

The glass is half-full as regards reporting on ICTs and ICT policy issues in six African countries. This is significant progress compared to research two years earlier. The study here of DRC, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Kenya and Senegal provides facts and analysis based on content analysis and interviews with journalists. It also charts the way ahead – highlighting how the media can ensure that ICT journalism continues its move to the mainstream.

Quotations from interviewed journalists:

“... whenever I am in front of decision-makers, I am taken seriously ...”

“When producing and presenting the programme, I feel that I have participated in the promotion and implementation of Mozambican ICT policy.”

“After much agitation, ICTs have begun to make the front page these days, as much as business stories do.”

“When I began producing programmes on ICTs, the idea was to help the people realise what they are missing by not having the right policies...”

“ICT touches on everything, so we should make it interesting to all. Why not in Wolof, Fula, Seereer if that can help introduce it to the farmer ...”

**Bureau expanding ICT with
100 million birr**

Research conducted and published by Highway Africa, School of Journalism and Media Studies, Rhodes University (www.highwayafrica.ru.ac.za)

Funded by CATIA (www.catia.ws)



School of Journalism & Media Studies
Rhodes University, South Africa

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From the margins to the mainstream: African ICT reporting comes of age

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From the margins to mainstream: African ICT reporting comes of age

by Guy Berger

Les géants d'Internet défendent leur coopération avec les censeurs chinois

Relance du réseau de téléphone fixe de l'OCPT à Kinshasa

Convergence Bill is at centre of controversy

**From the margins to mainstream:
African ICT reporting comes of age**

From the margins to mainstream: African ICT reporting comes of age

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This research report reflects studies conducted to assess and evaluate the nature of ICT policy coverage in policy-influential media in Kenya, Mozambique, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, Ethiopia and Senegal. It demonstrates substantial progress in comparison to an earlier study in 2004, and it charts the way ahead for there to be continued achievement.

This research has been made possible by funding assistance from the CATIA ICT Policy Advocacy Programme in Africa.

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Preface

Addressing the communication needs of citizens is fundamental in any democratic society. Within this, modern Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are a key enabler in ensuring citizens have access to information and in providing them with an opportunity to be heard. Affordable access and use of ICT is more than about technology – it is important in relation to democracy, governance and social and economic development. ICT policies can play a key role in providing opportunities and empowering those who are marginalised. ICT policies and regulations being developed and implemented across Africa are impacting on its citizens, and it is critical that media are engaged in promoting awareness and debate of the issues.

Media have an important role to play in creating a broader awareness and debate on development issues and, within that, on ICT policy issues. Media are both users of ICT and help to shape and reflect public debate. Effective engagement by media enables greater public awareness and understanding of the issues. It helps those involved in ICT policy advocacy to gain support and apply pressure for change.

However, coverage of ICT policy in Africa has traditionally been limited – where there has been ICT coverage it has tended to look at technology rather than take a policy or social perspective and has been confined to specialist sections of the media.

This document looks specifically at media coverage of ICT policy issues in DRC, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Nigeria and Senegal. It contrasts a review of media coverage of ICT policy in these countries which took place in 2004 with the situation in 2006. the purpose is to see what changes

have taken place in the content and type of media coverage. Such a content analysis not only provides an understanding of media reporting, but also provides information about how these issues are being discussed and prioritised by policy makers. An analysis of ICT reporting is also useful in order to assess how media understands and reports on this complex issue. This helps to enable better reporting of the issues.

The research findings suggest that journalists are taking ICTs and ICT policy issues more seriously, but that there still remains a vital need for better coverage of these issues in mainstream media. This is an important issue as the stakeholders engaged in ICT policy in Africa begin to address some of the key challenges moving forward. These include:

- Debates about the provision of affordable and accessible ICT infrastructure which at the moment are focussed around the EASSy and SAT3 international fibre cable projects.
- Convergence through which different ICT sectors that have traditionally been treated separately by governments (e.g. telecommunications and broadcasting) become less distinct and raise new issues around ownership, content and competition.

Effective awareness and debate on these and other issues is crucial and requires media engagement.

This document has been funded by the Catalysing Access to ICTs in Africa (CATIA) project which aims to enable poor people in Africa to gain maximum benefit from the opportunities offered by ICT and to act as a strong catalyst for reform. CATIA is working to promote a positive reform

process and increase affordable access to ICTs across Africa. As part of this it has been working to increase the awareness, capacity and interest of the media to report on ICT policy issues and engage as key stakeholders in the debates.

I congratulate the team for their contribution to this report and bringing this issue to the fore.

Claire Sibthorpe
CATIA programme manager
August 2006

Acronyms

- ART** – Agence de Régulation des Télécommunaications du Sénégal
- DRC** – Democratic Republic of Congo
- EASSy** – Eastern Africa Submarine Cable System
- CATIA** – Catalysing Access to ICTs in Africa
- CIPACO** – Centre for International ICT Policy for West and Central Africa, run by Panos Institute West Africa in Senegal.
- CCK** – Communications Commission of Kenya
- DMTIC** – Multisectoral Dynamic on Information and Communication Technologies
- ETC** – Ethiopian Telecommunication Corporation
- EICTDA** – Ethiopia ICT Development Authority
- ECA** – Economic Commission for Africa
- ECOWAS** – Economic Community of West African States
- EDGE** – Enhanced Data GSM Environment (faster data stream than GPRS)
- EFOSSNET** – Ethiopian Free & Open Source Software Network
- GPRS** – General Packet Radio Services (data connection for mobile phones, extending GSM capacity)
- GSM** – Global System for Mobile (most common digital wireless telephony technology)
- HANA** – Highway Africa News Agency (<http://hana.ru.ac.za/>)
- ICT** – Information and Communication Technologies (telecoms, internet, broadcasting)
- IDRC** – International Development Research Centre
- ITU** – International Telecommunications Union
- IPR** – Intellectual Property Rights
- KICTANet** – Kenya ICT Action Network
- NCC** – National Communications Commission (Nigeria)
- NATCOMS** – National Association of Communications Consumers of Nigeria
- NITDA** – National IT Development Agency (Nigeria)
- NITEL** – Nigeria Telecommunications Ltd
- SAT3** – Southern Africa/West Africa Submarine Cable
- SNO** – Second National (fixed-line) Operator
- VoIP** – Voice over Internet Protocol (Internet telephony)
- WSIS** – World Summit on the Information Society
- WTO** – World Trade Organisation

Biographic Briefs

Zenaida Machado is a journalist with Radio Mozambique, the state radio broadcaster. She has extensive experience in radio and has worked in a range of capacities, including children's programming, youth programming, presenting programmes and writing and editing news bulletins. Her particular interest areas are gender, HIV/AIDS and human rights. She is completing a translation course at the University of Eduardo Mondlane, Mozambique.

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John Dada is the programmes director of the Fantsuam Foundation, a Nigerian organisation concerned with the strategic use of ICTs for development. He is an active participant in a range of African information society networks and initiatives. He holds several professional and academic qualifications in public health, education and agriculture.

Filmon Tekle is an IT columnist with Fortune newspaper in Ethiopia. He is also an IT businessman, a published poet, author, film scriptwriter and media professional. He has worked in senior positions in Ethiopian print media, and holds diplomas in journalism, online research, communication and publishing. He has been editor-in-chief of an Amharic language ICT magazine.

Kenneth Alari Alare is a leading ICT writer in Kenya. His work

won him the coveted Kenya ICT Journalist of the Year Award in the print media category in 2005. The Nairobi-based reporter has worked with one of Kenya's major newspapers - The Standard - for several years. The 32-year-old Alari has had education and training in Kenya, South Africa and the USA.

Sophie K. Ly has been executive director and editor-in-chief of Sud Quotidien, a privately owned daily newspaper in Senegal. She has served as Secretary General of the World Association of Community Broadcasters (AMARC), and has headed up the West Africa office of the Panos institute. She speaks several languages fluently and holds a Master's degree in Literature and Communication from the University of Paris-Nord.

Ibrahima Faye is 29-year-old journalist at Sud Quotidien, one of the leading newspapers in Senegal. She writes on ICTs and is a founding member and secretary general of a body of Senegalese journalists called "Convention des Jeunes Reporters du Senegal".

Professor Guy Berger is Head of the School of Journalism and Media Studies, Rhodes University, Grahamstown. Berger was named as one of "50 people to know in New Media" by the US-based Online Journalism Review in 1998. In 2003, he was made an Associate Member of the World Technology Network in recognition of his work on the Highway Africa conference. Berger founded the New Media Lab at Rhodes in 1995, and has published several books on ICT and journalism, including:

- "The Internet: A goldmine for Editors and Reporters";
- "Configuring convergence";
- "Absent Voices, Missed Opportunities – Media silence on

Biographic Briefs

ICT policy issues in six African countries";

- "Doing Digital Journalism: how Southern African news-gatherers are using ICT"
- "What the newsroom knows". Managing knowledge within African newspapers".

He writes "Converse" - a fortnightly column for the Mail & Guardian online (www.mg.co.za/converse), and maintains his website <http://guyberger.ru.ac.za>

Executive Summary

Interviews with ICT journalists and content analysis of coverage, mostly in three weeks of April 2006, add up to a picture that is far more positive than two years ago. This is the overview that emerges from the update of the 2004 CATIA-sponsored study of DRC, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Kenya and Senegal.

In short, the research done between April and July 2006 suggests that at least a selection of African media and its journalists are taking ICTs, and to a lesser extent, ICT policy issues, with a degree of seriousness. This is a different portrait to the more gloomy images from studies in 2002 and 2004.

It is in many ways artificial to generalise from the small size of the sample data, and also across the diverse countries with their different circumstances. But there are pointers towards patterns whose significance may very well be wider than the period, the places, the persons and the publishing platforms that were surveyed. What emerges in these patterns is a picture that could be characterised as a glass either half-empty or half-full. But it is not a case of “take your pick”: seen against the backdrop of the earlier research image of a near empty container, the appropriate emphasis for the current findings is indisputably the interpretation of the vessel filling up.

The findings that give cause for this optimism are based on interviews with 35 journalists and content analysis of 346 reports across 26 media outlets. The qualitative sense that emerges from the study is that journalists understand their role and power, including as regards ICT policy. In at least two countries [Nigeria and Senegal], they take pride in this not just as reporters, but also as organised stakeholder

actors engaged in effective ICT use and ICT policy reform. Editors on the whole seem open to considering ICT stories (even if they do not actively encourage the beat). All these aspects stand in positive contrast to the 2004 research findings.

While most journalists today say they feel confident in their reporting, there is also a widespread awareness that the field is complex and fast-moving – and a recognition that this creates the need for ongoing training and beat specialisation. Analysis of the 346 media reports shows the bulk of them as being original independent stories (as opposed to lifted items or verbatim repeats of press releases). Their format is mainly news, indicating the event-tied nature of coverage and the relative lack of proactive agenda-setting or in-depth feature and investigative reporting. Significantly, however, items are not buried in the back pages, but generally given mid-level prominence at least.

The content focus in the surveyed coverage is mainly to do with telephony services and infrastructure, ownership and universal service. Actual policy-related content is much scarcer – but not as absent as it was in 2004. Most reports receive high scores for accuracy. Jargon is being explained to audiences in many reports (but at least in one country, it remains raw in at least one third of the content). Most stories are multi-sourced and contextualised. Again, most of these features suggest positive progress over a two-year period.

However, not more than a half of stories are linked to other ICT issues – in other words, a fragmented picture is being presented. There is an amount of critical journalism, although this is still a small minority of reports. The converse

Executive Summary

– hyping or romanticising stories – appears in up to one third of the reports. It is very uneven as to whether reports consider ICTs from the point of view of gender or poverty impact. These are areas where very little change is evident in comparison to 2004.

Nigeria and Kenya, reflecting their societies, feature business prominently amongst the actors in ICT, whereas other countries represent government as the main player. Civil society’s interests are registered in the reports. Limited recognition is afforded the regulators, donors and the media itself. No longer is ICT just for geeks or multinational companies. The reporting now shows it to be everybody’s business

The bottom line of the study as a whole is that ICT journalism in the six countries studied has begun to move, and to secure recognition. There is substantial potential for the half-filled glass to continue filling. This report concludes by highlighting ways in which this can happen. It therefore explains how journalists can put their general understandings into better practice. To this end, there is an outline of the centrality of policy, its character and operation, as well as some tips for story-telling. The discipline of ICT journalism is coming in from the cold. Now it needs the chill to be replaced with a warmth that can benefit a continent needing to exploit ICTs to maximum effect.

CHAPTER ONE: REPORT CARD SHOWS PROGRESS IN ICT REPORTING

1.1 Introduction

There is some good news about the reporting of Information Society policy issues in the policy-influential media in six African countries, even though there is still space for much improvement.

Interviews with information communication technology (ICT) journalists and content analysis of coverage, mostly in three weeks of April 2006, add up to a picture that is far more positive than two years ago. This is the overview that emerges from the update of the 2004 CATIA-sponsored study of DRC, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Kenya and Senegal. Those of the journalists interviewed who had attended CATIA-linked training all confirmed its value to their work.

Although this study is primarily qualitative in nature, providing depth rather than generalisable breadth, it does suggest a perceived increase of coverage of ICTs issues, even though actual policy issues still constitute a minority of reports. The sense is also one of ICT issues becoming mainstreamed in media. This in turn may well reflect, amongst things like CATIA interventions, practical developments in the countries concerned – such as the growing penetration and continued evolution of cellular telephony. The result is that no longer are ICT stories confined to special sections for computer geeks, gadget freaks or business specialists. That said, more specialist topics like information security and intellectual property are still fairly rare.

This aim of this publication is to present and assess the findings of the 2006 study, which was the culmination of a research project into how journalists are covering ICT policy issues in selected African countries.

1.1.1 Background

This project was initiated by CATIA – Catalysing Access to ICTs in Africa, a project linked to the UK's Department for International Development. The research entailed was part of a wider thrust titled "African-led Advocacy on Policy

Reform", which in turn, was one leg in a multi-pronged strategy under CATIA auspices. [The other legs included promoting low cost VSAT access; supporting the African Internet Service Providers Association as well as advocacy groups from the private sector and civil society; promoting relevant expertise; and backing greater African participation in international ICT-related decision making.]

In contextualising the research, CATIA started from the premise that the rate of change in telecommunications and Internet penetration in Africa was not enough to meet the targets for the Millenium Development Goals or NEPAD. It noted the need for independent regulation, and genuinely competitive telecoms environments. In CATIA's view, advocacy work could help accelerate change in ICT policy and regulatory regimes as a means to achieve higher teledensities, affordable access to ICTs, and openings for new ICT entrepreneurs.

In this strategy, three key stakeholders were identified as advocacy-relevant. First was the ICT private sector and its organisations such as AFRISPA - the African Internet Service Providers Association. Second was civil society – such as the Association for Progressive Communications (APC) and SchoolNet Africa. Third was the media, broken down into the two groups: editors and reporters. Editors were seen as agents of change, who could influence coverage, write editorials, and promote ICT specialisation amongst staff. Journalists were recognised as the actors who could become well-versed in ICT policy issues and report more effectively and broadly on ICT policy issues and debates. Women journalists were especially recognised.

CATIA's aim was to work with these three constituencies – business, civil society and media – so as to create public debate. In turn, this debate would help increase understanding amongst elites and create movement in the policy arena. The emphasis was on building a concerted, multi-stakeholder approach across the constituencies that could ultimately make up the critical mass to get ICT policy reforms initiated.

This approach struck a chord with Highway Africa, an

outreach project of the School of Journalism and Media Studies at Rhodes University. Started as a small conference in 1996, the event had grown to become the world's largest gathering of African journalists. While the initial focus was the media-ICT interface, this widened in tandem with the United Nations' World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) to include issues like media freedom, local content and intellectual property. Highway Africa further expanded its presence beyond the conference into a series of research, training and newsagency activities. A tradition had also developed of engaging in advocacy through annual declarations, and participation in WSIS preparatory meetings.

As a media-centric movement, the Highway Africa network shared a firm belief in the power of media to make a difference. In particular, Highway Africa took as a given that media had a major role to play in best practice as regards the making of public policy. Whether by agenda-setting, legitimising, popularising, informing, educating or providing a forum, media was not only a user of ICTs – it could impact positively on the policy environments that are so critical to Africa's evolution within the global Information Society. The sunlight of media coverage had played a significant part in the 1990s wave of African democratisation; it could do the same as regards opening up the terrain of ICT – and indeed Information Society – policy to public participation, pressure and wisdom. Media, indeed, had a role to play in relevant policy initiation, formulation, implementation, monitoring and review.

Against this backdrop, there was clear reason why CATIA and Highway Africa should team up on a number of issues. One area was in training of journalists, where Highway Africa contributed personnel in the development of materials, and in running workshops. This built on Highway Africa's own annual investment in training a cadre of journalists to constitute the core of the Highway Africa News Agency – an activity in which CATIA personnel also contributed. The second area of collaboration was research. CATIA was able to use the 2003 conference to survey 27 journalists about their views on what was needed to improve coverage of ICT and related policy issues. But the need was for systematic

information about this coverage – so that guidance could be given to the various initiatives aimed at enhancing capacity. It was out of this need that the research project underpinning this book was born.

1.1.2 Research objectives:

The research was intended to gauge the quality, and to a lesser extent, the quantity of media coverage of a contemporary ICT policy issue in policy-influential media at a given point in time in each of the six countries targeted by CATIA.

The research aimed to assess straightforward issues such as simple accuracy and understanding on the one hand, as well as communicative skill in conveying the story on the other. Further, some serious assessment of the deeper paradigms embedded in the coverage would be made. While an amount of basic quantitative content analysis would be required for this, the emphasis would mainly be on the qualitative construction of meaning over a particular policy item or process. In addition, the study would also attempt to assess in part whether any of the CATIA work was perceived to have had a direct impact on the coverage.

