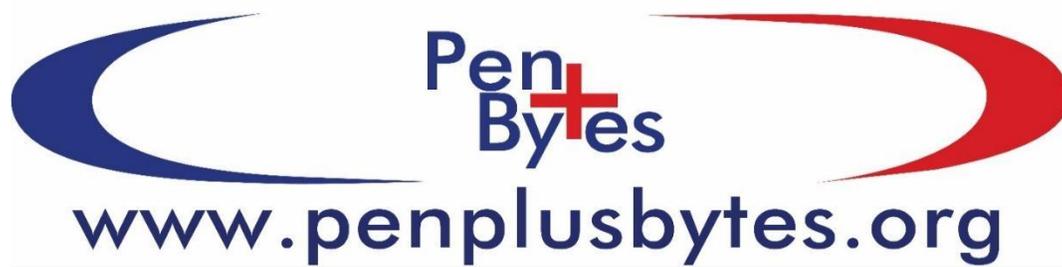




1st Quarter Social Media Index Report March 2022

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Social Media Index Report
(Radio, Television and Newspaper)
March, 2022.

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1. OVERVIEW OF GHANAIAN MEDIA ON SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

The way we consume news in the world has changed drastically. Some few years ago, the question was; who is a journalist? These days the question is; who is a publisher? Social media has made individuals and institutions content creators and publishers.

Social media brings new dimensions to the news production cycle and characteristics like interactive dialogue and social interactions. Institutions including media houses can now have real conversations with their audience and produce news that directly fits the interest of the reader.

Year 2022 has already positioned itself to be one of consolidation of a news industry that has been unsettled and at the same time galvanised by the long-drawn-out COVID-19 pandemic where the traditional news industry together with social media audiences have, to some extent, been worn-out by the relentless deluge of the news agenda focusing on politics and disinformation. It is envisaged that this will be a year where journalism and social media platforms take a breath of fresh air, reflect, focus on the basics and concentrate on using the media for good, especially in countering fake news.

Traditional one-way communication is turning into two-way conversations and some news media houses have taken advantage of this development to set up social media accounts and leverage user-generated-content (UGC) to test the pulse of their audience and also aid in the news generation cycle.

The above precepts served as a guide in developing the Penplusbytes' 1st Quarter Social Media Index (SMI) report for 2022 with a primary goal of improving mainstream journalism in Ghana using technology. The report highlights the extent to which media houses in Ghana are using social media to enhance their work, provide reliable and verified news and reach the masses locally and beyond.

The 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. A new entrant to this report is the rank of media outlets use of Instagram which has become trendy in recent times.

With collected data remaining valid as at 31st March, 2022, this report rates how media establishments have made good use of their social media platforms to reach out and engage audiences by employing a quantitative research module. The module provides relevant numerical figures which inform the rankings.

Taking into consideration 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, responsiveness to audience feedback and engagement.

Also, 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 40 newspapers, 450 registered radio stations and 90 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 important to mention here that international media houses that have registered outlets in Ghana were not captured in this report (i.e. BBC, RFI, DSTV etc.)

2. TV INDEX

2. i. Facebook

Over 90 Television stations guaranteed operations and on air in Ghana were analysed under this study. Out of this number, 70 (77.7%), were found to have Facebook accounts. They include, UTV Ghana, Ghana Television (GBC), GH One TV, TV3 Network, Metro TV, JOY News, Angel TV and Adom TV. Others are Joy Prime, Citi TV, NET 2, Kantanka TV, Zylphon TV, Pent TV, Onua TV, XYZ TV, Second Chance TV, Kessben TV and Max TV among others.

TV3 with 1,465,847 followers sits on top as the TV station with the most likes on Facebook. UTV Ghana came in 2nd with 1,378,501 likes. NET 2 TV took the last spot on Top 10 with 207,676 while state broadcaster, GBC's GTV missed the Top 10.

