Ezeanwu (2017) assessed the level of awareness of digital migration process among TV consumers in Enugu metropolis. The survey method was used for the study with the questionnaire as the instrument for data collection. Using multi-stage sampling technique, the research was guided by

three research objectives and research questions respectively. The study found a low level of awareness of digital migration process among residents of Enugu metropolis. The result also showed that because of discontent with the current TV viewing experience, the respondents showed a favourable disposition to digital migration and expressed willingness to explore new TV viewing experience it presents.

Alalibo (2017) investigated the opinion of broadcast professionals to determine the feasibility of the migration of broadcasting after several shifts in dates and the level of preparedness of the stations. Survey research and the purposive sampling technique with frequency tables and simple percentages were adopted to collate and analyze the results. The result showed that although most of the respondents expressed preference for the digitization only few of the professionals thought migration before the deadline was possible.

Obot and Inwang (2017) studied the level of awareness of the incoming digitization project among communication educators, the level of preparedness of the communication practitioners for the transition to digital broadcasting and the possible implications of full digitization on communication education in Nigeria. The population of this study comprised all the communication practitioners in television stations in Uyo, Nigeria who work in the news, programming and engineering departments. Communication educators who teach communication courses in tertiary institutions in Uyo also constituted the population of the study. The survey method was adopted for this study. The research instrument was the questionnaire. The result showed that communication educators in Uyo are aware of the digitization process in the broadcast industry and are already teaching the subject of digitization in tertiary institutions in Uyo, Nigeria in courses including trends in media technology, information and communication technology, among others. The result showed that the challenges of digital broadcasting include: lack of skilled manpower, lack of equipment needed to be procured and installed computer illiteracy, funding, poor power supply and lack of quality programme content.

Obisi and Rem (2016) examined the impact of human capital development on digitization process in the media industry in Nigeria. A total of 250 respondents took part in the study. The descriptive survey was used for the study. Data were collected through administration of questionnaires to the sample size drawn from the population. Data analysis was conducted using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), while 5 point Liker scale was adopted for response rating. The study found that digitization would bring about employees productivity. It is important to add here that among all the studies reviewed, no single study paid attention to challenges, readiness for adoption, awareness and progress made. This is the gap that the current studied examined.

Theoretical Framework

The diffusion of innovation theory was used for this study. The theory was propounded by Everett Rogers in 1962 to describe the introduction of innovations as being communicated through particular channels over a period and within a certain social system (Rogers, 1995). The theory focuses on how innovations are taken up in a population. Innovation is an idea that is perceived as new by its audience. The adoption of innovation takes place in stages as shown below:

Innovators: The adoption process begins with a tiny number of visionary, imaginative innovators. They often

lavish great time, energy and creativity in developing new ideas and gadgets. Here, digital broadcasting

Early adopters: As soon as the advantages of the innovation start to manifest, early adopters leap in. They are on the lookout for a strategic leap forward in their lives or businesses and are quick to make connections between clever innovations and their personal needs.

Early majority: Assuming the product or behaviour leaps the chasm; it may eventually reach majority audiences. Early majorities are pragmatists, comfortable with moderately progressive ideas, but won't act without solid proof of benefits. They are followers who are influenced by mainstream fashions and wary of fads. They want to hear "industry standard" and "endorsed by normal, respectable folks". Majorities are cost sensitive and risk-averse. They are looking for simple, proven, better ways of doing what they already do.

Late majority: They are conservative pragmatists who hate risk and are uncomfortable about new ideas. Practically their only driver is the fear of not fitting in; hence they will follow mainstream fashions and established standards. They are often influenced by the fears and opinions of laggards.

Laggards: Meanwhile laggards hold out to the bitter end. They are people who see a high risk in adopting a particular product or behaviour. Some of them are so worried they stay awake all night, tossing and turning, thinking up arguments against it. This theory has been found useful for studies focusing on digital broadcasting because digital broadcasting is an innovation that needs to be diffused into the Nigerian society.

Methodology

Participants

A total of 184 registered journalists from Enugu State (67), Anambra State (64) and Ebonyi State (54) took part in the study. Three criteria were used to select the respondents. First, they were from broadcast media stations. Two, they must be registered with the Nigerian Union of

Journalists and three, must be practising broadcasting for a minimum of five years. Also, a total of 150 broadcast audience 50 each from Enugu, Anambra Ebonyi States were selected for the study. To arrive at the broadcast media audience, a preliminary study was conducted to determine the broadcast media consumption of the respondents. Only those who reported consuming broadcast media daily for a minimum duration of three hours were eventually selected.