The findings in 2004 were to assist CATIA in identifying the key journalists, media and type of events to be targeted for training and interventions over the ensuing two years. The research in 2006 was to incorporate some assessment of the effect of these interventions in as much as there was a link between them and the particular media being surveyed. Highway Africa's interest was in establishing whether, over time journalists begin to recognise, and learn to sell to their editors, a wide range of ICT policy stories – and also whether they can tell these stories effectively (including with regard to knowledge of models of best policy practice and understanding their role in these).

The results of the research in 2004 were to serve as a baseline of the level of media awareness and understanding of ICT policy issues, the quality and quantity of coverage, and the 'champions' among journalists and editors who play a role. This provided a valuable point of comparison for the 2006 research. The 2006 analysis would also revisit

the 2004 analysis and assess whether there had been any improvement in media coverage of ICT policy issues. The intention was to interview the same people interviewed in 2004 where possible, plus some of those media people (journalists and editors) who were exposed to CATIA training and events.

1.1.3 Research method:

The research method was twofold. First was to undertake media content analysis of ICT coverage in influential media during a given month, using a combination of content and discourse analysis methods. Second was to have interviews with selected editors and specialised ICT-journalists. The research would take cognisance of national ICT issues and the quality and extent of coverage as it relates to these; and a sensitivity to online, print, and radio/TV.

The content analysis was designed to explore the priority accorded to ICT issues in the medium, frequency of coverage and the degree of follow-up and follow-through. More qualitative lenses assessed the implicit understanding within the story, and the terms in which policy is seen. An example is the extent to which the reporting showed awareness of power, politics and gender issues. Likewise, there is the extent to which gaps between policy and implementation are understood and pursued within the coverage, and the legitimisation or otherwise of a role of civil society. Further attention would go to the extent of technicisation of policy issues whereby the political and social aspects are incorrectly underplayed or ignored and the issue reduced to a purely technical matter. The degree to which coverage raised issues of impact on poor and marginalised groups in terms of affordability, was also to come under focus. More detail on the actual research process in appended at the end of this Chapter.

1.1.4 Then and now

The 2004 study, co-ordinated by Sonja Boesak, was published by Highway Africa as "Absent voices, missed opportunity: the media's silence on ICT policy issues in six African countries" (online at www.highwayafrica.ru.ac.za). Amongst

the more specific findings were that Mozambique's media were inhibited by the language of ICTs being English. In the DR Congo, Government officials were loath to talk to the media about ICTs. Nigeria's ICT coverage was ghettoised in inserts targeted at the IT industry. Ethiopia, however, demonstrated strongly-worded editorials and letters to the editor about the country's crisis in regard to its telecoms services. In comparatively advanced Senegal, with an active ICT sector, media coverage was limited to events-related coverage.

The conclusions made depressing reading: generally, the mainstream media showed little interest in ICTs, and even less in ICT policy. Even more lacking was analysis or critique of ICTs or the ICT sector, and instead there was only the occasional reproduction of simplistic orthodoxies about telecoms liberalisation without any qualification or critical elaboration. The findings showed that ICT was viewed primarily as dealing with Internet and telecom technical or business issues. These stories were also presented without reference to, or understanding of, the overdetermining context of policy and politics. There was a narrow horizon as regards the range of stakeholders, gender dimensions and indigenous knowledge. This pointed to a lack of understanding in the media of ICT policy issues in general. As such, there was little sign of media deepening its democratic role by becoming a vital link in the processes of public policy with regard to the African Information Society. In short, the African media in 2004 did not see the importance of the story.

All this is the background to the current study, whose results are grounds for optimism. While many problems still remain, there does seem to be undeniable progress. On the whole, the journalists interviewed in this study seem to appreciate the importance of policy issues to the area – even while they express frustration with the jargon and complexity of the field. However, it is noticeable that journalists also do not include broadcasting or other media issues as ICT issues – thereby limiting their field of vision to information technology (IT), the internet and telephony. And, despite the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) (convened in November 2006, five months before the research period), there is not much evidence that it has had explicit or ongoing resonance in the coverage or in the understand-

ing of ICTs by the journalists. On the other hand, there is still an intuitive understanding that ICTs do have a huge contribution to make to all areas of social life, and further that a country's policy, legal and regulatory framework can either develop or detract from this huge potential. It seems, though, that there is very little awareness of building gender questions into reportage on ICTs.

In short, the research suggests that at least a selection of African media and its journalists are taking ICTs and ICT policy issues with a degree of seriousness. Today, performance seems to be up, and the prospects a lot more encouraging. This chapter presents the context and overview of the research. It covers the trends in interviews and the content analysis. The second chapter gives a sense of the ICT issues in the specified countries, and how these were reported on in the coverage. Chapter Three presents the detailed interviews with the correspondents themselves, while Chapter Four sums up and looks ahead.

1.2 Overview of interview findings

Amongst those at the coalface, i.e. the journalists reporting on ICTs, the interview research turned up both what could be common themes, as well as nuances related to different country circumstances. A total of 35 journalists were interviewed for this study. In the DRC, seven journalists were interviewed (including one editor). Four current journalists (including one editor) and five former journalists feature for Ethiopia. There were five in Mozambique and the same in Kenya; just two in Nigeria; and seven in Senegal (including two editors).

1.2.1 Social significance

In the DRC, the seven journalists interviewed seemed to

have a clear, if partly fragmented, appreciation of the role of their media and themselves in contributing to policy development. Collectively, however, they highlighted the value of media in setting agendas, as well as promoting ICTs and educating people about them. One pinpointed the potential role of media before, during and after policy development. Another spoke of a critical component: of playing a watchdog role against unfair advantages, the pricing of licences and the issue of tax. They discussed how, in general, they were policy influential in the sense of being taken seriously by decision-makers and receiving audience feedback. All this came in a context where the political transition dominates the news agenda, and resulting in gaps in ICT policy both in government and in the coverage. Similarly, in Ethiopia and Nigeria, the point was made that a powerful focus on political stories too often trumps ICT stories. No journalists reported prejudice by editors against ICT stories, but by the same token, many said there was no a priori preferential selection of these. They said they relied a lot on press releases for reporting ICTs, but found jargon to be an issue. Also, because the topic was dynamic and covered many things, some did not feel confident in terms of their reporting.

Kenyan journalists interviewed were enthused with their media's role in contributing to policy development – not only in general, but also in regard to ICTs. This appears to be a function of the vibrant and participatory processes in their country. They spoke of their role in lobbying and advocacy around the second national operator, and government's position on the EASSy cable. Several spoke of taking part as actors, not just reporters, in policy meetings. One described a promotional role in regard to WSIS. Most also portrayed themselves as performing two complementary functions: being a watchdog as well as being a neutral disseminator of policy proposals. Another individual spoke of promoting debate and of setting agendas such as around e-learning and e-governance. However, one member of the group seemed to conflate policy with legislation, apparently not understanding that laws flow from policy (to one degree or another).

These journalists interviewed in Kenya noted that ICT stories would receive media play if they were competitive in regard to other stories, and if they were angled according

to particular sections (e.g. Business). All said they were comfortable in reporting ICT. One reported a problem that if editors did not understand a story, it would be dropped or cut down. They said they made use of press releases, but other sources as well. Some of these sources, however, were problematic because they were experts who could only speak in jargon. The feeling was that coverage had improved over the years in volume and comprehensibility, although investigative stories were lacking.

Five Mozambican journalists interviewed also showed themselves to be aware of their role in influencing policy, although the emphasis on ICT coverage seems to be more on promotion to the public rather than impacting on governmental decision-makers. ICT stories, they affirmed, had to compete with other content for space, and the prospects were reduced in the private media where editors felt such stories would not help sell the paper. Interestingly, none spoke of using press releases in their sourcing, but all discussed the challenges of ICT information generally being in English rather than Portuguese. Their sense was that there was more coverage than three years ago, and attributed this to increased governmental interest and journalists' own increased awareness. Gaps they pinpointed were stories on the impact of ICTs and ICT policies in the rural areas – and on negative consequences of ICTs.

Only two journalists, unfortunately, were interviewed in Nigeria, but they spoke of their active role in educating policy-makers on issues like e-voting, consumer protection, and independent regulation. The feeling was that the impact on government policy, however, was still somewhat low, and that policy stories in particular were under-reported. Nonetheless, their 32-member interest group had also made direct inputs on draft legislation. Although much reportage was criticised as being re-writes of press releases, ICT stories were now making front pages as often as business stories. There was more respect for ICT stories, whose play had increased, in their view.

Seven Senegalese journalists interviewed expressed mixed views on their particular policy relevance, although the media in general was seen to have influence. One spoke of

sensitising governments about issues, and about agenda-setting – such as the need for the regulator to act on pricing and relations between fixed line monopoly Sonatel and the Tigo cellular operator. Watchdog and informational roles were also discussed. The point was made that it was cheaper for media in Senegal to cover politics, than to follow policy processes and that political stories seized centre-stage. There was critique of the media itself for failing to invest properly in ICTs – in particular, in their own websites. It came across strongly that ICTs were seen as very important for Senegal, but that much discourse around the subject was criticised for being “theoretical”. Source use seemed to rely, disproportionately perhaps, on the Internet. The selection of stories to play in the media depended on how these were angled for the unique audience of each outlet. Language was an issue – with concerns expressed about needing to translate from English too much, as well as the presence of jargon that was exacerbated by experts. The Senegalese journalists said they were comfortable with reporting ICTs, but they needed more training because the subject was so dynamic. Coverage had increased due to more social activity around ICTs, such as the regulator acting on telecommunications and public interest in prices. However, some reports were still seen as being too superficial.

Ethiopia, still battered by a political crisis at the time of the research, yielded few direct results from the interviews. However, one editor observed that the lack of ICT policy reporting in his paper reflected the lack of momentum in society around the issue. There was no ownership of the matter which could result in advocacy, he argued. What coverage of ICT did occur in the Ethiopian print media seemed to be more along the lines of IT, and is written by IT specialists rather than journalists. The aim of these articles is to educate the public, rather than to advance policy. A number of journalists with training in ICT reporting are no longer in the field, although there are occasional stories from them. Training for people remaining in journalism was called for.

In sum, most of the journalists interviewed were not only engaged with the subject, but also keen to do more. This is

even the case with generalist reporters who only cover ICT issues occasionally. Many said that they felt comfortable reporting the stories, though even amongst these individuals, there was a strong interest in ongoing training and peer-networking. An abiding theme is that there is not an elaborated understanding of the role of policy in regard to ICTs, or even in relation to legal regimes. This may explain why despite an apparent increase in ICT stories, those that draw policy linkages, or deal exclusively with policy, remain a minority.

1.2.2 Content analysis – trends

The content analysis data reinforces some of these perceived patterns. Amongst the media identified as “policy-influential”, ICT content was found in 26 newspapers and additional media during the research period. The DRC registered three newspapers scoring this kind of content, while Senegal had eight. Mozambique chalked up three newspapers and two TV channels; Nigeria had four newspapers and one email listserv. There were four newspapers in Ethiopia and the same in Kenya. The number of stories tracked varies per country, related to the amount of what was deemed as ‘policy-influential’ media that was actually monitored and what news events were happening during April 2006. The range is between 125 for Kenya, and 20 in Mozambique. (DRC identified and studied 22 news items, Ethiopia 38, Senegal 57 and Nigeria 84). Although as indicated this research is not quantitative, it is still illuminating to look at rounded percentages of coverage within and between countries, according to various indicators.

1.2.2.1 Homegrown content

Most countries’ coverage scored as being comprised of independently written items, but with Nigeria, Senegal and Kenya as having around a quarter to a third of their items being basically made up of re-written press releases. Ethiopia and Mozambique had no stories rated as press-release journalism. This possibly reflects the more aggressive nature of media sources in the more commercialised economies of Nigeria, Senegal and Kenya, rather than a

reflection of Ethiopian and Mozambican journalists being more choosy about the content they reproduce. What it does suggest, however, is that there is space for ICT journalists to be trained in how to utilise press release material in a more independent and critical way.

Approximately one quarter of Ethiopia’s coverage was drawn from other newspapers or websites, and likewise for DRC as regards news agency-sourced content. These proportions of pre-prepared “imported” content are not as necessarily worrying as press-release journalism, but it is also likely that much of this “foreign” content is not tailored for specific relevance for Ethiopian and DRC audiences. Further research could be done in this area, and training could also help journalists deal with how to develop a local angle with regard to externally-sourced stories.

1.2.2.2 Formats and focus

A tenth of the Mozambican and Kenyan stories were in feature format, higher than any other country. Mozambique – off a low sample (20 stories) – also had the highest percentage of briefs (a fifth). (The country, it seems, was fairly quiet on the ICT front in April 2006, with few hard news items emerging.) There is not an intrinsic correlation between feature stories and educational content, or between briefs and irrelevance, but generally speaking, such relationships go hand-in-hand. Accordingly, it could be stated that across the board, there is more space for journalists to develop ICT journalism in feature-writing.

Most stories were local and national in significance, but approaching half of the content in the DRC was regional or international – probably correlating with its relatively high proportion of news agency content. A quarter of the content from Ethiopia was on international issues, while Kenya, Senegal and Nigeria had only around one-tenth of their stories being international. In a global policy and ICT environment, it remains important for ICT journalism to look beyond national borders and to investigate how international and foreign stories relate to the national and local. It is possible that the surveyed media in Kenya, Senegal and Nigeria are short-changing their audiences.

1.2.2.3 Making a splash

Except for DRC, Mozambique and Senegal where stories were mainly given either low or mid-level prominence, the ICT stories were generally prominently carried in the other countries, especially in Ethiopia. Reflecting the different issues at play in the particular period of this research, there were variations in the proportions of stories focussing on particular topics. Note: where appropriate, some stories were scored as falling into more than one category. In summary,

- More than a third of the DRC’s stories included focus on telephony (mainly cellular);
- Kenya’s articles were spread across ownership issues; costs; mobile and ICTs for development;
- Mozambique dealt with infrastructure, costs, landline, international issues, and ICT for development;
- Infrastructure was the most common topic in Nigeria, followed by ownership and costs;
- Senegal’s stories bunched around universal service themes, and ICT for development (ICT4D). However, it was the only country that featured content on piracy, information security, local content and language issues: about one fifth of the sampled stories had one or more of these characteristics; and,
- Ethiopia dwelt on ICT4D, infrastructure, the Internet, universal service and media issues.

Overall, stories about either business aspects or technology (e.g. mobile) seem to be the most common, while more policy-related content was scarcer – except in as much as ICT for development may be construed as an issue that, intrinsically, is closely connected to policy. Stories on policy processes and regulation were a minority. Privacy issues, local content, information security, and intellectual property (IP) angles were almost absent (except, as indicated above, in Senegal). It is evident that quite a range of ICT issues was present in the diverse countries at the time of the research. On the other hand, there does seem to be a need to sensitise journalists to the importance of directly policy-related stories (including relevant international bodies, local regulator, government processes). In addition, it may be

that the complexity of stories dealing with language and ICT, privacy, security and intellectual property is a factor in explaining their relative dearth. Further research and training may be in order here.

1.2.2.4 Accuracy

The mass of stories was scored by the researchers as being accurate. In Senegal, however, only half were rated as such, and this finding needs follow up. However, it does seem that, generally speaking, ICT journalists are getting their facts right.

1.2.2.5 Talking in tongues

On the issue of jargon, very different results emerged. Of the stories analysed from the DRC, 77% had ICT jargon explained and simplified for readers, while Mozambique scored 40%, Senegal 22% and Kenya 18%. Ethiopia and Nigeria ranked around one in ten stories or less (+/-10%). These figures do not mean, however, that the full remainder of stories were all characterised by unexplained jargon – a sizeable number of stories did not include jargon at all, according to the researchers. Filmon Tekle said the issue of unexplained jargon was not applicable to most of the Ethiopian stories he reviewed. John Dada cited the cases of Nigerian stories lacking ICT jargon as those which dwelt upon financial results, appointments, upcoming conferences or features touching on the social aspects of life. According to Mozambique’s Zenaida Machado: “Most of the stories had no jargon. I believe this is because journalists tend to avoid the jargoned texts by just not quoting them. But in some cases, it also means that the source of the story did not use jargon and it was easy for the journalist to transmit the message using simple language.”

In interpreting the statistics cited above, as to where jargon – when used – was explained, one might posit a language issue at work at least in the cases of DRC, Senegal and Mozambique. This is the view of John Dada who suggested that it might be that, given that ICTs are primarily discussed in English, having facility in this language could possibly reduce journalists’ sensitivity about explaining the jargon.

In other words, Senegal, DRC and Mozambican journalists might be explaining jargon better to their audiences precisely because they have to translate the terminology themselves rather than take it for granted.

When the criterion was re-phrased as “stories that have jargon that is not explained”, a complementary angle emerged. Here, a third of Mozambican and a fifth of Nigerian, Ethiopian and Kenyan stories were assessed as cases where there was jargon that was not explained. Three of five applicable stories in the DRC sample were deemed to have jargon not explained. Clear figures were not available for Senegal.

The implication of all this is that there is some good practice in explaining jargon when this kind of language is used. In regard to bad practice in not explaining jargon, some places have higher, and in others lower, percentages. Those bodies which recognise ICT journalism with prizes and awards could take note of this unevenness and help promote achievements in explaining jargon. Those engaged in training could assist in sensitising and empowering journalists to tackle the problem where it exists.