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

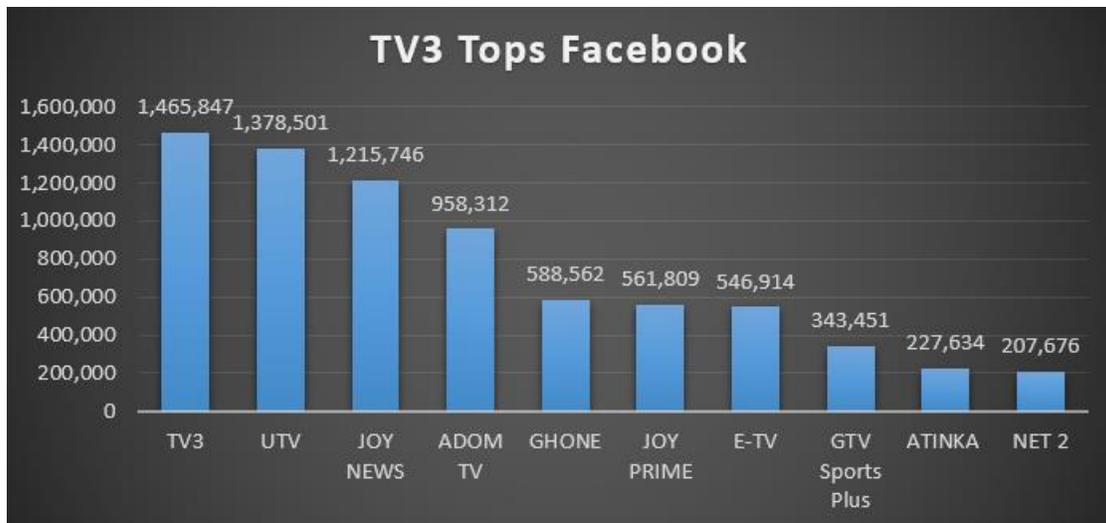


Figure 1: List of Top 10 TV stations with the most likes on Facebook

2. ii. Twitter

There are the same number of TV stations on Twitter as there are on Facebook. However, not all TV stations on Facebook necessarily have Twitter handles that are particularly active and regularly updated handles. Those on Twitter include; GHOne TV, UTV Ghana, TV3 Network, Citi TV, E-TV Ghana, Onua TV, Pent TV, TV Africa and Metro TV. Others are Wontumi TV, New Day TV, Akuafu TV, SBN and Metro TV.

TV3 with 1,300,000 followers again reigns as the most followed TV station on Twitter. GHONE TV came in 2nd with 1,200,000 followers. National Broadcaster, GBC made some gains, registering 7th and 8th position with its GTV and GTV Sports Plus channels.

Figure 2 below gives a graphical representation of the list of top 10 TV stations on Twitter ranked by number of ‘followers’.

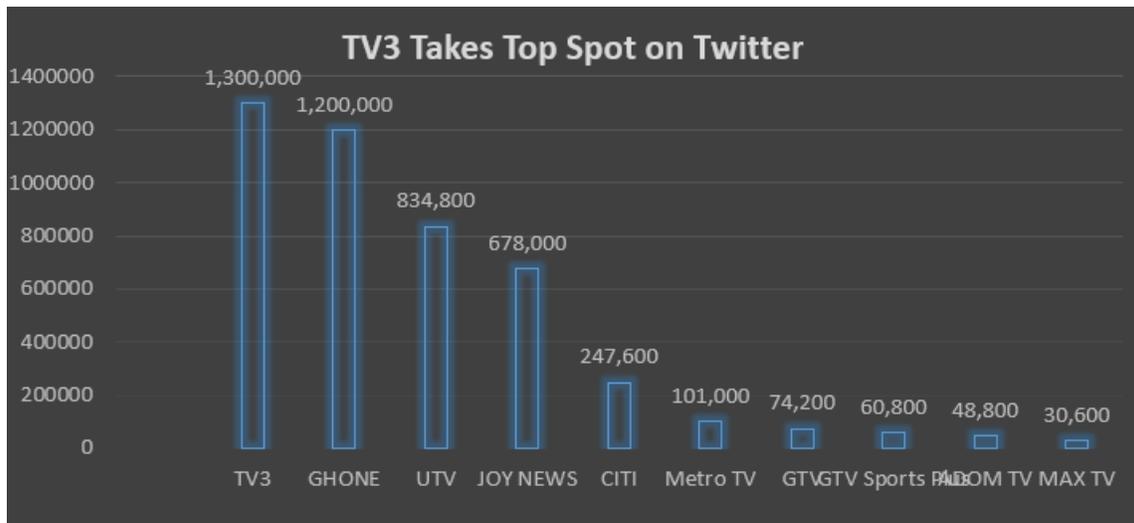


Figure 2: List of Top 10 TV stations with the most followers on Twitter

2. iii. Instagram

Unlike Facebook and Twitter, there are fewer TV stations making use of Instagram. Out of the 90 authorised and on-air TV stations captured in this study, only 54 were found on Instagram. 10 of the 54 TV stations had inactive Instagram accounts. This means the pages exist but have no regular posts or engagements on the posts.