Data collection

The researcher collected data for this study with the use of a self-developed questionnaire. The questionnaire had two parts. The first part was meant for broadcast media journalists while the second was meant for the broadcast media audience. The instrument was subjected to face validity by three communication experts. Its reliability was ascertained using test-retest approach, and this yielded Pearson's Correlational coefficient of 0.074 which was considered high reliability. A total of three trained researcher assistants administered the instrument in Ebonyi and Anambra states while the researcher administered in Enugu. The instrument was administered face-to-face and collected immediately.

Data Analysis

In the analysis of data for the study, the researcher used mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. All analyses were done with the use of SPSS version 22. The bench mark for accepting or rejecting a statement was 2.5 considering that it was a four-point scale. The results were presented in tables.

Results

Out of the 184 copies of the questionnaire and 150 administered to broadcast journalists and broadcast audience respective, 173 copies representing 94% and 145 representing 97% were returned. This gave a mean percentage of 96% returned rate. The result of this study is presented in the following tables:

Table 1: The challenges of digitization in Nigeria

S/N		(n-173)		
		Mean	SD	RE
1	Lack of fund	2.7	0.96	Accepted
2	Lack of skilled man power	2.6	0.68	Accepted
3	Lack of political will	2.5	0.78	Accepted
4	Lack of equipment	2.7	0.99	Accepted
5	Poor public knowledge	2.6	0.55	Accepted
6	Poor staff motivation	1.5	0.87	Rejected
7	Poor attitudes to work on the part of journalists	1.5	0.79	Rejected
8	Poor policy implementation	2.5	0.89	Rejected

Source: Field survey, 2018.

The result from the table above showed that the respondents accepted six out of either item presented in the table above as the challenges against digital broadcasting in Nigeria. The respondents rejected poor attitudes to work on the part of the staff and poor staff motivation as challenges against digital broadcasting in Nigeria. The respondents were asked to assess the level of progress made in digitization of broadcasting in Nigeria. The result is presented in the following table:

Table 2: Level of Progress made in digitizing broadcasting in Nigeria

	Journalists (n-173)		Audience (n=145)	
	X	SD	X	SD
High extent	1.2	0.93	1.2	0.76
Moderate extent	1.2	0.67	2.2	0.61
Low extent	2.6	0.93	2.9	0.87

Source: Field survey, 2018.

The result from the table above revealed that most of the respondents reported that the progress level of broadcast media digitization is low. This view was expressed by both broadcast journalists and broadcast media audience. To determine the level of awareness of digitization among broadcast media audience, the following table was computed.

Table 3: Level of awareness of digital broadcasting

SN	Level of awareness	Response	Percentage
1	High level	77	53%
2	Moderate level	35	24%
3	Low level	33	23
Total		145	100

Source: Field survey, 2018.

The result from the table above showed that most of the respondents reported high awareness of digital broadcasting. This could be because the quest for digital broadcast led to an intense debate on it. The argument on digital broadcast has been ongoing for over a decade, and this could be why the public has high awareness of it. However, awareness, does not equal readiness to embrace digital broadcasting. The next table showed data on the readiness of broadcast media to embrace digital broadcasting.

Table 4: Level of readiness of digital broadcasting

SN	Level of awareness	Response	Percentage
1	Early adopters	60	41%
2	Early majority	33	23%
3	Late majority	31	21%
4	Laggards	21	14%
Total		145	100

Source: Field survey, 2018.

The result from the table above used variables from diffusion of innovation theory to determine the readiness to adopt digital broadcasting among the broadcast audience. The result showed that most of the respondents fell into the early adopter's category with only a few falling into the laggards category. This implies that should Nigeria fully migrate to digital broadcasting; the audience will be willing to embrace the digital broadcasting.

Discussion of Findings

This study investigated the adoption of digital broadcasting in Nigeria. The result revealed that challenges to digital broadcasting in Nigeria include: lack of finance, poor policy implementation, lack of skilled manpower, lack of equipment and lack of political will. The result of this study is consistent with that of Obot and Inwang (2017) who reported that finance, lack of equipment and skilled manpower are responsible for the inability of Nigeria to fully implement digital broadcasting in the country. This result, however, extended the challenges to include lack of political will as Obot and Inwang could not find lack of political will as a challenge against digital broadcasting in Nigeria.

The result of this study also showed that the progress level so far made in the digitization of broadcasting in Nigeria is low. This is because most of the respondents reported that digitization is still at a very low level in Nigeria. This result is consistent with the situation on the ground as Nigeria has missed several deadlines for the switched over to digital broadcasting (Ojalere, Oyeyinka, Lateef, Olakunle, Kenneth, Rauf, & Nancy, 2013; Ochoji, 2009). The country only began the first phase of the pilot implementation on April 30, 2016, with the digital switch over in Jos, Plateau State.