1.2.2.6 Multiple-sourcing and critical contextualising

Another set of findings with diverse scores for different countries is whether stories were multi-sourced or not. More than half in the DRC were, and around one third to one fifth in Kenya, Mozambique, Ethiopia and Senegal. But the figure was just five percent in Nigeria. According to John Dada, this latter statistic reflects low levels of understanding by journalists in his country. In his view, “multi-sourcing comes along with a better understanding of the basic issues of ICT. Until the journalists begin to grapple with these basic issues, their reporting on ICT will remain rather stilted and single sourced.” He refers to one Nigerian journalist who, he says, would be ranked amongst the top three in his region, and yet “his views about his sources of information shows how restricted it is.” Dada sees this as highlighting one of the challenges regarding ICT reporting in the Nigerian media. Certainly, a precondition

of policy development is the promotion of debate and different points of view – a process that is constrained by single-sourced ICT journalism.

On the other hand, most Nigerian stories were rated to be contextualised, in contrast to around one-half or more in Mozambique, DRC, Ethiopia, Senegal and Kenya. Zenaida Machado spells this out with an example: “If the story is about a donation of computers to a school, it should include background information on why are the computers being donated (e.g. if it is part of the government ICT implementation strategy...) and it should also explain to the reader what this policy is, and how it relates to students’ performance, etc.” Asked to review his data along these lines, John Dada nonetheless confirmed the high Nigerian figure for contextualisation. At any rate, the point to be made is that contextualisation is a vital component if stories are to help educate readers, and there is certainly room for ICT journalists in countries other than Nigeria to do better in this area.

Another aspect of the content analysis was to assess the extent to which ICT reporting dealt with ICTs in a fragmented rather than holistic manner. This was the case in about half the stories in most countries, but only in a fifth of Kenyan and Nigerian examples. This aspect of the research is hard to render consistent, because its character requires very complex judgements on the part of each researcher of any particular story at hand. In many cases, it may also well be that a story is quite legitimately only about one part of the whole (e.g. telephony tariffs announcement by an operator), and for reasons of focus and length does not go further into a related aspect (e.g. the possible knock-on effect for Internet service provision). Yet, there is a nagging sense, from looking at the story summaries in the content analysis, that some opportunities to integrate story components of an interlinked reality are being passed by. The effect is that far from a picture of the composite African Information Society emerging, some stories are delivered as if they are about discreet and unrelated matters.

On the important matter as to whether there is a critical edge to stories, a quarter of DRC and Senegalese stories

were ranked as such, while in the other countries only over one tenth were judged to have this quality. There is no set formula that would set an optimum percentage of critical stories – many stories are legitimately focused on neutral information or education, or on a kind of advocacy and promotion of ICTs (and policy). It is evident, however, that the countries surveyed had a critical or questioning aspect present in at least some of their articles – even in Ethiopia which had suffered a severe press crackdown. This is not at all to suggest “critical” means only or even “critical of government”: rather, it means bringing other knowledge to bear on a development, raising questions that need addressing. Further research might analyse raises such questions as: critical of whom, by whom, and from what vantage point. There is no evidence of substantive investigation by journalists into ICTs or ICT policy and practice, which is troubling given the many possible stories that suggest themselves here (e.g. corruption in licensing processes, information interception and misuse, piracy, etc), and which in theory could have been done during the period under study. Too much ICT journalism, it seems, is reactive and short-term focused. Some journalists are aware of the gap, and point out the pressure on them, especially when they are generalists, to produce short-term stories to meet immediate deadlines – which rules out lengthy investigation or detailed specialisation.

1.2.2.7 Romance and relevance

The contrast to critical journalism is the proportion of stories which seemed to be romanticising ICTs – i.e. perpetuating hype and exaggerated claims. On this charge, one third of DRC and Ethiopian stories were analysed as guilty. The figure was only seven percent in Senegal. It was about one fifth of stories in Mozambique, Nigeria and Kenya. John Dada points out, for instance, the lack of alternative perspectives on the \$100 laptop project as it was reported in celebratory form in Nigeria. Aside from Senegal (which may also be a factor of many of its stories having concerned problems — like information security and intellectual property), these figures of “rosy” portraits being painted are disturbingly high. Reporting of ICTs and ICT policy needs to be sustainable and credible, and that means it should not

be confused with marketing or hyperbole.

As regards other underlying themes, it is interesting to query what proportions of stories held ICTs to be relevant to overcoming gender and/or poverty disadvantages. This was barely the case in Nigeria and Mozambique, but was 40% in Senegal (with many stories dealing with universal access) and almost 33% in DRC. A related theme was whether stories considered a rural angle. Here, the results for DRC went up to 55%, and 32% for Ethiopia. Senegal, Kenya and Mozambique averaged around a fifth of stories, but Nigeria was very low with only 5%. It seems that Nigerian ICT journalism during the period under review was one-sidedly concerned with business and technology, leaving out major developmental angles. There remains a lot of work to do in sensitising journalists to making the linkages, and broadening out their stories in terms of the relevance to African development challenges.

Further, the content analysis looked at whether the one-sided theme of “deficit” thinking was haunting coverage – such as along the lines of the theme of “Africa is lagging the rest of the world”. This was the case in half of the DRC stories, and a fifth in Kenya and Senegal, but absent in the remaining three countries. It is not clear what explains these differences. What is signalled, however, is a relative weakness of a modernisation paradigm with a mindset that looks not at what existing value African countries do have, but only at the amount of catching up that is needed. It is important for ICT journalists to be aware of both aspects, and certainly not to ignore what information and technology progress is being made in their own countries.

1.2.2.8 Pinning it down to policy and players

The thematic analysis also found that the majority of ICT stories (up to three quarters) in most countries had no explicit policy linkage. In the words of researcher Zenaida Machado, “Policy link means, to me, that within the story, there is a link to the national ICT policy.” She observed that this was the case in state-owned Noticias, but not in the privately-owned newspapers. This problem of not making a connection to policy was evident the least in Senegal, where

nonetheless a total of 40% of stories was still identified as beset with this narrow approach. Of course, many ICT stories only have a very indirect link to policy. But what seems to be in too short supply is the sense that behind each development or issue, is the shape [or absence] of a government policy framework. Journalists’ admirable understanding about the media’s role in policy development is not translated into conscious tracking of how a given story relates to policy formulation, implementation or review. In Nigeria, where the same limitation was noted in approximately one half of the stories, researcher John Dada noted a government policy that had a major flaw in it that was not spotted by the media. He went on to say: “Verbatim reporting of what was said at events is common, and the content itself, being largely driven by private sector, is skewed to their own promotional ends.” This suggests that it is not only, or even primarily, the media that is to blame for not making the policy link – it is also the actors in the field who do not raise the issues. This stands in a degree of contrast to the coverage around the South African Convergence Bill (see Chapter Four). But even where there is a vibrant policy process, and with journalists being active participants in it, the linkages are not always being made. Thus, the problem being discussed here was, ironically, most prevalent in Kenya — with 75% of stories not being linked to policy.

A fascinating divide is evident with regard to the role players reflected in the coverage. Government featured in at least a third of the stories in DRC, Mozambique, Senegal and Ethiopia, but very little in Nigeria and Kenya. In these latter two countries, however, local business was a role player in approximately half of all content. Civil society was present in about a fifth of all stories, except in DRC where it was in roughly one tenth. DRC and Ethiopia had some reflection of disadvantaged people in their content – even though less than one fifth. These patterns may well reflect the corresponding state of play between government, business and civil society in the diverse countries. One would question, however, whether the business focus in Nigeria and Kenya ought not to be complemented with more stories on government which, after all, can make or break an ICT environment through its policy and practice (or lack thereof). One positive observation is that civil society as a stakeholder in

the subject receives a degree of legitimisation as an actor by featuring in coverage.

Governments as being the agency accountable for delivery on ICT development was emphasised in more than a third of all stories in DRC, Mozambique and Ethiopia. In Nigeria and Kenya, local business was the most common responsible agent – again approaching almost half the stories in each country. Senegal had government in almost a third of its stories, with the remainder spread fairly evenly across business, civil society, regulator and donors. One fifth of stories in DRC and Kenya pinpointed international business. Ethiopia and Mozambique named civil society in a fifth of their stories. The notion that there was a “buck” that should stop somewhere, and in particular also with donor agencies, regulators or the media, was a theme only in less than one tenth of the stories in the countries being surveyed. This characteristic of accountability for delivery may help set agendas by focussing the attention of the public and that of the particular agencies being identified. However, the degree to which this matter is explicit in the stories was not pursued in depth in this research. Further fact-finding could be profitably conducted in this area – for example, in doing both audience research (e.g. through focus groups) and studies of the journalists’ own understandings and leanings. It is an important matter, because it has a bearing on the responsibility, authority and legitimacy of ICT policy and practice for different stakeholder sectors within each country.

1.2.2.9 In a nutshell

In sum, the content analysis shows that press release journalism does not seem to be a universal problem, though it does register as problematic in Kenya and Nigeria. Another positive is that stories are given mid- to high- prominence. Telephony, infrastructure, tariffs and ownership seem to be common topics, but there are gaps as regards important matters such as privacy issues, local content, information security, and intellectual property. The perception of the researchers seems to be that there is widespread accuracy, but there is variation in their estimation about the media’s ability to dejargonise.

responsibility is similarly downgraded.

1.3 Comparison to baseline data

What these findings point to are indicators of good health of ICT journalism in some cases, but also that there is space for substantial improvements in general — and also in regard to specifics in particular countries. However, when compared to the analyses of several years ago, an encouraging picture emerges. Thus, the current study appears to signal improvements on the situation reported by Stanbridge and Ljunggren in their UNECA research (2003), which studied Egypt, Morocco, Cameroon, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Malawi, Mozambique, Senegal, Ghana. The authors found that journalists (and editors) had very low knowledge on Information Society developments. Although formal conceptual understanding is lacking in the journalists surveyed for this current study, most nonetheless readily grasp the importance of ICTs and of policy related to their development.

The same 2003 UNECA study also found that there was poor media liaison by NGOs (civil society). It is unclear the extent to which this has changed – although CATIA initiatives have intervened here. Nonetheless, there is now information that civil society does feature in approximately one-tenth of stories. Another finding in the Stanbridge-Ljunggren study was that there were too few women in ICT journalism. Anecdotal testimony in the current interviews suggests that this remains a problem. However, what also seems to still be absent is gender-sensitivity on the part of the journalists at large who were interviewed. It is not at all evident that these communicators, aside perhaps from some in Senegal and DRC, are examining ICTs and ICT policy from the point of view of differential impact on African gender relations.

The UNECA study also found a lack of critical analysis and follow-up, plus an absence of considerations of grassroots voices, rural issues and the WSIS. The current research does not go into all these aspects, but it does find that there is evidence of a critical dimension in a tenth to a quarter

The dependence on single sourcing seems a problem, especially in Nigerian journalism. Contextualisation could be done more frequently. Critical journalism does exist, but at least during the period of investigation, not in the form of substantive investigative reporting. On the other hand, the figures of critical ICT journalism were easily outweighed by coverage that unrealistically romanticised ICTs. This hype was found to come close to one third of coverage in two of the countries, and constituted a fifth of the total in three others.

Gender, poverty and rural angles were grossly underdeveloped in Nigeria, but better treated in DRC and Senegal. Not putting these critical African issues sufficiently on the public agenda means that there is that much less reason for on policy-makers to address them. Added to this is the widespread absence of linking stories to policy as such – with even the best-performing Senegal still only having a minority of stories (40%) reflecting the connection. While this may often reflect the failure of sources to make the necessary links, it is also an indicator that journalists are not putting into ICT journalism practice, their wider understanding of their general role in policy development.

On the more positive side, the disempowering modernisation paradigm is not very common (except in DRC coverage). African audiences are getting a sense of the global aspects of ICT and ICT policy, though this could be improved. Thus, international coverage has its place, which could even be increased in some countries. International business is seen in a minority of stories as being the responsible agency to develop ICTs, and generally it is national governments in the spotlight (except for Kenya and Nigeria with national business as the key role player). There are variations between different countries in the ICT role of the African state (and correlatively, that of business too). This probably accounts mostly for the differences in coverage, although the character of the media itself – governmental or private – in a given country also plays a part in representing one actor or institution more than another. Civil society features as a player at least in around one-fifth of stories in most countries. Of concern is that the roles of regulators, donors and the media are little reported, and likewise their

of stories. Apart from Nigeria, and to a much lesser extent Mozambique, the other countries studied (and especially DRC, followed by Ethiopia) had at least around one-fifth of their stories including a rural or poverty dimension.

The current research contrasts positively with that sponsored by CATIA originally – the baseline data that emerged more than two years ago before this study. That project then (published in Berger, 2005) said there was little sign of journalists’ understanding how they could deepen their democratic role to become a vital link in public policy processes with regard to the development of the African Information Society. This was ironical at the time, because Information Society-related policies had huge impact on media itself. Nowadays, however, journalists are not only expressing consciousness of their role, but also actively engaging as stakeholders in processes – at least in Kenya and Nigeria. Back in 2004, the CATIA finding was that the media was silent on relevant policy agenda-setting, policy debate and formulation, implementation, monitoring and review. These social functions do now find resonance in the self-perceptions of journalists, even if this does not appear to be reflected very much in the form of linking their ICT stories to ICT policy. But it is an advance on 2004.

1.4 Conclusion

This chapter has summed up in overview the findings of this study, and favourably compared them to the baseline of two years earlier. The final chapter of this book looks ahead, but some concluding remarks can be made at this point. Some of the findings suggest that in the absence of major ICT developments, journalists (for example in DRC and Mozambique; and in some private media) believe there is little journalism that can be done. On the contrary, however, the lack of developments is itself a story – perhaps even a bigger one, at least in terms of scandal and sensation. This aside, what does emerge from this research, however, is that despite the unevenness amongst countries, the ICT story today is being tracked and told – and the policy ramifications are sometimes engaged. There was a time when ICT journalism was an arcane area, restricted to “geek”-jour-

nalists, and confined to the fringes. As ICT becomes ever more central to our lives, countries and the continent, so the mainstreaming of this central area of journalism should proceed apace. If this report as a whole can accelerate the speed and amplify the quality of ICT journalism, particularly, about policy issues in the area, it will have served a useful purpose.

Appendix: Research record

The findings of this study were based on a combination of content analysis and interviews with selected journalists. The country researchers were individuals who, with one exception (Kenya), had been involved in Phase One of the research. They were contracted in February and early March 2006. For Nigeria, there was John Dada; Senegal - Sophie Ly assisted by Ibrahima Faye; Kenya – Kenneth Alare; Mozambique – Zenaida Machado; DRC – Esperance Bayedila; Ethiopia – Filmon Tekle.

The aim was to have the 2004 methodology updated and piloted by the end of March 2006. Data-gathering was then set for April, with draft analysis to be completed by end of May. This was fulfilled in general. The research guide was updated and distributed in mid-March, and the pilot phase was then completed with two interviews and three stories being covered. Unfortunately, not all the results came in on deadline, meaning that there was insufficient time for cross-country comparisons to be done. The result of the pilots was that feedback was given on an individual basis to each the researchers on issues such as probing deeper in parts of their draft interviews. Further, some of the content analysis questions were refined, as well as being changed into spreadsheet format for easier analysis.

Researchers produced plans and budgets, and were given the green light to proceed before the start of April. Despite some difficulties (three of the six researchers were afflicted with illnesses in May), the content-analysis was done as per schedule that month. (The DRC survey covered February to April, due to the very small number of articles appearing in any single month.)

All this is not to underestimate the systemic and struc-

tural challenges facing researchers around the continent – where individuals endure difficulties like power failures, gaining access to interviewees, distance and travel issues, and illness. Further, few of the researchers are professional researchers by training, and most earn a living through a range of other activities. In short, this research was generally an extra in their lives, something that had to be added on, rather than merging organically with their mainstream work. However, most of the researchers were highly professional, and many also gave valuable and insightful comments on the research methodology. In addition, the fact that all but one had been involved in the first CATIA study proved to be a boon in terms of getting the project underway relatively swiftly, and in terms of a sense of historical comparison.

Analysing the data increasingly confirmed the fact that its value is qualitative, and that quantitative reading would be problematic. Thus, it is important to note that this is not the kind of study where one can safely specify exact margin of error and representative statistics. For this reason, the overview given cites approximate percentages by and large. But this is not only an issue of sample size (small), and country diversity (making it hard to generalise across the diversity of countries). More fundamentally, it is bound up with the original conceptualisation of this project, and its related purpose and research design. The study, like its predecessor, aims to selectively understand patterns in each country over the particular period concerned, with regard to the proportions of coverage in that country according to certain criteria of assessment. The purpose is also to compare such findings in each country with those in other countries – seeking to identify and probe any contrasts where these exist, rather than to try and generalise in absolute or definitive terms across the entire range. The logic therefore is to get depth for the particularities of the time, place and personnel, rather than chase an artificial cross-country representivity.

This point is also important given the random character of the period when the research was done. This is one reason (the volume of available media is another) for the wide discrepancy in numbers of articles that were identified for

monitoring. There were just 20 in Mozambique, compared to 125 in Kenya. Zenaida Machado, the researcher in Mozambique, indicated a month after her content analysis was conducted: “I wish the monitoring period could have taken place now. In two days, STV has broadcast at least six ICT stories while in April they only had one.” (She added: “Four of the stories were done by Atanasio Marcos after the interview we had. This is what I call progress”). In other words, the pace of ICT journalism is affected by a number of fluctuating factors across the six countries – including when events occur and interventions that might sensitise journalists. In Nigeria, it appeared that a heated political topic (i.e. a possible third term for the president) was the most compelling national issue, and one might speculate that concentrated media coverage on this topic would have inevitably shrink the space and attention that might otherwise have been devoted to ICT policy issues.