Those with up and running accounts include TV3, Lucky TV, Metro TV, Precious TV, Volta 1 TV, GBC and Dominion TV. Others are Akuafu TV, Kantanka TV, Joy News, Citi TV, NET 2 and Onua TV among others.

Figure 3 below gives a graphical representation of the list of top 10 TV stations on Instagram ranked by number of ‘followers’.

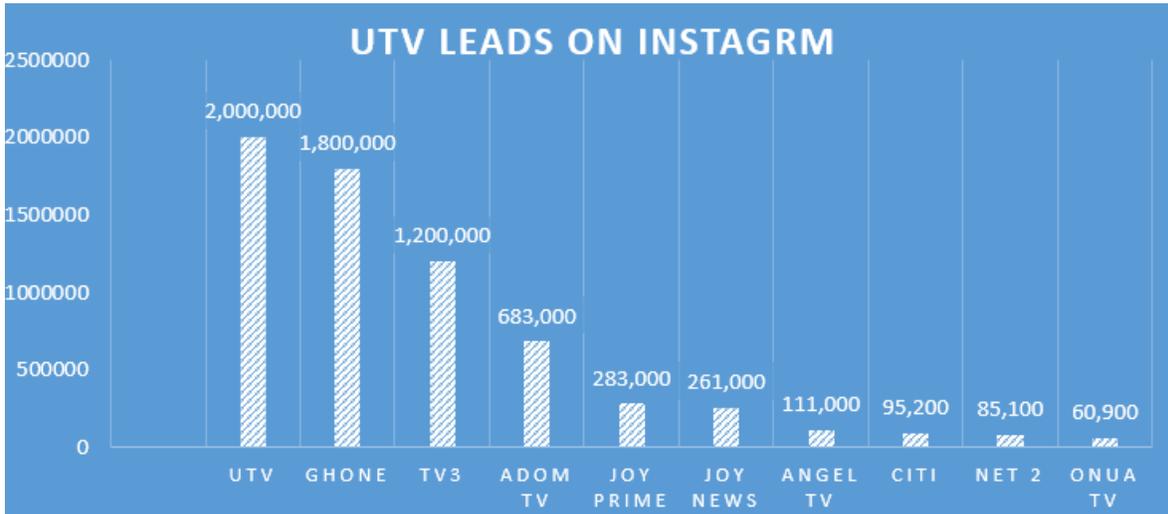


Figure 3: List of Top 10 TV stations with the most followers on Instagram

3. NEWSPAPER INDEX

3.i. Facebook

It is evident from the data that newspapers are still behind when it comes to using social media effectively as a tool to reach out to the large online population. For them, online platforms are just mediums for daily news updates. Although the study shows 83% of newspapers captured are on Facebook, only a few manage active engagements on their pages. Facebook pages of a number of the newspapers are ill-managed with no updates or engagement and remain dormant accounts. Thus, a correlation with the number of likes received by such accounts. Pages with regular updates and interactions continue to record more followers than those with none or fewer. For instance, Daily Graphic which tops on Facebook has more than 8 times the number of followers of second-placed Daily Guide.

Figure 4 (below) depicts the top 10 performing Ghanaian newspapers on Facebook ranked according to the number of page 'Likes'.