The findings also showed that most of the respondents reported a high level of awareness of digital broadcasting. This result is contrary to those of Eze, Orekyeh and Ezeanwu (2017) who assessed the level of awareness of digital broadcasting and reported low awareness among

the broadcast audience. The difference between the findings of the current study and that of Eze, Orekyeh and Ezeanwu could be as result of the times both studies were conducted and the scope. For example, while Eze, Orekyeh and Ezeanwu covered only Enugu metro, the current study covered three states namely Enugu, Ebonyi and Anambra.

Finally, the result of this study revealed that most of the respondents said that they are ready to be early adopters of digital broadcasting as soon as it is fully implemented in the country. This aspect of the findings is a practical test of the diffusion of innovation theory postulated by Everett Rogers in 1962. Rogers had called the early adopters respectable, the early majority deliberate, the late majority as sceptical and the laggards as traditional. Therefore, this result has implications on the diffusion of innovation theory because it has shown that the broadcast audience will go through the stages of adoption of new technologies and ideas as postulated by the theory.

Conclusion/Recommendations

Based on the result of this study, the researcher concludes that digitization in Nigeria is faced with many challenges that are hampering the smooth and complete switch over to digital broadcasting in Nigeria. The researcher also concludes that so far, Nigeria has made low progress concerning digital broadcasting. However, there is a high awareness on the part of the broadcast audience concerning digital broadcasting. The basic contribution of this study is that it has provided specific evidence on the current level of digital broadcasting in Nigeria. By providing evidence on the challenges facing digital broadcasting in Nigeria, the study has provided evidenced-based understanding concerning interventions vis-à-vis digital broadcasting in Nigeria. Also, this study has theoretical implications. This is because the study used variables from diffusion of innovation theory to examine the adoption readiness of digital broadcasting. This study, thus, makes the following recommendations. First, the Nigeria government should address the issue of

funding to ensure the smooth take-off of digital broadcasting in Nigeria. Other issues to be addressed include policy implementation, manpower training and equipment supply. Also, further studies should be expanded to cover more areas for better understanding.

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ЦИФРОВЕ МОВЛЕННЯ В НІГЕРІЇ ОЧИМА ЙОГО КОРИСТУВАЧІВ: ІСТОРІЯ РОЗВИТКУ ТА СУЧАСНИЙ СТАН

У статті відтворено деякі аспекти з історії впровадження цифрового мовлення в Нігерії, а також міститься оцінка його сучасного стану. Теоретико-методологічною основою для його проведення стала "дифузійна" теорія інновацій, що дозволило встановити дійсний стан готовності Нігерії до цифровізації національних мас-медіа. У рамках цього дослідження було здійснено інтерв'ювання (опитування) 184 журналістів цифрового мовлення зі 150 медійних компаній трьох провінцій (Енугу, Ебоні та Анамбра) Нігерії. Їх результати засвідчили, що основними перешкодами для розвитку цифрового мовлення в Нігерії є обмеженість фінансування, незадовільний стан цифровізації мас-медіа, брак кваліфікованих спеціалістів та потрібного для цього обладнання та відсутність політичної волі. З огляду на це існують всі підстави стверджувати, що нинішній рівень цифровізації мовлення в Нігерії є доволі низьким, і на загал не відповідним потребам розвитку країни на сучасному етапі. Водночас результати дослідження дозволяють стверджувати, що переважна більшість респондентів має високий рівень власної поінформованості про цифрове мовлення. Більша їх частина виявила свою готовність стати першими користувачами цифрового мовлення, як тільки воно буде повністю впроваджене в країні. До цього часу Нігерія досягла незначного прогресу в галузі цифрового мовлення, а подальший його розвиток вимагає вирішення урядом Нігерії низки складних завдань, пов'язаних з цифровізацією телевізійних ЗМІ. По-перше, уряд Нігерії має вирішити питання фінансування для забезпечення розвитку цифрового мовлення в Нігерії, а також запропонувати стратегію його впровадження, забезпечити навчання персоналу та знайти можливість для встановлення сучасного технічного обладнання. Важливим видається й розширення тематики та географії подальших досліджень з цієї проблематики з метою охоплення всіх провінцій країни задля кращого розуміння суті проблеми.

Ключові слова: адаптація; електронні мас-медіа; мовлення; оцифровка; журналісти.

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