It should be noted here that some nuances were applied in the analysis of data. In Kenya, where 125 stories were identified, it was deemed acceptable to classify only approximately every fourth one. This was partially to reduce the work-load for the researcher to that comparable to his peers, but primarily because it emerged that a higher sampling rate did not change the picture. Another issue is that in the subsequent analysis of data, different percentage formulae were sometimes called for. For example, in Kenya and Nigeria where photographs were recorded alongside stories, or where many stories had no jargon at all, it made no sense to count these in the universe of relevant items when scoring the percentage of stories that used jargon without explanation.

For these kinds of reasons, therefore, it should be apparent as to why the research results presented here are not necessarily indicative of ongoing overall trends in a given country, let alone across different countries. Where the value of the research lies is in providing understanding of how, given particular circumstances, ICT journalism is understood, executed and made manifest in the public sphere. In this, some findings may be of wider and more enduring significance; others more context-specific. This final overview chapter concentrates on the former – on the tentative

elements that seem to characterise an amount of ICT journalism studied in April/May, in the policy-relevant media in the six countries concerned. These insights provide a contrast to the findings of the previous study, and they suggest that there is progress over the two-year period. In addition, the research gives clues into the kinds of interventions relevant to the circumstances that were researched in this period – many of which will continue to be relevant even if other variables (e.g. presence or absence of ICT events and competing stories) will inevitably be different at other points in time.

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CHAPTER TWO:
COUNTRIES AND COVERAGE

2.0 Introduction

The six countries were all subjected to content analysis over a three week period, to ascertain the quantity and quality of coverage in each.

2.1 Democratic Republic of Congo

2.1.1 Issues in ICT policy in DRC

ICT policy in the DRC is much influenced by the DMTIC - the Multisectoral Dynamic on Information and Communication Technologies. Its leader, Alphonse Ntita, says that the body comprises all stakeholders (including those in civil society and the public sector) who can help develop ICTs in DRC. DMTIC works with civil society organisations with the same objectives on common projects. Its role is to raise the consciousness of decision-makers about the stakes involved for developing the DRC into an Information Society. As such, DMTIC also promotes collaboration with the government to develop a coherent ICT policy in the country. Recently, the group organised a roundtable on ICTs in Kinshasa in 2005, which helped to identify ICT issues in DRC that could be included in the development of a national ICT policy. In this roundtable, four major areas were identified:

- Infrastructure and access: national backbone, governmental intranet, community access centres;
- Applications and content: e-governance, e-commerce, cyber-agriculture, tele-health, e-education, local content, etc.
- Training and capacity building: training in ICT in primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education, public sensitisation, professional training, etc.
- Judicial and institutional framework: revisit and complete existing ICT regulation; partake in international regulation activities; create a framework for co-ordination of all the stakeholders; create an ICT policy implementing executive organ.

Among these, infrastructural development was identified as

the major priority. This includes: urban networks; national backbone; and a computer park. The choice was motivated by the fact that the national traffic between cities is done via satellite (which is very expensive), and the connectivity in the rural towns is very weak (which hinders the roll out of many ICT services).

It seems the major problem in the DRC is parliament's lack of interest in the development of a national ICT policy. It seems the country's lawmakers are more pre-occupied with the on-going politics of the country's transition into an electoral democracy and nothing else. Thus most ICT initiatives and programmes come from the private sector. According to Mr Ntita, the sector is beset with several problems:

- Ignorance: the Congolese population and its leaders has not yet realised the importance of ICTs in the development of the society even if they use them frequently (mobile phones, internet, broadcast radio and TV, etc.)
- Lack of political will: there is the absence of a coherent policy in the field. There are some regulations in telecommunications and broadcasting, but nothing regarding other ICTs. However, there is some hope: the Ministry of Posts, Telephones and Telecommunications has appointed an ICT advisor who is working with the DMTIC to develop a national ICT policy.
- Lack of experts: it is difficult to find Congolese experts in ICT in general, and in ICT policy in particular. This is because the education system does not deal with the issue. Some of the experts have struggled to build their expertise, and in the face of the needs in the field, they are more involved in applications than in policy development.
- Uneven ICT investment trends: the few investors who dare come into DRC are interested in the sectors where they can get their money back in a very short time (via mobile services or internet provision) and so they give preference to the big cities and ignore the rural areas.
- Electricity: the electricity network does not cover the whole country. And where there is a network, supply is er-

atic. It is often impossible to have uninterrupted electricity supply for 10 hours in a day in the DRC. Some places can go for several months without power supply at all.

The topical issue whenever there are debates on ICTs in the DR Congo is the lack of a policy framework itself. People often argued that nothing much can be done if there is no national policy framework to guide ICT development interventions.

2.1.2 Policy influential media in the DRC

Print: Newspapers and magazines

	<i>Le Potentiel</i>	<i>Le Phare</i>	<i>La Référence Plus</i>
Ownership and control	Private	Private	Private
Location of H/O	Kinshasa	Kinshasa	Kinshasa
Frequency of publication	Daily	Daily	Daily
Language	French	French	French
Distribution	National	National	National
# of Pages	24	16	16
Launched in	1990 as a weekly 1996 as a daily	1983	1990

	<i>Uhuru</i>	<i>Numerica</i>	<i>L'Observateur</i>
Ownership and control	Private	Private	Private
Location of H/O	Kinshasa	Kinshasa	Kinshasa
Frequency of publication	Daily	Weekly	Daily
Language	French	French	French
Distribution	National	National	National
# of Pages	16	16	12
Launched in	2001	1998	1991

	<i>Le Révéléateur</i>	<i>The Post</i>	<i>Le Soft</i>	<i>La République</i>
Ownership and control	Private	Private	Private	Private
Location of H/O	Kinshasa	Kinshasa	Kinshasa	Kinshasa
Frequency of publication	Bi-weekly	Bi-weekly	Weekly	Weekly
Language	French	French	French	French
Distribution	National	National	National	National
# of Pages	12	8	1990	24
Launched in	2002	2000	16 to 20	2004

These newspapers are the most regular in the market and their editors (and/or owners) are the most respected. Most of the decision-makers and opinion makers contacted rely on these dailies, bi-weekly and weekly and read them regularly to be informed.

Electronic: Television

	Tropicana TV	RAGA TV	CEBS	AA
Ownership and control	Private	Private	Private	Private
Location of H/O	Kinshasa	Kinshasa	Kinshasa	Kinshasa
Language	French	French	French and Lingala	French
Launched in	2001	1996	2003	1990

	RTNC	Digital Congo TV	CCTV
Ownership and control	Government	Private	Private
Location of H/O	Kinshasa	Kinshasa	Kinshasa
Language	French, Lingala, Swahili, Kikongo, Tshiluba	French, Lingala, Swahili, Kikongo, Tshiluba	French and Lingala
Launched in	1966	2003	2004

	CongoWeb TV
Ownership and control	Private
Location of H/O	Kinshasa
Language	French and Lingala
Launched in	2005

Electronic: Radio

	TOP Congo	RAGA FM	RTNC	Radio Okapi
Ownership and control	Private	Private	Government	United Nations
Location of H/O	Kinshasa	Kinshasa	Kinshasa	Kinshasa
Language	French and Lingala	French and Lingala	French, Lingala, Swahili, Kikongo, Tshiluba	French, Lingala, Swahili, Kikongo, Tshiluba
Launched in	2004	1996		2003

	Digital Congo
Ownership and control	Private
Location of H/O	Kinshasa
Language	French, Lingala, Swahili, Kikongo, Tshiluba
Launched in	2003

Tropicana TV, Antenne A (AA), and RAGA TV have the biggest following in Kinshasa. Their programming attracts viewers because they try to provide better information than the state-owned stations. Airtime is given to mostly those who cannot access the state-owned channel. CEBS is seen as the only educative channel in Kinshasa. Besides, it has a programme called “la generation du numérique” produced in collaboration with Alternatives and dedicated to ICT issues. Digital Congo TV and CCTV are seen as the mouth-pieces of President Joseph Kabila Kabange and Jean-Pierre Bemba Gombo, respectively. CongoWeb TV belongs to one of the organisers of la Fête de l’Internet, which is very active

in promoting ICT issues nationwide and has a potential for influencing policy changes.

With the radio stations, RTNC and Radio Okapi broadcast across the whole country while Top Congo, Raga FM and Digital Congo reach only Kinshasa.

2.1.3 Overview of content analysis

There was a total of 22 stories that appeared in the Congolese press during the sample period. The major issues emerging from these stories are summarised briefly below,

first in a narrative format and then in table format.

2.1.3.1 Origin of stories

Some 23 % of the stories analysed during the sample period were ‘news’ items that were independently sourced by the media houses under study. Another 23% originated from international news agency copy, and a further 14% was derived from local and international newspapers and websites. However, the majority of the stories originated from official press releases from private companies and government agencies. The figure for such stories was at 27%. A further 10% was divided equally between news briefs and rehashed speeches and pronouncements made by government officials and private company heads. Most of the stories sourced from private companies were in the form of advertorials, and occupied from half to a full page in most newspapers. Only 5% of the ICT articles carried during the study’s sample period were opinion pieces.

In terms of spatial distribution, 50% of the stories were national, 18% and 27% were regional and international respectively.

2.1.3.2 Actors and sources

The government was portrayed as major role player/actor in 29% of the sampled material. This was followed by the local and international business concerns which were portrayed as the main actors in 24% and 16% of the stories respectively. International news agency copy like Reuters almost always portrayed the United States government, the European Union and private conglomerates like Microsoft as the major players in all its stories. While civil society was only portrayed as active players in 11% of the stories, the figure for national independent regulators stood at 8%. The poor and marginalised population of the DRC, especially the rural poor, were given a central role in 13% of the ICTs stories that fell within the sample period.

In terms of accountability for delivery, government was cited in 37% of the stories as being accountable for delivery of ICT-related services and programmes, while local and inter-

national businesses were cited in 26% and 22% respectively. National regulators were only cited in 7%. None of the stories cited the media as playing a crucial role in this area, with non-governmental; organisations (NGOs) and donors were cited 4% of the stories each as being responsible for delivery in the sector.

2.1.3.3 Angling

Most of the stories during the study were concerned with mobile telephony, with 27% of the stories falling in this category. 18% of the stories fell under the category of ICT for development, while issues of universal access came third with 14% of the stories in the category. However, none of the stories were linked to on-going policy debates, the role of the media, broadcasting, or international aspects such as WSIS and globalisation. A total of 10% of the stories made mention of the costs of ICTs and telecommunications infrastructure. A further 9% was related to fixed phone telephony.

2.1.3.4 Quality of coverage

The quality of coverage was worrisome in most of the stories analysed. For example, a total of 45% of the stories were reported without any context. This was more common especially with stories rehashed from international news agency copy, where neither such stories’ wider implications to the local Congolese population were drawn, nor were attempts made to provide the historical background of the stories. In addition, there was no critical coverage of the ICTs, especially in those stories that concerned ICT for development. For example, in 84% of such stories, ICTs were vested with unlimited powers to develop the rural poor and to help the country to ‘leap-frog’ to European standards of development. (Africa was constructed as lagging behind in development in 41% of the stories). The romanticisation of ICTs’ potential meant that more often than not, an opportunity was missed to open debate on, for example, the need for rural people in Africa to own mobile phones, and instead, the stories ended up reading like advocacy campaigns or public relations materials. However, an encouraging aspect was 100% of the stories were classifiable as accurate, in

as far as what they reported on was truthful. In addition, Congolese media seemed to explain jargon and other technical ICT-related language, with 77% of the stories falling in this category. For example, a story on Vodacom DRC's launch of its Global Positioning Radio System in the country mentions that the service will allow for the faster transfer of data for up to 100 megabytes per second. As an explanation, it further reads: "1 megabyte is the equivalent of 100 pages [of ordinary text] or 10 web pages or 7 photographs taken with a cell phone".

2.1.3.5 Visibility/weighting

In terms of prominence, 59% of the stories during the period under study received medium prominence, while 27% of them had a low prominence. 14% of the stories were of high prominence. Prominence was measured in terms of

DRC CONTENT ANALYSIS	
No. of stories	22

Type of story	Percentage of all stories
News that is independently written	23
News that is basically just a republished press release	27
Brief	5
Cartoon/graphic	0
Editorial	0
Opinion piece	5
Feature/analysis	0
Specialist business article	0
Sport	0
Photograph	0
Interview	0
Other – speech	5
Other – news from another newspaper (national or international) or a website	14
Other – news from press agencies (national or international)	23

appearance in the media concerned, for example, in a story appeared on the first page of a newspaper, it was classified as having high prominence, while those that were buried in the back pages were classified as having low prominence/visibility.

2.1.3.6 Other issues

While a few stories considered gender and poverty as an issue that needed addressing, none addressed issues like intellectual property rights. No issues either were carried on either free-to-air or satellite broadcasting.

The results for the content analysis are presented in the tables below.

2.1.3.7 Statistics

Prominence	Percentage of all stories
High	14
Medium	59
Low	27

Angle	Total stories in category
BUSINESS EMPHASIS:	0
Ownership	0
Telecomms infrastructure	5
Costs / Tariffs	5
TECHNICAL	0
Technology – mobile	27
Technology – landline	9
Technology – satellite	0
Technology – computers	0
other ICT (web, wireless)	0
POLICY ISSUES	0
Universal service/access	14
A policy process	9
International aspects e.g. ITU, WTO, globalisation	0
Regulator	5
ICT for development – health, education, government services, small business, poverty alleviation	18
OTHER	0
Media/Broadcasting/private press	0
Privacy issues	0
Content issues – local content, language issues	0
Information security	0
Intellectual property (piracy, etc).	0
Other – please specify and explain	9

Spatial dimension	Percentage of all stories
Local	5
National	50
Regional	18
International	27

Role players:	Percentage of all stories
Government	29
Local business	24
International business	16
Regulators	8
Civil Society	11
Media	0
Disadvantaged	13

Quality of story	Totals per quality
Accurate	100
Jargon explained	77
Jargon NOT explained	60
Multi-sourced	41
Contextualised	55
Critical aspect	14

Underlying themes	Totals per characteristic
Is about ICTs, but no policy link	82
A single isolated aspect of ICT	55
Considers gender, poverty	50
Romanticised – assumption is that ICTs will solve all problems	36
Africa is lagging the rest of the world	41
ICTs are relevant to disadvantaged (rural, poor)	59

Accountability for delivery presented as:	Percentage of all stories
Government	37
Local business	26
International business	22
Regulators	7
Civil society	4
Donor agencies	4
Media	0

2.2 Ethiopia

2.2.1 Issues in ICT policy in Ethiopia

The Government of Ethiopia has formulated various development policies and strategies with implementation modalities in order to alleviate poverty. One such initiative is the recognition of the central role that ICTs can play in helping to achieve governmental development objectives, and then embarking on large nationwide ICT infrastructure development.

The major objective of this initiative is described as bringing about accelerated socio-economic development through effective application of ICTs as a tool for the facilitation of greater participation in the global market; promoting transparency and accountability in government administration; and enabling effective and efficient delivery of services to citizens. The continuously improving services from the Ethiopian Telecommunication Corporation (ETC) such as the broadband multimedia network and fibre optic cable installation projects are also indications of government's interest in improving the availability of ICT infrastructure throughout the country.

Also, the government has taken measures to encourage private investors to participate in the ICT sector. Since October 2003, the Infrastructure Development Ministry has adopted a policy which gives an opportunity for investors to take part in telecommunications service re-sale and tel-centre services. The ETC has given licenses to investors engaged in cable, wireless local loop and terminal equipment maintenance since December 2003. In addition, it has authorised six private companies to sell mobile phone SIM cards without additional payment on the rates.

The Virtual Internet Service, the Call Centre Service and additional Value Added Service One policies, which have been in operation since August 2005, are intended to strengthen the participation of the private sector in using broadband network technology efficiently to reach every part of the country. The ETC has also launched and sponsored a Graduate School of Telecommunications and

Information Technology College to facilitate ICT research education and training in order to address the shortage of ICT professionals in the country. Currently, the college has three post-graduate programmes in Telecommunications Engineering, Information Technology and Telecommunications Management.

Furthermore, the Corporation has organised various workshops to facilitate forums of discussion to identify the roles of higher institutions in drafting policy on ICT, ICT entrepreneurship and commercial activities; and the roles of international humanitarian organisations to expand ICT education.

Despite all the above, the Ethiopian ICT policy is still in draft form. Nonetheless, the Ethiopian Information Communication Technology Development Authority (EICTDA) has been established to promote the ICT industry in the country as a way of accelerating social, economic and political development. The Authority is also tasked with formulating the country's ICT policy. Since the first spark of awareness of the need for adequate ICT national policy in January 1999, ICT policy formulation and implementation has undergone many processes. In May 2006, EICTDA organised a two-week workshop aimed at stimulating debates and discussions with all stakeholders in the sector. The Authority also took the opportunity to canvass its newly-drafted ICT policy document and a five-year action plan developed in consultation with foreign experts. Currently, the EICTDA is compiling feedback from the participants of the workshop before the amended document and action plan is sent to the Council of Ministers for debate and adoption in parliament. According to Authority officials, this was to be completed within a two-month period from June 2006.

The summary above comes from information gathered from interviews with :

- Mr. Bogale Demise, current president of Ethiopian IT Professional Association;
- Mr. Abdurahim Ahmed, communication division manager with Ethiopian Telecommunication Corporation;
- And an official from EICTDA, his name withheld on request.

2.2.2 Policy influential media in Ethiopia

The top three policy-influential media in Ethiopia are Reporter (Amharic language, published twice a week), its sister English edition The Reporter (Saturdays) and Fortune (English language, business weekly). The graph below represents all the policy influential media in the country. The Daily Monitor is the only widely-read private newspaper in the country, with a readership base that includes government officials, the private sector and influential NGOs.

