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Faculty of Communication and Information Science Department Of Journalism and Media Studies

MSc in Journalism and Media Studies

Thesis Title:

An Evaluation of the Adoption of Digital Survival Strategies and Other Opportunities Offered by the Internet by Alpha Media Holdings (AMH) and Zimpapers

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ABSTRACT

This study is an evaluation of the extent to which two mainstream Zimbabwean print media houses, Alpha Media Holdings (AMH) and Zimpapers, have taken advantage of a variety of technological innovations offered by the internet and other digital platforms. Placed in the context of economic and technological changes currently being experienced globally, the study sought to find out the reasons for Zimbabwean print media going online, to establish the current trends in the adoption of the internet and digital strategies by the Zimbabwean mainstream print media and the factors influencing those trends. Lastly, it sought to establish the benefits realised from the adoption of the digital strategies. The theories informing the study were the Industrial Organisation theory, Porter's five forces model, the Resource Based View (RBV) theory and the niche theory. The study was classified under the applied research paradigm and a mixed methods approach was taken as both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods were used in sequence. Four newspapers were sampled for this study. There were two dailies, *The Herald* and *News Day*, and two weeklies, *The Sunday Mail* and *The Standard*. While data collection for the study was conducted from September 2014 to January 2015, the study focused on strategies implemented between January 2013 and December 2014. Findings from the study indicate that to a larger extent, the print media in Zimbabwe have made efforts in the adoption of digital strategies. They consider these strategies to be helping them towards the achievement of their strategic goals, among them revenue generation and the effective undertaking of their public service role. The study also unraveled factors behind their failure to adopt digital strategies and while some of the factors are unique to the Zimbabwean environment, other factors are similar to those documented in findings from global studies. Findings also highlight that while some of these factors are beyond the control of the media houses, at times the organisations have deliberately not taken up strategies out of fear of their potentially negative repercussions. Other factors behind the low uptake of the strategies include lack of technological capabilities, manpower shortages, as well as limited know-how. While local scholars have made assertions to the effect that Zimbabwean print media have done little in the adoption of digital strategies, the study managed to highlight that efforts have been made and also highlights that more still needs to be done if the print media houses are to realise the full benefits derived from the implementation of the digital strategies.