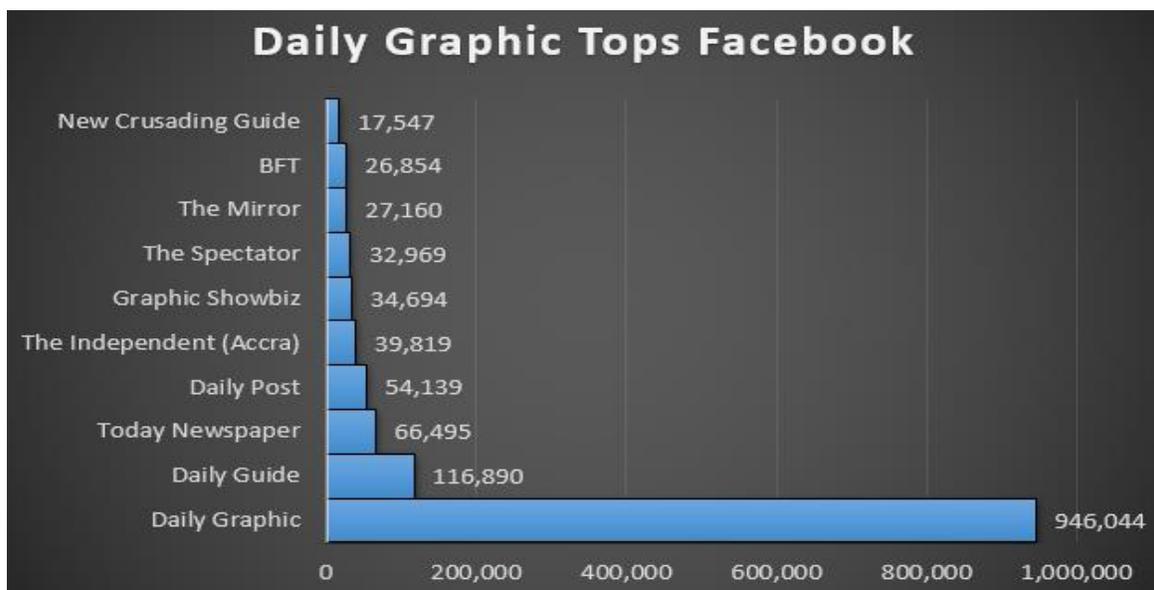


Figure 4: List of Top 10 newspapers with the most likes on Facebook

3. ii. Twitter

A whopping 41% of the newspapers captured are not found on Twitter. This shows the platform is still a green field for newspapers. Meanwhile, the big shots like Daily Graphic and Daily Guide are capitalizing on the space to their advantage. The Daily Graphic which has proven a

pioneer in the online space placed first recording close to 3 times more followers than Daily Guide which came second.

See Figure 5 below for the top 10 newspapers on Twitter ranked according to the number of ‘followers’.

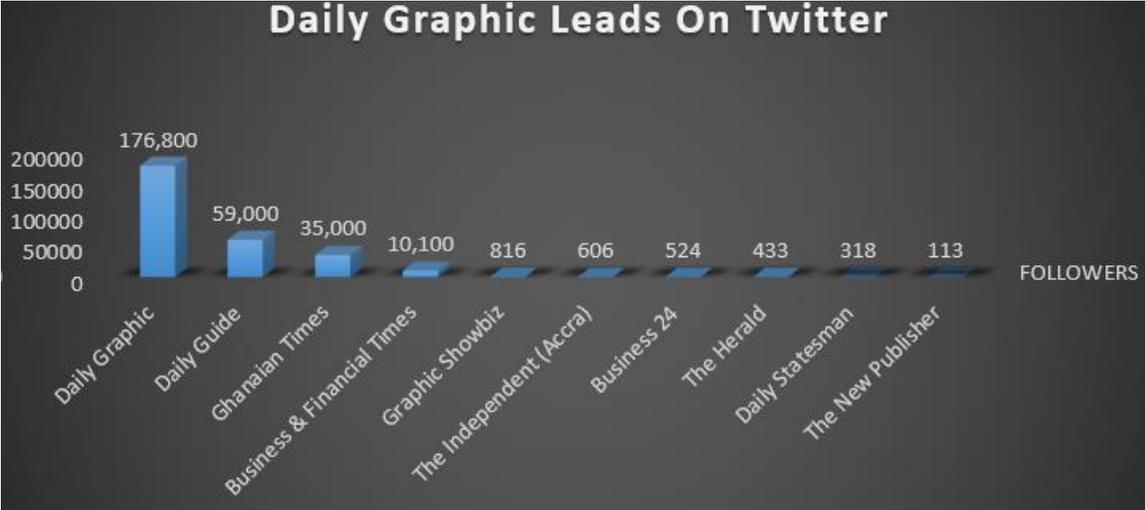


Figure 5: List of Top 10 newspapers with the most followers on Twitter

3. iii. Instagram

Compared to Facebook and Twitter, the photo-sharing app, Instagram is a far less explored platform among newspapers in Ghana. Only 45% of newspapers contained in this index have Instagram accounts. Out of this, 15% haven’t made any post in 2022.