	<i>Reporter</i>	<i>Fortune</i>	<i>The Ethiopian Herald/ Addis Zemen</i>	<i>The Daily Monitor</i>
Ownership and control	Private	Private	Government	Private
Location of H/O	Addis Ababa	Addis Ababa	Addis Ababa	Addis Ababa
Frequency of publication	Twice a week along with English edition on Saturday	Weekly on Sunday	Daily except Monday	Daily(One weekend edition)
Language	Amharic	English	English and Amharic	English
Distribution	Addis Ababa and main regional capital cities	Addis Ababa and main regional capital cities	Nationwiide	Addis Ababa and main regional capital cities
# of Pages	32-68	44	8-16	8-12
Launched in	1995	1997	1943	1995

A few websites were also added to the policy influential media above, and these included www.ethioindex.com and www.cyberethiopia.com. These were included in the study because they have a very high number of visitors and they are operated like stand-alone online newspapers, which generate original content on a daily basis. The television and radio services were not included in the study because they have lost so much credibility after the last general election in May 2005, with many people viewing them as propaganda channels for government officials.

2.2.3 Overview of content analysis

There was a total of 38 individual stories on ICTs during the study's sample period. The sections below summarise the findings.

2.2.3.1 Origin of stories

47% of the stories that were covered by the Ethiopian policy-influential media during the sample period were independently written by the media houses themselves, while a further 26% were derived from other national and international newspapers. Editorials, opinion pieces, news briefs, stories based on interviews and specialist business articles account for 3% each of the stories. While ICT stories based on cartoons and other graphics comprised 8% of the stories, only 5% of the stories were features items. No stories were derived from international news agencies.

In terms of spatial distribution, 39% of the stories were local in outlook, with the rest, 26%, 8%, and 26% being of national, regional and international focuses, respectively.

2.2.3.2 Actors and sources

The top three major role players were government, civil society and the disadvantaged with 29%, 18% and 17% of the stories respectively portraying them as the major actors in the sampled stories. Surprisingly, international business came fourth, with 14% of the stories portraying them as major players, as compared to only 3% which referred to local business. National regulators and the media were each portrayed as major role players in 10% of the stories.

A large portion of the stories – 45% – pin-pointed government as having the sole responsibility of delivery, while 29% of them located that responsibility with international business concerns. None cited the local business sector as having any responsibility at all. While a further 11% held the media as accountable for delivery, national regulators, civil society and donor agencies were each mentioned in 5% of the stories.

2.2.3.3 Angling

In terms of angling, in most of the stories, no link was made to ICT policy, with most simply reporting on a single isolated aspect of the issue being covered. The majority of the stories (42%) were related to the issue of ICTs for development, with e-health, e-government, e-commerce and poverty alleviation receiving major attention. Discussion of telecommunications infrastructure accounted for 34% of the stories. Telephony — both mobile and fixed — also received a fair share of the stories, as did web-related and internet wireless stories.

While only 32% regarded ICTs as being relevant to the disadvantaged poor, most still portrayed ICTs as a panacea to solve of all Africa's developmental problems. No stories focused on broadcasting (radio and television) or intellectual property rights, security and privacy.

2.2.3.4 Quality of coverage

While the accuracy of the stories was quite high (92%), the overall quality of the coverage of ICT issues was not promising. In all the stories, only 13% had a critical aspect, with most vesting ICTs with unlimited development potential. However, the encouraging thing was that 62% of the stories were contextualised, and almost a similar figure of the stories were de-jargonised of technical ICT language. Nevertheless, the overall quality of coverage was compromised by the fact that about 60% of these stories were over-reliant on single sources, with most relying on government, international companies and other 'experts' as single sources of information.

2.2.3.5 Visibility/prominence

The majority of the stories – 66% in all – had a very high visibility, while 33% were classified as of being medium prominence and the remainder were of low visibility.

The collated content analysis are represented in the tables below.

2.2.3.6 Statistics

ETHIOPIA CONTENT ANALYSIS

No. of stories	38
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Type of story	Percentage of all stories
News that is independently written	47
News that is basically just a republished press release	0
Brief	3
Cartoon/graphic	8
Editorial	3
Opinion piece	3
Feature/analysis	5
Specialist business article	3
Sport	0
Photograph	0
Interview	3
Other – speech	0
Other – news from another newspaper (national or international) or a website	26
Other – news from press agencies (national or international)	0

Prominence	Percentage of all stories
High	66
Medium	32
Low	3

Angle	Total stories in category
BUSINESS EMPHASIS:	0
Ownership	0
Telecomms infrastructure	34
Costs / Tariffs	0
TECHNICAL	0
Technology – mobile	8
Technology – landline	8
Technology – satellite	0
Technology – computers	16
other ICT (web, wireless)	34
POLICY ISSUES	0
Universal service/access	29
A policy process	0
International aspects e.g. ITU, WTO, globalisation	0
Regulator	0
ICT for development – health, education, government services, small business, poverty alleviation	42
OTHER	0
Media/Broadcasting/private press	16
Privacy issues	0
Content issues – local content, language issues	0
Information security	0
Intellectual property (piracy, etc).	0
Other – please specify and explain	3

Spatial dimension	Percentage of all stories
Local	39
National	26
Regional	8
International	26

Role players:	Percentage of all stories
Government	29
Local business	3
International business	14
Regulators	10
Civil Society	18
Media	10
Disadvantaged	17

2.3 Mozambique

2.3.1 Issues in ICT policy in Mozambique.

Mozambique's ICT draft policy was approved in December 2000. The main objectives of the document, which can be seen on the government web site www.infopol.gov.mz/simposio/politica, are among others, to:

- Contribute to the fight against poverty and the improvement of the conditions of life for all Mozambicans;
- Ensure for (its citizens) access to the benefits of world-wide knowledge;
- Make Mozambique a producer and not a mere consumer of ICT services and products;
- Raise Mozambique to the level of a fitting and competitive partner in the Global Information Society.

	Noticias	Savana	Zambeze
Ownership and control	State	Private	Private
Location of H/O	Maputo	Maputo	Maputo
Frequency	Daily	Weekly	Weekly
Language	Portuguese	Portuguese	Portuguese
Distribution	6000	10000	10000
# of Pages	20	32	32
Launched in	1906	2000	2002

Other significant topics in Mozambique are:

- E-education and telecentres: Providing schools with more computers and provinces and rural areas with telecentres is one of the government priorities for the year 2006;
- E- Governance: Most of the Ministries and public institutions can now be accessed via internet. The goal of the government is now to ensure that these websites are a link between government and the general public;
- Telephony: VOIP issues, Internet infrastructure, investment, licenses, ownership, deregulation, access. The extended use of new technology on broadcasting and spread of information like optical fibre is also one of the government goals.

2.3.2 Policy-influential media in Mozambique

Print Newspapers/magazines:

Electronic: Television/Radio/Web

	Radio Mozambique	SoicoTV	Television of Mozambique
Ownership	State	Private	State own
Location of H/O	Maputo	Maputo	Maputo
Language	Portuguese, English and other 19 national languages	Portuguese	Portuguese
Launched in	1975	2003	1981

From these six policy-influential media above, only four were monitored, and these include Noticias, Savana, Soico TV and Television of Mozambique (TVM).

Jornal Noticias is a state-owned daily newspaper which was established in 1906 by the Portuguese colonial rulers. Noticias is the most widely distributed newspaper in the country with between a print run of between 6 000 and 10 000 copies a day. Because Noticias can also be read on walls at public places, it is the most preferred newspaper for most advertisers, politicians and policy makers.

Savana is the first privately-owned weekly newspaper that was launched in the year 2000. During the past six years, Savana has managed to get the attention of the public because of the stories that it carries that criticise non-performing government ministers (something that is unheard of in Noticias). It is owned by a company called MediaCorp.

Launched in 1981, TVM is the country's public broadcasting station, fully controlled by the state. It is the only TV station that reaches all the Mozambican provinces. Together with Radio Mozambique, TVM is a major source of information in areas where other private TV and radio stations cannot reach. TVM is famous for its public events programmes, which range from national celebrations/anniversaries, state ceremonies, presidential speeches and the election processes.

SOICO TV (STV) is a private television station wholly owned by a private company called Soico. Soico also owns a weekly newspaper, a magazine, a radio station and a web site. STV gained popularity at the expense of TVM in 2004 and 2006 when it won the rights to broadcast the European football

championships (Euro 2004) and the FIFA World Cup (2006) ahead of its rivals. The station's programmes are mostly entertainment, news and sport.

2.3.3 Overview of content analysis

The Mozambican government acknowledges that media plays a major role in ensuring greater access to information for all citizens, and in promoting dialogue and co-operation between public and private information agencies and telecommunication industries. In order to achieve its broad ICT policy objectives, the Mozambican government approved an ICT Policy implementation strategy plan in 2002 which considers the media - especially radio, television and print - as powerful tools to keep the public informed on fundamental matters of national and international life which includes ICT developments.

The results of the content analysis show that ICT coverage in the Mozambican public media (Noticias and TVM) tallies with the broad objectives of the Mozambican ICT policy. Most of the stories correspond with the governmental objective of making the public aware of ICT developments in the country. A total of 20 stories were generated during the study's sample period.

During the interviews (see next chapter), Mozambican journalists stated that they recognised the need to popularise ICT issues in the country. They also demonstrated a commitment to ensure that government efforts to guarantee the rapid spread of ICTs are achieved as soon as possible. The majority of stories, however, do not analyse issues from the wider public's point of view, and are not contextualised. It is a general concern that there is a lack of coverage of

stories that involve civil society and people from the rural areas. Instead, the stories are mainly a reflection of what the government is doing to promote the development of ICT without corresponding information on the public thinks about government initiatives or how these initiatives are actually impacting (or not) on people's daily lives on the ground. Thus government, local businesses and the civil society are portrayed as the major actors in all the stories, with the three accounting for 89% of the actors in the stories sampled.

The type of ICT coverage in Mozambican media can be a result of:

- The character of Mozambican private media which most of the time invests in “stories that sell” and considers ICTs

MOZAMBIQUE CONTENT ANALYSIS	
No. of stories	20
Type of story	Percentage of all stories
News that is independently written	55
News that is basically just a republished press release	0
Brief	20
Cartoon/graphic	0
Editorial	0
Opinion piece	0
Feature/analysis	10
Specialist business article	10
Sport	0
Photograph	0
Interview	0
Other - speech	0
Other – news from another newspaper (national or international) or a website	0
Other – news from press agencies (national or international)	5
Prominence	Percentage of all stories
High	35
Medium	45
Low	20

as an issue which is not yet part of Mozambican culture.

- The lack of financial, material and human resources.
- The fact that ICT technical language is difficult to understand - whether for the journalist or reporter who intends to cover the topic, or for ordinary people who read the story.
- Lack of training and understanding about ICT. During interviews, journalists had problems defining ICT policy, for example. Other journalists would start the interview and stop in the middle because the ICT issue seemed to be far away from their normal work.

The tables below represent the overall statistical findings of the Mozambique study.

2.3.4 Statistics

Angle	Total stories in category
BUSINESS EMPHASIS:	0
Ownership	5
Telecomms infrastructure	25
Costs / Tariffs	25
TECHNICAL	0
Technology - mobile	5
Technology – landline	25
Technology – satellite	0
Technology – computers	5
other ICT (web, wireless)	0
POLICY ISSUES	0
Universal service/access	0
A policy process	5
International aspects e.g. ITU, WTO, globalisation	25
Regulator	0
ICT for development – health, education, government services, small business, poverty alleviation	25
OTHER	0
Media/Broadcasting/private press	0
Privacy issues	0
Content issues – local content, language issues	0
Information security	5
Intellectual property (piracy, etc).	5
Other – please specify and explain	15

Spatial dimension	Percentage of all stories
Local	15
National	65
Regional	5
International	15

Role players:	Percentage of all stories
Government	44
Local business	19
International business	7
Regulators	0
Civil Society	26
Media	0
Disadvantaged	4

Quality of story	Totals per quality
Accurate	100
Jargon explained	40
Jargon NOT explained	30
Multi-sourced	30
Contextualised	50
Critical aspect	10

Underlying themes	Totals per characteristic
Is about ICTs, but no policy link	60
A single isolated aspect of ICT	40
Considers gender, poverty	5
Romanticised – assumption is that ICTs will solve all problems	20
Africa is lagging the rest of the world	5
ICTs are relevant to disadvantaged (rural, poor)	15

Accountability for delivery presented as:	Percentage of all stories
Government	46
Local business	19
International business	8
Regulators	0
Civil society	23
Donor agencies	4
Media	0

2.4 Nigeria

2.4.1 Issues in ICT policy in Nigeria

Some of the issues that came under intense discussions during the three weeks of monitoring included the Information Technology (IT) Bill and the Nigerian Internet Exchange Point. Other matters revolved around the regulator, taxation, cybercrime law, and the National IT Development Agency (NITDA). Other issues were a unified licensing regime, and the financing of the National IT Development Agency.

While the government is all talk about ICT popularisation and universal access, the absence of a comprehensive policy document that guides such action means that there are multiple players with overlapping interests, with the end result being a duplication of roles and a stepping of each other's toes in the country. The delay in the last few years in articulating a clear national ICT policy has led to entrenched interests and positions among the major stakeholders, whose long-term interests may not necessarily be in the national interest.

The period of this research must be located in its context of the socio-political climate in Nigeria. During the time the study was conducted, the country was in the throes of political struggle, pursuing a vigorous, and sometimes rancorous transition to a fully-fledged democracy. Nigeria's law-making bodies, the House of Assembly and the Senate were still grappling with the intricacies of the system – it was still a

	<i>Independent</i>	<i>Guardian</i>	<i>Punch</i>
Ownership	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available
Location of H/O	Lagos	Lagos	Lagos
Frequency	Daily	Daily	Daily
Language	English	English	English
Distribution	National	National	National
# of Pages	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available
Launched in	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available

learning process to enact those policies which will place Nigeria on a firm path of stable and democratic governance. The analysis undertaken in this project was against the backdrop of two major political activities: the just concluded national census and the on-coming 2007 elections which at the time were seen as either ushering in a new president or having the current president serve a third term. The declaration of the Vice President's and former military president Babangida's political ambitions added to the fray, along with various shades of analysis of the relation between these two and the incumbent. One of the newspapers describes Nigeria as being "A Nation At the crossroads" during this period (ThisDay, April 8, 2006p.64)

The topical ICT issues at the time of research were:

- Unified licensing regime,
- Quality-of-Service (QoS), consumer issues in telecom industry
- Universal access (rural telephony)
- Software, Nigeria
- .ng Domain Name Domestication
- Privatization of NITEL
- Deployment of ePayment services, Nigerian credit cards

2.4.2 The policy-influential media in Nigeria

Print Newspapers/magazines

	<i>Independent</i>	<i>Guardian</i>	<i>Punch</i>
Ownership	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available
Location of H/O	Lagos	Lagos	Lagos
Frequency	Daily	Daily	Daily
Language	English	English	English
Distribution	National	National	National
# of Pages	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available
Launched in	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available

These can be regarded as policy-influential, because they are award winners, have close contact with the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) Regulatory office, they have a huge online presence, and are frequently quoted.

2.4.3 Overview of content analysis

There was a total of 84 stories that were analysed during the sample period. The overview of the research results can be summarised under the following themes.

2.4.3.1 Action /Inaction

Most ICT related activities were firmly in the local business sector, followed by the Government, and the Regulator, while donor agencies were the least active.

2.4.3.2 Main sources and actors

The main actors in the stories were from the local business sector, the regulators and international sector. Multiple sourcing was done in the independently written articles, but not common in the others. There was only one reference out of the 84 stories to the disadvantaged, rural poor.

2.4.3.3 Type of story where ICT issues are located

The bulk of the stories were reporting of various ICT events. The first three weeks of the research were periods of intense newspaper reportage of political events and news regarding the “Third Term Agenda”. ICT coverage in this context was largely limited to news events.

For example, during the three weeks of monitoring the ICT-influential media in Nigeria, there were only two editorial comments on ICT. The first was in the Daily Champion, [04/04/2006] that analysed the ‘Levies on telecom’s facilities’. The second was Negroponte’s repeat visit to Nigeria regarding the US\$100 Laptop Project. He apparently had mentioned that one of Nigeria’s computer assembly plants would be producing the laptops at some stage. The price of the laptop, and the President’s commitment to the project all combined to raise interest in the issue as well as its importance.

During the period of study, however, the bulk of media coverage on ICTs was devoted to advertising and events promotion. In instances where the same story has been covered by all the media, it was assigned different levels of prominence. For example, the deal between NetnearU and Intel on Wimax was strategically located with bold headlines on the ‘Perspective’ page of ThisDay [06/04/2006], while the Daily Champion which reported it a day earlier gave it a less prominent coverage on its page 15 [05/04/2006]. Sometimes, a story which is given prominent coverage in one medium, such as the common tariff being planned by West African regulators in the Punch [03/04/2006], does not get any mention in the newspapers. However, on the next day, the editorial of the Daily Champion on 04th April was devoted a related problem of levies by Government on telecom’s facilities. The NEPAD e-Schools initiative, which raised the anger of local manufacturers (Punch, 10/04/2006) in Nigeria, was first mentioned in Punch [03/04/2006] and only got a high profile treatment in ThisDay three days later [06/04/2006].

2.4.3.4 Visibility/weighting

The visibility accorded most of the ICT stories fell in the High and Medium category, with very few in the Low category. This is largely because these papers have weekly pull-outs dedicated to ICT issues. This pull-outs are Infotel in the Daily Champion, Computers & IT/ Telecoms Computers in Punch, CompuLife in the Guardian and eBusiness in This-Day. Apart from these supplements, the rather few stories that deal closely or even tangentially about ICT, invariably get some prominence and visibility. On the odd occasion when an ICT story is reported on other ‘non-ICT days’, it must be a breaking-news event and it will get a high visibility.

2.4.3.5 ICT Policy

The first direct mention of the Nigerian IT policy during this survey was reported in the Daily Champion [12/04/2006]. The story mentioned that computer accessories vendors were concerned that the implementation of one of the policy regulations, to waiver import duties, may lead to flooding of the Nigerian market with obsolete and substandard components. However, the thrust of the vendors’ concern may have been misdirected. Although the Government gives the waiver, it is up to the vendors to ensure that the components they import meet the minimum standards. So this first direct mention of the policy shows a flaw in its implementation which would have been a useful angle to explore. The issue of regulation of standards within the industry has to be a combination of self regulation by vendors alongside Government’s own monitoring mechanism.

Related policy issues which got some mention were largely on the regulator, the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC). The vexing issue of multiple taxation imposed on service providers by various tiers of Government was given high profile coverage, first in Guardian [05/04/2006], followed by ThisDay [09/04/2006], then followed by a full page of interview of the President of the National Association of Communications Consumers of Nigeria (NATCOMS) in the Daily Champion [12/04/2006]. The various taxations imposed by Government are invariably passed on to the consumers. There is a periodic debate with the regula-

tor, the NCC, via a forum called the Telecom Consumers Parliament, where these issues have been raised. But the president of NATCOMS thinks legislation will be needed to resolve the dispute. Apparently, various arms of Government are cashing in on the growing IT industry and wanting to get some of the revenue as well.

2.4.3.6 Universal access

The editorial on this topic was more like a public relations release for Negroponte’s US\$100 Laptop Project. The watchdog role of the media was not at the forefront in this story, and the animated international discussion on the pros and cons of this technology were not mentioned. The Government’s advanced commitment to the project was being given full support. An independent writer, who is also a reputable legal practitioner, was also quoted supporting the project.

2.4.3.7 Other Issues

There were no stories on privacy, content and Intellectual Property Rights (IPR). This may not necessarily mean an absence of interest: it is a reflection of the amount of focus which was given to the topical issues of the day (politics). Nigeria has been working on a Cybercrime Bill although this is currently eclipsed by other political issues.

2.4.3.8 Origin of Stories

Over 70% of the stories were of national origin, while fewer than 1% were of local relevance.

2.4.3.9 Gender issues and representation

The near-absence of gender representation among ICT journalists was explained by one of the journalists interviewed as being due to the technical jargon and terminology that tend to put off the female journalists. That male journalists are not put off by such hurdles may reflect the generally low level of females in the science and technology field in Nigeria. This again may be a carry over of old social

values that encouraged females to go in for less technically-oriented professions. One news article that was independently written was from a female journalist, Oluwafunmike Oyekanmi in ThisDay, [06/04/2006]. She was the only female ICT journalist encountered during the survey.

2.4.3.10 Quality of coverage

Use of multiple sources, critical analysis and explanation of jargon were not common in the stories sampled.

2.4.3.11 The Diaspora dimension

The Nigerian IT professionals in the diaspora, http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Naija_IT_Professionals/, have a vibrant mailing list that has become a must-read for many of the technocrats who advise Government on Nigerian ICT policy issues. The group has also placed itself in a strategic role of being a critic as well as being in direct involvement at various policy formulation levels. In fact, some members of the list have participated in drafting several regulations and guidelines for the ICT industry.

The overall statistical findings are summarised in the tables below.

2.4.4 Statistics

NIGERIA CONTENT ANALYSIS	
No. of stories	84
Type of story	Percentage of all stories
News that is independently written	27
News that is basically just a republished press release	39
Brief	10
Cartoon/graphic	0
Editorial	2
Opinion piece	1
Feature/analysis	6
Specialist business article	2
Sport	0
Photograph	2
Interview	2
Other - speech	10
Other – news from another newspaper (national or international) or a website	0
Other – news from press agencies (national or international)	0

Prominence	Percentage of all stories
High	51
Medium	37
Low	13

Angle	Total stories in category
BUSINESS EMPHASIS:	0
Ownership	37
Telecomms infrastructure	14
Costs / Tariffs	0
TECHNICAL	0
Technology - mobile	4
Technology – landline	2
Technology – satellite	0
Technology – computers	7
other ICT (web, wireless)	0
POLICY ISSUES	5
Universal service/access	1
A policy process	1
International aspects e.g. ITU, WTO, globalisation	11
Regulator	5
ICT for development – health, education, government services, small business, poverty alleviation	1
OTHER	0
Media/Broadcasting/private press	0
Privacy issues	1
Content issues – local content, language issues	4
Information security	0
Intellectual property (piracy, etc).	0
Other – please specify and explain	0

Spatial dimension	Percentage of all stories
Local	7
National	74
Regional	5
International	11

Role players:	Percentage of all stories
Government	8
Local business	44
International business	16
Regulators	11
Civil Society	18
Media	0
Disadvantaged	4

Quality of story	Totals per quality
Accurate	96
Jargon explained	6
Jargon NOT explained	22
Multi-sourced	5
Contextualised	83
Critical aspect	14

Underlying themes	Totals per characteristic
Is about ICTs, but no policy link	49
A single isolated aspect of ICT	21
Considers gender, poverty	2
Romanticised – assumption is that ICTs will solve all problems	17
Africa is lagging the rest of the world	5
ICTs are relevant to disadvantaged (rural, poor)	5

Accountability for delivery presented as:	Percentage of all stories
Government	27
Local business	43
International business	6
Regulators	15
Civil society	8
Donor agencies	1
Media	0

2.5 Kenya

2.5.1 Issues in ICT policy in Kenya

The ICT issues in Kenya have concerned a proposed ICT bill; the expansion of the scope of the Kenya Communications Commission (CCK) to include multi-media regulation; and the national ICT policy formulation process. The following issues were also topical:

2.5.1.1 Broadcasting: cross media ownership in broadcasting

A series of reforms have been undertaken in the broadcast-ing sector in Kenya to ensure that the sector is competi-tive and serves the growing needs of the people of Kenya. Consequently, over 24 radio and 16 TV stations have been licensed. However, the policy also says, “In order to promote diversity of views and freedom of expression, concentration of ownership of print and electronic media in a few hands will be discouraged. Limits to cross-media ownership will be set through regulations to be issued from time to time and through competition laws”. If passed, it will be interesting to see how media giants like the Nation Media Group (NMG), the Standard Group (SG) and the Kenya Broadcasting Cor-poration (KBC) operate. These own several titles under their various stables, ranging from television, to radio and print, over several countries in the East African region.

2.5.1.2 Telephony: licensing of GSM operators to construct and operate their own international voice gateways

Despite promises in 2004 by the sector regulator, CCK, that mobile phone operators will be licensed to construct and op-erate their own international voice gateways, nothing has so far happened. Celtel Kenya for instance had invested heavily in equipment while waiting for the CCK, a quasi government body to grant them a license to directly interconnect with Celtel Tanzania and Celtel Uganda. Once licensed, Kenyans will be able to spend less while making international calls from their mobile phones either Celtel or Safaricom. At the moment, international connectivity is through Telkom Kenya

who owns 60% of Safaricom (that is Celtel’s competitor).

Sector analysts have attributed the delay to last year’s con-troversial cabinet shake up, where senior pro-liberalisation officials were replaced by others who were perceived to be averse to make radical changes in the sector.

Safaricom’s chief executive officer Michael Joseph is on record saying that licensing of GSM operators in Kenya to construct and operate their own International voice gateways will see international call rates drop by 90 percent. The high costs of international calls are attributed to high interconnection rates set by Telkom Kenya as well as the latter’s inefficiencies.

2.5.1.3 Telecommunications: licensing of the second national operator (SNO) and the third GSM provider.

Kenyans are eagerly waiting for the government to license the second national fixed line operator (SNO) and the third mobile phone operator. This follows action by then Minister for Information and Communications Hon Raphael Tuju’s controversial move to halt the tendering process for the SNO in the eleventh hour and cancellation of the third GSM license citing irregularities. In July 2004 the Minister Hon Tuju also halted the awarding of a second national operator (SNO) for fixed-line telephone service, citing irregularities in the tender process.

The government announced at the time that a new bidding process for the SNO would be announced later, but this had not happened to-date. Norwegian company Telenor was expected to clinch a license. If an SNO is licensed, Telkom Kenya will for the first time get direct competition in all aspects of telecommunication. Safaricom and Celtel Kenya will also face stiff competition if a third GSM operator is licensed.

2.5.1.4 ICT Policy: enactment of the ICT policy document by the Kenyan parliament

ICT issues are still high on the political agenda in Kenya. At the official opening of last session of parliament, President Mwai Kibaki mentioned telecommunications as one of the sectors has contributed considerably to the overall national growth. He reiterated government's commitment to the ICT sector, citing the approval of the National ICT Policy by the Cabinet early this year.

In the legislative agenda for this session of parliament, Kibaki said that the Government will present a Sessional

Paper on ICT and an ICT bill to repeal the Kenya Communications Act of 1998.

However, there is concern that all this might not be realised any time soon, with the general elections scheduled for next year due to hog the limelight and the government's time.

2.5.2 Policy influential media in Kenya

Print Newspapers/magazines

	Daily Nation	Kenya Times	The Standard	The People
Ownership	Private	Private	Private	Private
Location of H/O	Nairobi, Kenya	Nairobi, Kenya	Nairobi, Kenya	Nairobi, Kenya
Frequency	Daily	Daily	Daily	Daily
Language	English	English	English	English
Distribution	180, 000	50,000	120,000	80,000
# of Pages	60 pages	24 pages	40 pages	24 pages
Launched in	1960	1983	1902	1990

Electronic: Television/Radio/Web

	Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) TV	Kenya Television Network (KTNTV)	Capital FM Radio
Ownership	Government	Private	Private
Location of H/O	Nairobi, Kenya	Nairobi, Kenya	Nairobi, Kenya
Language	Several, including vernaculars	English/Kiswahili	English
Launched in	1970	1990	1995

	NTV (Nation TV)	KISS FM
Ownership	Private	Private
Location of H/O	Nairobi, Kenya	Nairobi, Kenya
Language	English/Kiswahili	English
Launched in	December 1999	2000

These are the leading newspapers/televisions/ radio with larger readership/viewership and audiences in the country. They command a big following and shape opinion as well.

The Government TV (KBC) covers all parts of the country unlike KTN who despite being the favourite TV station do not cover the entire country.

2.5.3 Overview of content analysis

It is evident that ICT coverage in Kenya has changed for the better from the time when ICT stories could only feature as 'fillers' in the news. That unfortunate situation was about three years ago, when the country was still fighting for the liberalisation of the telecommunication sector. Although total liberalisation is still not yet achieved, the opening up of the sector has given rise to a significant rise in the coverage of the issues affecting the ICT industry. There has also been increased investment in the private sector and this has had a multiplier effect on people's lives, including those of the media fraternity. Improved coverage, however, has also been due to the increase in the number of young journalists (writers and editors) who are sensitive to technological developments.

2.5.3.1 Emerging trends and issues

As can be seen in the content analysis tables below, most of the many ICT stories written during the research period were business-related, with those about local investment taking the lead. However, most of the stories had no link to the ICT policy processes happening around the country. The focus has been on the private investors 'pumping' money into the sector, and on their new products and services, and on their involvement in sponsorships and social responsibility projects. Many of the stories have a lot to do with issues related to GSM technology such as network upgrades, network study, opening up of new markets, launch of "Pocket office" connections (GPRS/EDGE), etc. During the period, stories on telecoms ownership, share holding and profiteering were present in the media. There were very few stories on ICT for development, or on content development or civil society. The lack of such stories may perhaps be partly attributed to lack of civil society groups sensitising the media about their role.

While the Kenyan media shows diversity in sourcing ICT stories, the local business community gets the lion's share of coverage. This comes from their elaborate way of doing things – like hiring public relations or communication managers and/or public relations firms to develop media

strategies. Sources apart from the players in the industry include the users, the civil society as well as the government. Journalists say that these parties are well-informed about happenings in the sector.

The Kenya media carry many ICT stories on a regular basis; however, there is no deliberate favouritism for such stories: "We carry several ICT related stories every week, but stories have to compete, and that is journalism," says a journalist with the Standard Newspaper, Cathy Ochung. An editor with a top radio station, Capital FM, Eric Ombok shares the same view: "I think we judge ICT stories against all other business stories on a daily basis. So I won't say that, for instance, if a story is sourced from for instance Celtel or Safaricom it will get priority. No, all business stories are treated equally." Safaricom and Celtel are the two GSM operators in Kenya, with a combined subscriber base of about five million.

The stories carried by the media during the study period enjoyed some mixed prominence/visibility. They were mostly placed between medium to highly visible positions. This is due to fact that the editors are now appreciating ICT stories filed by their reporters, which is a very positive development.

Notably, the ICT policy process received the least coverage. This is due to the fact that the majority of the media practitioners do not understand what the process entails in general. And efforts to get the media involved in the process have been very few in the past. The media, on the other hand, has also not bothered to follow the issues related to the process. To them, the subject is too technical and there is a need for the proposed ICT Bill to be simplified. Instead of being involved therefore, the media is now an outsider, only invited to cover events like the openings of workshops and seminars. The situation calls for the training of media workers in the reportage of ICTs.

A start was made in March, when KictaNet (Kenya ICT Action Network) together with CATIA hosted a three-day seminar for editors on the ICT Policy process. However, it is still felt that a similar seminar is necessary for the 'foot soldiers' - that is, the writers and reporters who cover ICT

related issues.

What emerges from the content analysis is that journalists struggle to break down ICT jargon into language that is well understood by their readers. This is a challenge especially

to journalists not well versed with technology. Language too affects the coverage. The full details of the findings are captured in the tables below

2.5.4 Statistics

KENYA CONTENT ANALYSIS	
No. of stories: 125 total, but analysis of sample of 53, and of 41	125,53,41

Type of story	Percentage of all stories
News that is independently written	18
News that is basically just a republished press release	31
Brief	8
Cartoon/graphic	1
Editorial	0
Opinion piece	3
Feature/analysis	11
Specialist business article	4
Sport	0
Photograph	5
Interview	14
Other - speech	0
Other – news from another newspaper (national or international) or a website	0
Other – news from press agencies (national or international)	0

Prominence	Percentage of all stories
High	50
Medium	68
Low	30

Angle	Total stories in category
BUSINESS EMPHASIS:	0
Ownership	22
Telecomms infrastructure	8
Costs / Tariffs	14
TECHNICAL	
Technology - mobile	16
Technology – landline	2
Technology – satellite	4
Technology – computers	3
other ICT (web, wireless)	
POLICY ISSUES	
Universal service/access	1
A policy process	1
International aspects e.g. ITU, WTO, globalisation	
Regulator	4
ICT for development – health, education, government services, small business, poverty alleviation	14
OTHER	
Media/Broadcasting/private press	
Privacy issues	1
Content issues – local content, language issues	
Information security	1
Intellectual property (piracy, etc).	1
Other – please specify and explain	8

Spatial dimension	Percentage of stories
Local	3
National	79
Regional	8
International	9

Role players	Percentage of all stories
Government	4
Local business	52
International business	17
Regulators	8
Civil Society	19
Media	0
Disadvantaged	0

Quality of story	Totals per quality
Accurate	89
Jargon explained	18
Jargon NOT explained	24
Multi-sourced	31
Contextualised	44
Critical aspect	24

Underlying themes	Totals per characteristic
Is about ICTs, but no policy link	79
A single isolated aspect of ICT	21
Considers gender, poverty	15
Romanticised – assumption is that ICTs will solve all problems	17
Africa is lagging the rest of the world	23
ICTs are relevant to disadvantaged (rural, poor)	21

Accountability for delivery presented as:	Percentage of all stories
Government	16
Local business	49
International business	19
Regulators	11
Civil society	5
Donor agencies	0
Media	0

2.6 Senegal

2.6.1 Issues in ICT policy in Senegal

Senegal has a telecommunications policy, as well as a national code for telecoms which defines the role and powers of the national telecom regulatory agency. However, the implementation of policy – particularly with regards to telecoms liberalisation of the state-dominated sector – has been slow. Other topical issues during the study period included the IT around the coming election, and digital identity cards.

The current ICT policy issues that are attracting attention in one form or another – even if not in the media are the following.

- Consumers' issues: new products, quality of service, costs, two years after the liberalisation (especially for

mobile telephony)

- Licensing, control, financing, investment and growth, as a third telephony provider has been expected over the past two years

- E-governance as the governance finalised an online administration website just before WSIS 2005

- E-commerce, especially with the launching by the national telephone company of online banking services (payment of bills).

2.6.2 Policy influential media in Senegal

The following is the policy-influential media in Senegal.

Print Newspapers/magazines

	<i>Le Soleil</i>	<i>Sud Quotidien</i>	<i>Walfadjri</i>
Ownership and control	State-owned	Private	Private
Location of H/O	Dakar	Dakar	Dakar
Frequency	Daily	Daily	Daily
Language	French	French	French
Distribution	Agence de Distribution de Presse (ADP), a French agency	Street vendors	Street vendors
# of Pages	16 to 28	12	12
Launched in	1961	1993	1993

	<i>Le Quotidien</i>	<i>Le Populaire</i>	<i>L'Observateur</i>
Ownership	Private	Private	Private
Location of H/O	Dakar	Dakar	Dakar
Frequency of publication	Daily	Daily	Daily
Language	French	French	French
Distribution	Street vendors + own distribution system + ADP	Street vendors	Own distribution system + street vendors
# of Pages	12	8	8
Launched in	2003	1999	2003

	Nouvel Horizon	Journal del'Economie
Ownership	Private	Private
Location of H/O	Dakar	Dakar
Frequency of publication	Weekly	Weekly
Language	French	French
Distribution	Own distribution system	Agence de Distribution de Presse (ADP), a French agency
# of Pages	52	12 or 16
Launched in	1997	1994

Le Soleil is the one state-owned daily that has actual national coverage, access to official information sources and is seen — except for the editorials - as a good source of information by the public. They have well trained journalists and the capacity to cover issues of public interest that private media cannot afford to cover.