Daily Graphic again maintains a firm grip at the top of the Instagram list with 17,200 followers.

See Figure 6 for the performance of the top 10 newspapers on the Instagram Index ranked according to their ‘followers’.

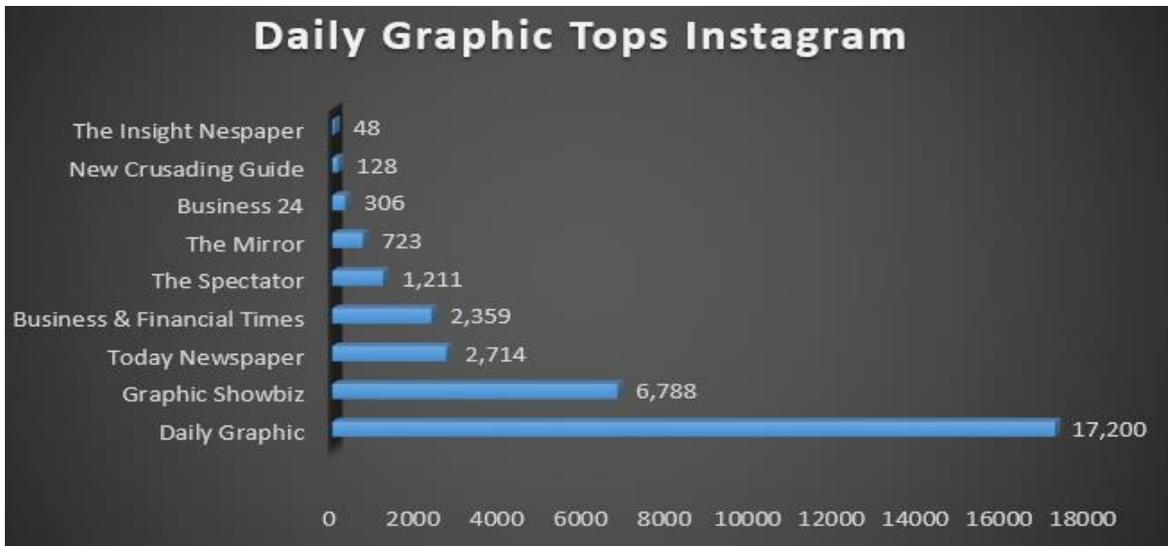


Figure 6: List of Top 10 newspapers with the most followers on Instagram

4. RADIO INDEX

4. i. Facebook

We identified a regional imbalance in the presence of radio stations on Facebook. Greater Accra dominates the top 10 bracket of the most active and most followed accounts on Facebook. This is also evident across the other social media platforms in this study. All the radio stations in the top 10 list are Greater Accra-based with the exception of Multimedia's Kumasi based Nhyira FM.

In other regions, radio stations in urban areas across the country were found to be more likely to own and manage active social media accounts unlike those in rural areas. Community radio stations have not made any significant growth on the online space in the last 4 years this index has been in existence. Radio Ada has however made some strides in posting regularly on community happenings using their Facebook page in particular.

Accra based Citi FM with 1,268,986 likes snatched the number one position from Nhyira FM part of the Multimedia Group which also owns Joy FM, Adom FM, Hitz FM and Asempa FM all in the top 10.

The full list is graphically shown in figure 7 below:

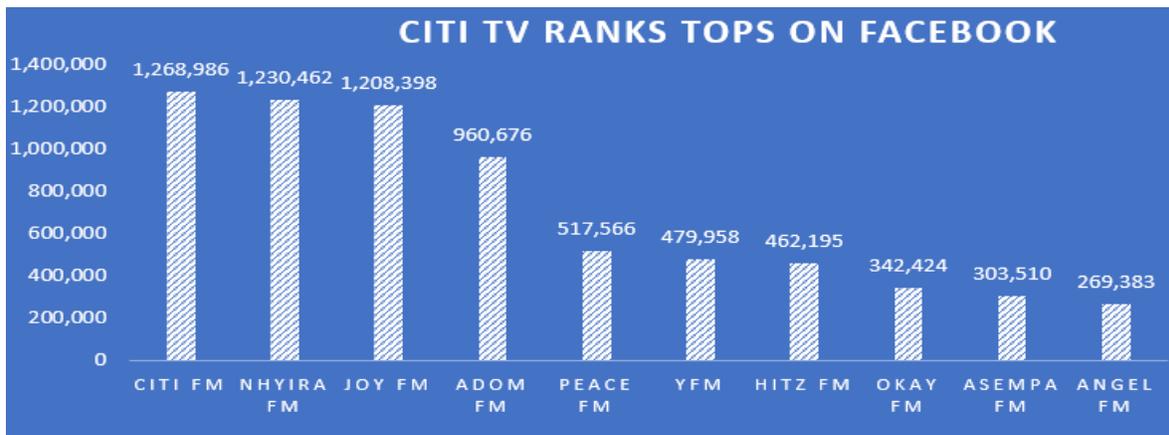


Figure 7: List of Top 10 Radio stations with the most likes on Facebook

4. ii. Twitter

As has been the case over the years in previous [SMI reports](#), not all stations with Facebook accounts necessarily owned a Twitter page. In fact, 46% of radio stations covered in this study do not have Twitter presence. This represents almost 4 times the number of radio stations not on Facebook.

Despite the challenge, those who have taken advantage of the platform have been doing well with respect to the number of followers and influence. Joy FM with 1,700,000 followers took the top spot as the 1st ranked radio station on Twitter; a position it has been contesting with Citi FM in several of our previous reports. Coming up behind them is their close contender, Citi FM with 300,000 followers less than Joy FM.

Figure 8 below shows the Top 10 performing Ghanaian Radio stations on Twitter; ranked according to the number of followers.

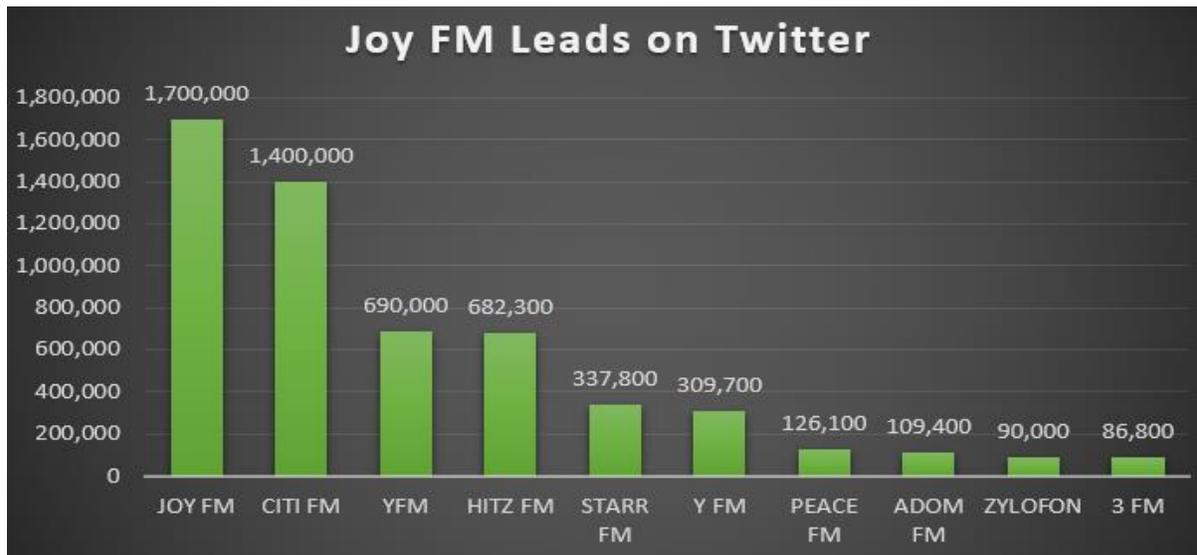


Figure 8: List of Top 10 radio stations with the most followers on Twitter

4. iii. Instagram

Instagram usage among radio stations is comparatively low. While those with a presence continue to cash in on numbers and garner substantial following and traction, a significant number of radio stations continue to miss out on the benefits of using the platform.

Our data shows that a staggering 55% of authorized and on-air radio stations do not have any presence on the app. Also, almost 30% of radio stations do not have some presence have not made a single post in 2022.