Sud Quotidien is the flagship of the oldest independent media group. It is seen by the larger public as a trustworthy source and a media with high capacity of analysis on political issues. It is seen by the politicians as highly influential. Editorials by Sud Quotidien have often had immediate influence on bills or policies.

Walfadjiri is also seen as the flagship of an independent media group. It is seen by the larger public as a professional and courageous source of information. It is seen by the politicians as influential.

Le Quotidien is a recent daily that has straight away chosen the niche of investigative journalism and has privileged access to information on the judiciary. Seen as the medium that puts the decision-makers under permanent scrutiny.

Le Populaire is a popular low cost daily with privileged sources of information on the decision-makers' activities that they break as short stories, leaving analyses and follow-up to other media.

L'Observateur is a daily with privileged sources of information on the decision-makers' activities that they break as short stories, leaving analyses and follow-up to other media.

Nouvel Horizon is the best print medium in terms of design

and print quality. It is a full colour magazine. Its readership is the elite. Decision-makers make it a point to appear in it regularly with the best possible profile both in terms of information and photography. It is one of the very few media specialising on economic issues. It is recognised by entrepreneurs and managers as a good source of information and serious weekly.

Xalima is owned by US based immigrants and has a large audience among the Diaspora which is influential on government's positions.

2.6.3 Overview of research results

A total of 125 stories was generated during the study's sample period. However, analysis was based on 53 stories. The following are the themes that emerged.

2.6.3.1 Origin of stories

The findings were that 49% of the stories in the sample period were independently written by the newspapers surveyed in this study themselves, while press releases accounted for 26% of the stories. In addition to the press releases, a combined total of 18% of the stories were based on news briefs, speeches made by government officials and heads of private sector companies, and interviews. There were no news items derived from other newspapers (both national and international) and also none from international news agencies. While there were no editorials, 4% of the items and 2% of the items were opinion pieces and features articles, respectively.

In terms of spatial distribution, 67% of the stories were

national, while 18% and 7% were local and regional respectively. International news accounted for 9%.

2.6.3.2 Actors and sources

While the majority of the stories portrayed government as a major actor (31%), other players, especially civil society (20%), national regulators (11%) and the media (2%) were also portrayed as actors in the stories sampled. Business – both local and international – appeared as major role players in 18% of the stories. No stories mentioned the poor and disadvantaged as having a role to play.

In terms of accountability for delivery, government was on top of the pile, being cited in 28% of the stories, while local and international business were each cited in 15%. Regulators and civil society were mentioned in 12% and 16% of the stories respectively, with a number of stories (15%) mentioning donor agencies as having accountability.

2.6.3.3 Angling

A high number of the stories was focused on issues of local content and language issues (18%), information security (18%) and intellectual property and piracy (25%). The stories of intellectual property in particular focused on the negative effects (on the economy) of piracy and illegal trade in copyrighted material. ICTs for development was also a popular angle at 14%, and the most popular single angle concerned issues of universal access. However, no policy process or links to policy were made in any of the stories. The cost of ICTs and infrastructural development were rarely mentioned in the stories (2% and 5%, respectively).

2.6.3.4 Quality of coverage

The quality of the coverage was very low, with the majority of the stories (60%) being carried without any contextualisation or relevant historical background information. This was also exacerbated by the fact that 23% of the stories romanticised the capabilities of ICTs, without questioning their downsides or negative effects such as surveillance, spamming, invasion of privacy and child pornography, etc. ICTs were often assumed to be the answer to all the problems facing the people of Senegal from democratic elections to transparency in governance. Technical jargon/language was also an issue in the stories, with some journalists reproducing the technical language of IT experts in their stories and failing to interpret or simplify them for the readers.

2.6.3.5 Visibility/weighting

The stories had a fair prominence in all the newspapers during the sample, with more than 60% in the medium visibility category.

2.6.3.6 Other issues

As pointed out above, a few stories made links to policy, and many were guilty of considering only a single aspect of a wider area of ICTs. This means that reportage was largely narrow; for example, focusing on the co-awarding of the Senegalese President Wade and internet inventor Tim Berners-Lee with the World Communication Prize in Geneva, being covered as nothing more than just an event. Gender, poverty and the rural poor were rarely considered in the stories monitored.

The full results for the content analysis are presented in the tables below.

2.6.4 Statistics

SENEGAL CONTENT ANALYSIS	
No. of stories: 125 total, but analysis of sample of 53, and of 41	57
Type of story	Percentage of all stories
News that is independently written	49
News that is basically just a republished press release	26
Brief	9
Cartoon/graphic	0
Editorial	0
Opinion piece	4
Feature/analysis	2
Specialist business article	0
Sport	0
Photograph	2
Interview	7
Other - speech	2
Other – news from another newspaper (national or international) or a website	0
Other – news from press agencies (national or international)	0
Prominence	Percentage of all stories
High	50
Medium	68
Low	30

Angle	Total stories in category
BUSINESS EMPHASIS:	0
Ownership	5
Telecomms infrastructure	5
Costs / Tariffs	2
TECHNICAL	0
Technology - mobile	4
Technology – landline	0
Technology – satellite	0
Technology – computers	0
other ICT (web, wireless)	0
POLICY ISSUES	0
Universal service/access	23
A policy process	0
International aspects e.g. ITU, WTO, globalisation	0
Regulator	0
ICT for development – health, education, government services, small business, poverty alleviation	14
OTHER	0
Media/Broadcasting/private press	0
Privacy issues	0
Content issues – local content, language issues	18
Information security	18
Intellectual property (piracy, etc).	21
Other – please specify and explain	0

Spatial dimension	Percentage of all stories
Local	18
National	67
Regional	7
International	9

Role players:	Percentage of all stories
Government	31
Local business	18
International business	18
Regulators	11
Civil Society	20
Media	2
Disadvantaged	0

Quality of story	Totals per quality
Accurate	54
Jargon explained	22
Jargon NOT explained	72
Multi-sourced	18
Contextualised	60
Critical aspect	23

Underlying themes	Totals per characteristic
Is about ICTs, but no policy link	40
A single isolated aspect of ICT	47
Considers gender, poverty	40
Romanticised – assumption is that ICTs will solve all problems	7
Africa is lagging the rest of the world	21
ICTs are relevant to disadvantaged (rural, poor)	21

Accountability for delivery presented as:	Percentage of all stories
Government	28
Local business	15
International business	15
Regulators	12
Civil society	16
Donor agencies	15
Media	0

2.7 All countries: absolute figures

The tables below present a comparative analysis of all the data obtained from the participating countries.

CONTENT ANALYSIS	DRC	Ethiopia	Mozamb	Nigeria	Kenya	Senegal
No. of stories:	22	38	20	84	125	57

Type of story						
News that is independently written	5	18	11	23	22	28
News that is basically just a republished press release	6		0	33	39	15
Brief	1	1	4	8	10	5
Cartoon/graphic		3	0	0	1	0
Editorial		1	0	2	0	0
Opinion piece	1	1	0	1	4	2
Feature/analysis		2	2	5	14	1
Specialist business article		1	2	2	5	0
Sport			0	0	0	0
Photograph			0	2	6	1
Interview		1	0	2	18	4
Other – speech	1			8	0	1
Other – news from another newspaper (national or international) or a website	3	10	0	0	0	0
Other – news from press agencies (national or international)	5	0	1	0	0	0

Prominence						
High	3	25	7	43	20	18
Medium	13	12	9	31	27	20
Low	6	1	4	11	12	19

	DRC	Ethiopia	Mozambique	Nigeria	Kenya	Senegal
Angle						
BUSINESS EMPHASIS:						
Ownership			1	31	21	3
Telecomms infrastructure	1	13	5	12	8	3
Costs / Tariffs	1		5	0	13	1
TECHNICAL			0	0		0
Technology – mobile	6	3	1	3	15	2
Technology – landline	2	3	5	2	2	0
Technology – satellite		0	0	0	4	0
Technology – computers		6	1	6	3	0
other ICT (web, wireless)		13	0	0		0
POLICY ISSUES						
Universal service/access	3	11		4	1	13
A policy process	2		1	1	1	0
International aspects e.g. ITU, WTO, globalisation			5	1	0	0
Regulator	1			9	4	0
ICT for development – health, education, government services, small business, poverty alleviation	4	16	5	5	13	8
OTHER						
Media/Broadcasting/private press		6		0		
Privacy issues				1	1	
Content issues – local content, language issues				3	0	10
Information security			1	0	1	10
Intellectual property (piracy, etc).			1	0	1	12
Other – please specify and explain	2	1	3	0	8	

Spatial dimension						
Local	1	15	3	6	4	10
National	11	10	13	62	95	38
Regional	4	3	1	4	10	4
International	6	10	3	9	11	5

Role players:						
Government	11	21	12	7	2	32
Local business	9	2	5	37	27	19
International business	6	10	2	14	9	19
Regulators	3	7	0	9	4	11
Civil Society	4	13	7	15	10	21
Media		7	0	0		2
Disadvantaged	5	12	1	3		0

	DRC	Ethiopia	Mozambique	Nigeria	Kenya	Senegal
Quality of story						
Accurate	22	35	20	81	40	31
Jargon explained	17	4	8	5	8	11
Jargon NOT explained	3	7	6	18	11	36
Multi-sourced	9	15	6	4	14	10
Contextualised	12	24	10	70	20	34
Critical aspect	3	5	2	12	11	13

Underlying themes						
Is about ICTs, but no policy link	18	27	12	41	38	23
A single isolated aspect of ICT	12	22	8	18	10	27
Considers gender, poverty	11	9	1	2	7	23
Romanticised – assumption is that ICTs will solve all problems	8	11	4	14	8	4
Africa is lagging the rest of the world	9	1	1	4	11	12
ICTs are relevant to disadvantaged (rural, poor)	13	12	3	4	10	12

Accountability for delivery presented as:						
Government	10	17	12	25	6	33
Local business	7	0	5	40	18	17
International business	6	11	2	6	7	17
Regulators	2	2	0	14	4	14
Civil society	1	2	6	7	2	18
Donor agencies	1	2	1	1		17
Media		4				

2.8. All countries: percentages.

CONTENT ANALYSIS CALCULATED AS PERCENTAGES						
No. of stories:	DRC	Ethiopia	Mozamb	Nigeria	Kenya	Senegal
	22	38	20	84	125,53,41	57
			OUT OF 100%			
Type of story						
News that is independently written	23	47	55	27	18	49
News that is basically just a republished press release	27	0	0	39	31	26
Brief	5	3	20	10	8	9
Cartoon/graphic	0	8	0	0	1	0
Editorial	0	3	0	2	0	0
Opinion piece	5	3	0	1	3	4
Feature/analysis	0	5	10	6	11	2
Specialist business article	0	3	10	2	4	0
Sport	0	0	0	0	0	0
Photograph	0	0	0	2	5	2
Interview	0	3	0	2	14	7
Other - speech	5	0	0	10	0	2
Other – news from another newspaper (national or international) or a website	14	26	0	0	0	0
Other – news from press agencies (national or international)	23	0	5	0	0	0
			OUT OF 100%			
Prominence						
High	14	66	35	51	50	32
Medium	59	32	45	37	68	35
Low	27	3	20	13	30	33

	DRC	Ethiopia	Mozambique	Nigeria	Kenya	Senegal
			MORE THAN ONE ANGLE POSSIBLE			
Angle						
BUSINESS EMPHASIS:	0	0	0	0		
Ownership	0	0	5	37	22	5
Telecomms infrastructure	5	34	25	14	8	5
Costs / Tariffs	5	0	25	0	14	2
TECHNICAL	0	0	0	0		0
Technology - mobile	27	8	5	4	16	4
Technology – landline	9	8	25	2	2	0
Technology – satellite	0	0	0	0	4	0
Technology – computers	0	16	5	7	3	0
other ICT (web, wireless)	0	34	0	0		0
POLICY ISSUES						
Universal service/access	14	29	0	5	1	23
A policy process	9	0	5	1	1	0
International aspects e.g. ITU, WTO, globalisation	0	0	25	1		0
Regulator	5	0	0	11	4	0
ICT for development – health, education, government services, small business, poverty alleviation	18	42	25	6	14	14
OTHER						
Media/Broadcasting/private press	0	16	0	0		0
Privacy issues	0	0	0	1	1	0
Content issues – local content, language issues	0	0	0	4		18
Information security	0	0	5	0	1	18
Intellectual property (piracy, etc).	0	0	5	0	1	21
Other – please specify and explain	9	3	15	0	8	0

Spatial dimension			OUT OF 100%			
Local	5	39	15	7	3	18
National	50	26	65	74	79	67
Regional	18	8	5	5	8	7
International	27	26	15	11	9	9

Role players:						
			OUT OF 100%			
Government						
Local business	29	29	44	8	4	31
International business	24	3	19	44	52	18
Regulators	16	14	7	16	17	18
Civil Society	8	10	0	11	8	11
Media	11	18	26	18	19	20
Disadvantaged	0	10	0	0	0	2

	DRC	Ethiopia	Mozambique	Nigeria	Kenya	Senegal
Quality of story			% OF STORIES WITH QUALITY			
Accurate	100	92	100	96	89	54
Jargon explained	77	57	40	6	18	22
Jargon NOT explained	60	18	30	22	24	72
Multi-sourced	41	39	30	5	31	18
Contextualised	55	63	50	83	44	60
Critical aspect	14	13	10	14	24	23

			% OF STORIES WITH THEME			
Underlying themes						
Is about ICTs, but no policy link	82	71	60	49	79	40
A single isolated aspect of ICT	55	58	40	21	21	47
Considers gender, poverty	50	24	5	2	15	40
Romanticised – assumption is that ICTs will solve all problems	36	29	20	17	17	7
Africa is lagging the rest of the world	41	3	5	5	23	21
ICTs are relevant to disadvantaged (rural, poor)	59	32	15	5	21	21

Accountability for delivery presented as:			OUT OF 100%			
Government	37	45	46	27	16	28
Local business	26	0	19	43	49	15
International business	22	29	8	6	19	15
Regulators	7	5	0	15	11	12
Civil society	4	5	23	8	5	16
Donor agencies	4	5	4	1	0	15
Media	0	11	0	0		0

CHAPTER THREE:

COUNTRIES AND CORRESPONDENTS

3.0 Introduction

ICT correspondents in all six countries were surveyed for this study. This chapter presents the qualitative insight gained from interviews with them. The data updates the survey carried two years ago, although only a small number of the original journalists were interviewed a second time. As in the Ethiopian case, this may be a factor of churn in the profession – a worrying development which suggests wastage of investment in capacity-building and experience. On the other hand, many of the interviewees recorded below are not only very enthusiastic about their

work, but profess to be relatively comfortable in the beat. On the whole, their responses paint a generally positive picture notwithstanding gaps and problems. The countries are presented in the following order DRC, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Nigeria, Kenya and Senegal.

3.1 Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) interviews

“... whenever I am in front of decision-makers, I am taken seriously...”

Name of newspaper/s or other medium	Name of journalist:	Gender	Educational background, including training in covering ICTs	Main beat:
Agence Galaxie Media (TV programmes producer) - programme Pft.Com	Jerôme Sekana (JS)	Male	Graduate in Journalism	Development and reconstruction
<i>L’Observateur</i> (Daily)	Mankenda Voka (MV) (Owner and journalist)	Male	Graduate in Social sciences but nothing in ICT coverage	Politics
<i>L’Observateur</i> (Daily)	Jean-Pierre Seke (J-PS) (Journalist and author of the monitored story)	Male	Graduate in Social sciences but nothing in ICT coverage	Social and culture
<i>La République</i> (Tri-Weekly)	François Yambu (FY)	Male	Graduate in Journalism	Politics, Social, Sciences and culture
<i>Le Potentiel</i> (Daily)	Martin Enyimo	Male	Undergraduate in Journalism	Sports and culture
RTNC (National Radio)	Claude Ntanta (CN)	Male	Graduate in Mathematics and Computer Sciences	ICT
Radio Okapi	Jean-Marc Matwaki (J-MM)	Male	Graduate in Journalism	Culture and Arts

1. What role do the media play in policy development? Give some examples of where you have played a role in the past. Can you cite some stories you have written?

JS: Media play an important role. Beyond the role of information, education, entertainment and watchdog, the media play the role of orientation. Without mass media, it is difficult to reach a lot of people at the same time. They [the media] should then be one of the public spheres where debate can take place before any decision. This will allow every voice to be heard. Of course, it is not easy, but at least, I think we should try. This of course raises the problem of professionalism. Media practitioners need to know what to do at any time bearing in mind that they have to serve the public interest, the society, and the citizens. They do not have the right to destroy what they are expected to build. Speaking about HIV/AIDS, someone said

“media can save human life better than physicians”. He was actually thinking of information given that this could prevent the disease. As journalists, we have raised a lot of issues in connection with good governance. The feedback we received shows that what we say is worthwhile. We hope it will help the decision-makers in the future, considering the state of the country in these years of the transitional period.

MV: I do not believe in the development in a country without the help of media, because the media have the role of ensuring the flow of information and they have to analyse things so as to initiate debate on hot [topical] issues. They help decision-makers to orientate their decisions in the general interest of the people. For that, one of the roles the media play is to denounce bad practices. For example, one of the roles we have played dealt with the number of police barriers on the roads in the DR Congo. Trucks from the

rural areas to Kinshasa with foods are subject to extortion. After denouncing the phenomenon, decisions were taken to stop it although not completely.

J-PS: The media should play the role of a guide in policy development because the policy should help produce a better life of everybody. Decisions need to have the people’s voices. It is then the duty of the media to get these voices and convey them to the decision-makers.