As is evident in the top 10 list, Accra based radio stations are leading the Instagram wave. Multimedia’s entertainment station, HITZ FM peaked at number 1 with 428,000 followers with Okay FM in second place. Asempa FM sealed off the list denying Angel FM a spot in top 10.

Figure 9 below represents the top 10 media brands using Instagram with the most followership:

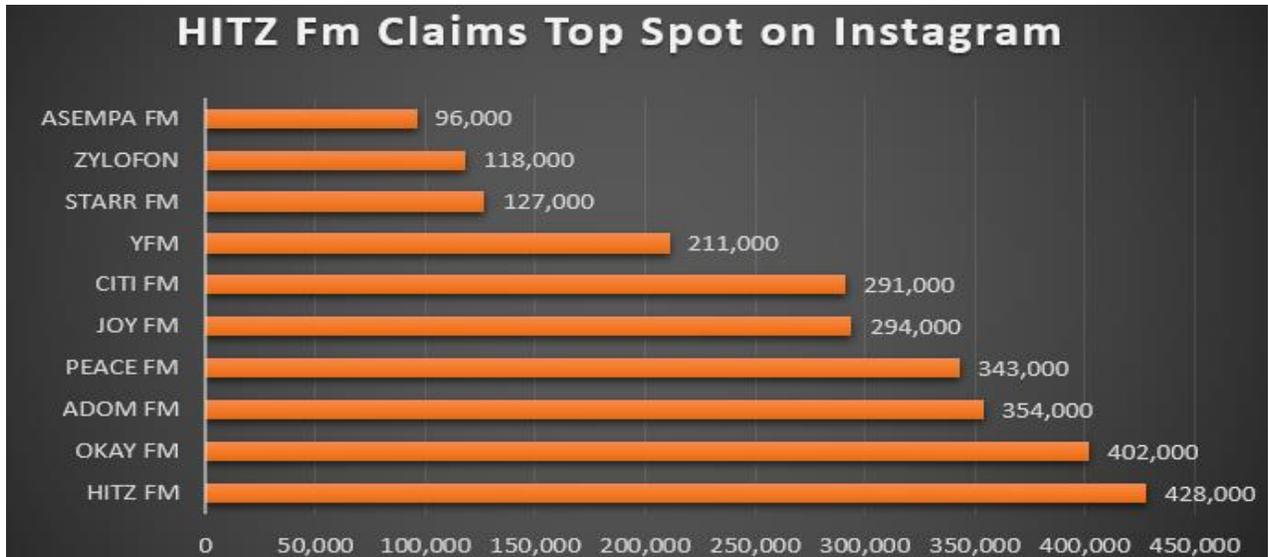


Figure 9: List of Top 10 radio stations with the most followers on Instagram

5. DISCUSSIONS

For better or worse, social media has forced its way into traditional journalism and has become a news source not only for the general public, but for journalists as well. Social media and media practice also combine to make a major impact on reporters and media workers in general.

Social media has drastically shifted the way journalists do their jobs; changing the way they receive information, think up story ideas all the way through to shifting how stories are generated and published.

In the modern media business model, journalism, and content in general, is now driven more than ever by an increasing need for views and clicks. In fact, it doesn't look like the influence of social media in journalism is going away any time soon. Media organizations must realize this sooner than later. According to experts it will only increase. The fact that some media houses particularly in rural or peri-urban areas in Ghana don't use social media as often as their counterparts in the capital can truly be labelled as "lagging."

Thanks to social media, media houses have unprecedented access to their audience, putting them closer than ever to the content and story ideas that their readers/listeners/viewers care about. Audiences are no longer passively waiting for a news anchor to tell them the news. They're on Twitter or Facebook, creating content from everyday happenings, sifting through content and sharing stories from their friends and family, sometimes before a media house has even picked it up.

All of this makes social media a great place to do research and make connections that may not have otherwise been made.

Some large media houses in Ghana have undoubtedly built their presence on these platforms over time and have a growing need to sustain it. Budding media houses are catching on to the craze and have quite engaging content to share besides their usual informative, educational and entertaining ones.

Media organisations' use of social media in recent times suggests there are three main types of messages that they send on social media: informational, community-building, and "action" (promotional & mobilizational) messages.

Sharing Information

Social media effectively controls the lives of millions around the world, and people crave "likes" and "followers". No wonder media houses have found ways to harness the impact of social media on their business. The question "why use social media for media business?" can be answered in a simple phrase: because that is where people are. As of January 2022, there were

about 8.8 million registered social media users in Ghana. ¹This was an increase from the preceding year. In February 2022, there was an estimated number of 8.6 million Facebook users. These figures demonstrate the huge reach that social media has.

According to Google, people worldwide run 3.5 billion searches on the Google search engine every day. Facebook claims that there are two billion searches on their social media site each day. These claims demonstrate an interesting fact: that many today use social media not just to connect with others but also to search for information. This information should certainly make any media organisation sit up as they can use social media for business to greatly expand their reach.

Keeping users engaged

Surveys indicate that people go through their social media pages multiple times each day. Social media posts can have links to your website that would increase traffic on the website. It can also be used to keep in touch with your readers, listeners or viewers. You do not only gain new audiences but keep existing ones engaged and retain them. They in turn often advertise for you by word of mouth, or through their shared media posts.

Evident from this first quarter report is the fact that most media houses did not make significant use of the digital drive that Covid-19 brought along its wake. Strategy is the core to achieving any social media goals and being ranked high. Most media houses, particularly those that made the top 10 in previous quarter reports and fell out this time, failed to rank high and do well on social media because they failed to put in a strong social media strategy. The strategy may exist in some of these media houses but it is more often than not an ad hoc activity rather than a well-documented policy in place. A strategy that outlines efforts in social media management including having a dedicated team, building the team's skills and knowledge on its use could be a first start in making media brands useful on social media.

This report reveals impressive performances by media entities such as Joy FM, Citi FM, Daily Graphic and TV3 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 updates and interaction with their audience. Worthy of note here is the verification by these social media platforms which further authenticates and builds their brand credibility.

Regular and consistent updates and engaging audiences are what keeps a media house top of the social media charts and media houses need to catch on with this especially in other regions in Ghana besides the capital cities.

¹ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1171445/number-of-social-media-users-ghana/#:~:text=As%20of%20January%202022%2C%20Ghana,of%208.6%20million%20Facebook%20users.>

6. RECOMMENDATIONS & CONCLUSION

Like any other technology, social media is also evolving and changing constantly. Artificial intelligence, data science, and virtual spaces are the emerging technologies and they will impact the use of social media by media houses. Media organisations in Ghana ought to be up to their task by using these digital platforms to reach the masses they serve.

This quarter's report, like other quarters, has continued to show the disparity between rural and urban cited media organisations and their use of Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. It has also continued to reveal how the lack of engagement and regular updates on their pages and accounts can translate to a lack of and/or a drop in following on these platforms.

We, therefore, recommend that for any media house to thrive in this digital oriented world, it must invest in developing and implementing a social media strategy and a plan that spells out the following:

1. It identifies which platform best suits the media house and its workers (i.e. journalists) who will subsequently be brand influencers for their media houses.
2. It must have a training schedule aimed at building the competencies of their personnel in the effective use of social media.
3. It must clearly define who their target audiences for each platform are and how to engage these audiences.
4. It must have a well-developed content plan and schedule
5. It must have the tone of voice (TOV) character of your media organisation - communicated through words, both written and spoken. It's not about what you say, but rather the way you say it, and the lasting impression it makes on your audience who read or hear you. eg. Funny vs. serious; formal vs. casual etc.
6. It must have a clear social media community management plan which will include content curation, sourcing and scheduling, listening and engaging current community members using your strategy and analytics; finding new users and interacting with them; and providing them with feedback and value

Finally, we encourage media houses to make their social media accounts easily identifiable by applying and striving for verification (blue ticked accounts) on the various platforms to differentiate them from the several similar names that come up in searches. They should also phase out accounts associated with them that are no longer in use and also embed their social

media accounts on their websites for easy access. This also means they should maintain active and up to date websites.

"We see a lot of websites popping up in the name of providing news. It is good for the public in a way, because they have a variety of avenues to consume news, but at the end of the day, credibility is at stake,"
- Kent Mensah (dw.com)

Expectantly, as per the objective of this index report, media houses in Ghana will commit a lot more to building their brand credibility both online and offline by investing a lot more in building quality online presence and maintaining it.