FY: Media reflect to politicians the most important social realities so that they can decide about burning public issues. A humouristic note on the invasion of a public place in Kinshasa led to the withdrawal of the authorisation to occupy the space, although the authorisation had originally come from the mayor of the capital. Reportage on problems along the Lumumba Boulevard brought the evacuation, one year later, of market gardeners there, and trees were planted instead.

ME: Traditionally recognised as the fourth power, media play the role of catalyst, and of mediation between social stakeholders. They serve as a channel for information and communication in policy development. They can inform and orientate public opinion. I can remember publishing, two years ago, a story on the bad governance of the Congolese football association (Fecofa). I received various kinds of threats for that but the Fecofa leaders had to give the public some explanations on the management of the funds. Le Potentiel publishes a lot of stories denouncing bad governance - such as disappearance or theft of money at the Central bank, fraud at the borders, tax evasion... etc.

CN: The media play the role of information, education, orientation and sensitisation. We have produced magazines on the theme “computer and education” at the same time that some primary and secondary schools have introduced computers into their teaching programme. We have also produced magazines on the theme “computers and women” so as to try to promote women in ICTs.

J-MM: Media play a critical role in policy development. They played that role before, during and after policy development. Media are vehicles of information that bring progress and the emancipation of the people. Radio Okapi is working for the unification of the country and its population through its different programmes broadcast in several languages. The Radio Okapi news bulletins look at the principal events that occur all over the country. Radio Okapi covered the Inter-Congolese Dialogue that took place in Pretoria, South Africa. Now it is covering the transitional period and the electoral process.

2. Do you view your medium as policy-influential in 2006?

Why/why not? How has it changed over the past three years? Give examples.

JS: Yes, and you might be surprised, PTT.com is the second magazine we are producing; it is seven years old; the first one “taxation and development” is eight years old. In total we have seven of them. PTT.com has interviewed a lot of telecommunication company executives (DRC has 18 telecommunication companies). This was before the adoption of a telecommunications law in the Parliament. We were actually debating seriously. But despite that, the magazine has no sponsor. Do you know why? Simply because, when it is required, we say the truth. This does not please these companies. Because, thanks to our action, decisions are being taken in a way that means they are now sort of losing their “illicit” advantages. There is now a telecommunication regulation authority; there is now an arsenal of regulation that can help control the area; parliament is talking about revising the contracts with companies, etc. So they cannot be happy. We are struggling to produce our magazine anyway, hoping that one day, any international organisation will appreciate what we are doing and will fund us.

MV: Yes, our [particular] paper is influential because it is read by decision-makers; most of them are among our subscribers. At a recent presidential press conference, I was among the interviewers representing the entire private newspapers sector. For many years, we were publishing only eight pages. Now we have 12 pages. By the end of this year we will have 16 pages with the aim to reach 20 pages within two years from now on. The number of our subscribers is increasing. Finally, we are among the rare media who have correspondents all over the country except in Goma.

J-PS: Of course, yes, we are influential. If it was not the case, I would have gone out of business a long time ago. I see it like this because whenever I am in front of decision-makers, I am taken seriously for the simple fact that I belong to this newspaper.

FY: Yes. I say so after I consider the number of responses we receive from readers regarding one or another subject tackled in the newspaper. From a black and white weekly, we have changed to being a colour weekly before becoming a colour tri-weekly.

ME: Our newspaper is very influential because it is read by decision-makers and their advisors. It is shaping the people’s opinion. We know it through the responses we receive every day from our readers. From eight pages at the beginning, we now have 24 pages every day. This means that we have enlarged the range of beats. The other big change is the fact that now, in the newsroom, every journalist is able to use the computer to write his story or

to use Internet.

CN: Policy-influential, I would not say so. But I can say that the programme is really followed by a lot of interested people. I know it thanks to the feedback I receive from the listeners.

J-MM: Of course Radio Okapi is a policy-influential media as it belongs to Monuc (the UN observation mission in Congo). Its work reduces the divide between eastern and western Congolese. A positive change for us is as regards the value, the quality and the quantity of the work. The programming is being regularly modified to take into account the needs of the listeners. The radio is then getting closer to the listeners.

3. How do you see your role as journalist? Are there examples where these roles have been relevant in covering ICT issues, including ICT policy?

JS: The main role of a journalist is the one of a watchdog helping good governance. He is also a mediator between the people in government and the population, helping each side to know what is happening in both sides. He should also be a good analyst to help both sides do what they have to do for the sake of the society. Examples are to be found in all that we do. We mostly focus on ICT policy. We denounced, for example, the fact that in the DRC, a licence for telecommunication companies was sold at \$20 million, while elsewhere it is in terms of billions of US dollars. The same companies working in different countries in Africa (Vodacom, Celtel, etc.) pay more, in terms of tax, in those other countries, while in DRC they are paying almost nothing. Of course this is done in complicity with some government officials. Much of what we are advocating now might be applied in the near future.

MV: I am wondering what I could have been if I was not a journalist. It opens all the doors - especially with decision-makers whom I meet whenever I want. I am even asked to meet them from their initiative. I meet everybody from the big boss to the simple people. For that I consider myself as playing the role of a medium: the mouth of people to the authorities and the conveyor of the authorities' messages to the people. It is a very big responsibility. To handle it, I do my best to be as objective as I can. And I must admit that it is not easy every time. My journalists and I are trying to do our best. Regarding ICT coverage, I must admit that we do not pay much attention to that for the moment.

J-PS: As a journalist I see my role as someone who must work for the people's interests. I play the role of watchdog and also of informational medium for both the people and the leaders. We do what we can to play those roles. About ICT coverage, I, as a journalist, do what I can whenever

there is something to do regarding the reporting aspect. To be able to tackle ICT policy issues, I need to learn more about this. It is not the case now. But I personally consider that in our country now, there are a lot of very important reasons why we need to be interested in this area.

FY: In my opinion, the role of a journalist is to inform people (that is ordinary people as well as decision-makers), to help them know what is relevant. Media should popularise things and new ideas. Unfortunately, up to now the coverage of ICT issues including ICT policy is not yet handled the way it should be.

ME: Information makes people feel more secure. The journalist is the person who distils and orientates information; he confers historical significance on facts and phenomena by publishing them. At the same time, he plays the role of watchdog. Regarding ICT, media must intensify its promotion in DR Congo. The popularisation of ICT is not effective in the Congolese media yet. This subject is still for a very small number of people, and media need to commit themselves to changing this.

CN: It is a very important role as he or she is in contact with a large number of people almost at the same time or about the same subject. The role of the journalist is to help people get the right information; sensitise people on what is relevant for the society; facilitate exchange of information on burning issues by giving voice to everybody.

J-MM: It is a noble and essential and interesting role. But it is also a delicate one. Media are vehicles of information that promote people's progress and emancipation. The problem is not the role of a journalist but the ICT coverage itself. The political situation in the country is so that I cannot cover this field the way I would have loved to. I think and I know the media must popularise ICTs so that a lot of people can know and understand and use them efficiently. I also know that the state must facilitate access to ICTs through a very good ICT-policy. I try to do what I can, while I know that it is not yet what I should do.

4. What do you understand by ICTs? What do you understand by 'ICT-policy'? What is its relevance to your readers?

JS: ICTs are the key to development. If you look at all those developed countries, there is a link between the speed of development and the mastery of ICT. The point is that in DRC, many people are computer-illiterate. It is a serious problem. ICTs are all these means we (can) use to communicate: Internet, cell phone, telephone, fax, VSAT, etc. But ICT policy in DRC is limited to speeches, long speeches without any impact, without any commencement of implementation. We do not have any ICT policy in this

country. I think the transitional period is the main reason why all this is happening. But what we are doing now is not useless. The day everybody starts thinking about ICT policy, many things will be done in a very short time, and I can assure you, well done. The relevance is that people will know then how to use ICTs in their daily life. Those who have any bright idea regarding ICT policy can express themselves through our TV programme PTT.Com.

MV: ICTs are all these means we are now using to communicate with easily and quickly - cell phones, Internet, fax, telephone, etc. ICT policy is everything that can help having these means spread in the country for the interest of the people. For that, what I can say is that ICT (for example cell phones) involves a lot of money. As telephony is a social need, the operators are likely to make a lot of profit. That is why ICT policy can help assure that every interest is protected. I think the relevance to our readers is great because they are among ICT users. So these kinds of stories will be welcome by our readers.

J-PS: ICT is among the frequently used words these days. But what I understand by it, is all these new technologies we are using to communicate or to get in touch with information. So it is the cellphones, Internet, faxes, Policy is everything that is done to assure a better life to people of a country. Therefore, ICT policy is what can be done to assure the betterment of this area. It is relevant to our readers as it is likely to help them benefit from those ICTs in their daily life. Something is already being done in our country in this area but I personally do not pay much attention to it because of a lack of enough knowledge in that field.

FY: ICTs are all modern tools for data processing and instant transmission of information. ICT-policy is all planning that aims at the development and promotion of the use of ICT within the society. The relevance is to focus on the need everybody feels to use these ICTs.

ME: The notion that lies under these three key words, that is Information and Communication Technologies, refers to computing, multimedia, virtual reality, telecommunication, internet, etc. ICT policy is the arsenal of measures and plans of action to develop ICTs in the country. Its relevance to the readers is that as far as they are concerned in their own life with ICTs, they need to get accustomed to the use of them. But their responses to the stories published are low. This is surely because the attention is focused on the political situation, although there is also an issue of the quality of the stories published.

CN: ICT is information processing technologies based mainly on electronic means. ICT policy is the set of practical dispositions that can allow a successful integration of ICT

in the economically-active population, including specifically students and other strata of the population. The relevance is in the benefit they are likely to get by proper use of these ICTs.

J-MM: ICTs are the result of scientific progress in the field of information and communication. They are these new means that shorten the distances between people and help them communicate easily, quickly and without problems. ICT-policy is the planning of actions and programmes to promote and popularise ICT. The relevance is in the fact that people need to know what they are all about.

5. What is your main beat? How does this speak to your coverage of ICT and ICT policy in particular? What kinds of ICT stories do you give more attention to? Why?

JS: I do not have a specific beat. Or if I must have one, I would say "Development and reconstruction". That is why I created this agency named "Agence Galaxie Media". The agency is producing seven electronic magazines: 1) Taxation and development, 2) PTT.Com, 3) Development Territorial, 4) DRC Building site, 5) Energy and reconstruction, 6) Good governance, 7) DRC mining. If you look at all this you will understand that I am concerned by the development and the reconstruction of DRC. That is why I am speaking about ICT, mainly telecommunication but also computer matters. The thing is, I want to see my country become, and behave, like elsewhere.

VM: My main beat is politics and economy. Unfortunately so far it does not deal much with ICT coverage because there are a lot of issues in politics and economy in our country at the moment.

J-PS: My main beat is culture. Actually it should deal much in ICT coverage, but my lack of knowledge in the field is the main reason for my not covering ICT issues. When there is an event related to ICT, I just report on it like any other event.

FY: Communication and culture marketing industries. It does not speak much to my coverage of ICT and ICT policy in particular. The stories on technological innovations taken from Internet are the kinds of stories I give more attention to. The reason is that they help people know what is possible in the field - even not yet in the country. By so doing, the day that particular technology will arrive in the country, people will not be much surprised because they were already informed.

ME: My main beat is sport, culture and media. For that, I am constantly using Internet to look for information to share with my readers. I also give attention to stories dealing with Internet as a subject, and those in connection

with telecommunication (mobile phones, satellite, etc.).

CN: My beat is ICTs. It is a dedicated radio programme for ICTs, with stories that popularise ICTs, because one of my objectives is to get a lot of people to be interested in their use.

J-MM: My main beat is culture and arts. ICTs and ICT policy have their place inside this beat among many other aspects. The kinds of stories I give attention to are those in connection with daily life of Africans. This is because of the gap that exists between Africans and people from other continents.

6. Have you done any particular coverage that helps to promote national ICT policy and implementation?

JS: A lot of them, but the problem is regarding the implementation. Actually all of what we do is aimed at the promotion of national policy (ICT, Finances, Mining, Energy, etc.)

VM and J-PS: No

FY: No, not yet.

ME: Yes.

CN: I am convinced that what I am doing now will one day help to promote ICT policy and implementation. For example I raise problems such as the one dealing with high taxes to pay to import computers. It is a barrier to the promotion of ICTs.

J-MM: Actually no. I do conduct some interviews that address national ICT issues, but I must admit that my background in this field needs to be completed.

7. How does your editor regard coverage of ICTs? Is there support, or are stories frequently thrown out for not being newsworthy?

JS: I am myself the editor and the producer. There is then no problem that side.

J-PS: My editor never throws out ICT stories for not being newsworthy. Quite the contrary, I receive support from him and even encouragement.

VM: We place an ICT story in our paper whenever it is well written. And this is because we want to cover a large number of areas of life.

FY: I receive a support from him. An ICT story is placed in the newspaper when it is well written and newsworthy and

interesting.

ME: At Le Potentiel, stories on ICTs are encouraged. But most of them come from the Internet.

CN: It is because they appreciate the programme that they schedule it.

J-MM: The small volume of stories I do is encouraged by the editor.

8. Whom did you choose as sources for ICT stories? Why? Do you rely mainly on press releases? Is most of the material cut and pasted from other sources, etc? Where do you get most of your information? Give some examples in relation to particular stories.

JS: The starting point is of course the press releases. But we always go beyond. We use Internet mostly to document our opinion or findings in comparing what is done elsewhere. Our main sources are officers, executive directors of private companies and NGOs involved in ICT sector, experts and, last but not least, the population.

J-PS: As I usually report on events, my sources are the participants or the organisers. Sometimes, I rely mainly on press releases and also on other documentation.

FY: Internet and the press release are the only sources for ICT stories.

ME: The great number of ICT stories we publish come from Internet and other media. But we also rely on press releases.

CN: I do rely on press releases, but I also look for inspiration from other sources (media) like newspapers from abroad, Internet, Radios and TV. Some of my programmes are initiated by myself after observation of the society. For example, considering the fact that many people do not know much about computers, I initiated a series of programmes about what can be done with computers. The aim was to bring my listeners to understand what the computer is and why it is important to learn how to use it.

J-MM: I rely on a lot of sources amongst press releases and the Internet, but also some experts.

9. Does language affect ICT coverage?

JS: Yes, particularly English and some technical words. But we are doing our best to be able to understand a lot of them and master English. For the language we hired an English teacher who is now abroad so we decided to register at an English centre to learn English.

J-P-S: Of course yes. It is a technical field and there are a lot of technical words that I usually do not understand. ICTs nowadays are dealing with telecommunications and computer. It is not given to everybody to understand it at first hand. I need a lot of training. And those who can act as sources are often unable to explain things in simple words.

FY: Not much.

ME: Yes. Sometimes, I don't understand what I find on Internet as the vocabulary is new and difficult at first. I can say that I learn the meanings sometimes just before the readers do.

CN: Not really. It is my training field.

J-MM: Somehow, yes. Each field has got its jargon that needs to be mastered so as to be at ease in that field.

10. Do you feel comfortable reporting on ICTs and ICT policy? Do you have enough background? Where did you get your background? How do you feel about covering the very technical parts of ICTs? How about the economics and politics and international dimensions?

JS: Well, it is said "where there is the will, there is the way". I feel comfortable reporting on ICTs and mostly on ICT policy because I am convinced that the development of DRC depends partly on it. I did not have enough background when I started, that is seven years ago, but now I am getting some experience. For the very technical parts of ICTs coverage, I call for assistance. This really helps me learn more. The situation is the same for the economics and policy and international dimensions.

J-PS: To be frank, I do not feel comfortable when reporting on ICTs and ICT policy because of lack of background.

FY: No particular difficulty to point out, even if I am a self-taught man in the use of ICT. I am at my ease because of the interest I have in the issue and the curiosity that characterises my relationship with this field.

ME: ICTs are a huge domain, so I am never at my ease when covering ICT. It is a very dynamic field. I do not have enough background. There is a big gap between my knowledge and the reality in the domain, although I do my best to update my knowledge. To be frank, I do not master the economics and policy and international dimensions. I can reproduce a story dealing with these dimensions taken from Internet, but I cannot say that I can contextualise them. I need some training.

CN: Very comfortable because I have enough background.

At the university, I studied computer science. So I am at ease when covering this area.

J-MM: I face a lot of difficulty when covering ICT issues. The field is huge and understanding it requires background that I do not have. Another problem is that the progress is very fast so it is difficult to follow when those innovations are not yet applied in the country. It is the same regarding economics, policy and international dimensions. Some training is needed.

11. Are there differences in coverage of ICTs and ICT policy now, compared to three years ago? If so, what and why?

JS: In my case, there is no difference. If there is one, I can say now I am doing it better than before. But still there is some progress we need to look for.

J-PS: What has been done to make a difference now compare to three years ago? Nothing. The situation remains the same. What I need to do is to look for some training so that I can understand at least the basics.

FY: Yes of course. Three years ago, there was almost nothing in the media regarding ICTs. Thanks to the profusion of mobile telephony, now people are showing some interest.

ME: Three years ago, there were almost no articles on ICT published in Le Potential. Today, it is a need and a requirement of the leadership of the newspaper. This also links to the fact that Le Potential has an Internet site, and it also draws certain articles from the Internet. The journalists have each learned how to use the computer – at least MS Word.

CN: The first difference I can point out is the equipment we are now using to produce the magazine. While three years ago everything was analogue, now all the equipment is digital. The second difference is that three years ago, people did not hear much about ICTs, but now at least with the boom of mobile phones, they are more aware.

J-MM: Yes, there has been a certain evolution. More and more one observes an increase in the interest of journalists in ICT. There are programmes and training organised on the national level. ICT is impossible to circumvent for the progress of the media. And the Congolese journalists, like those of the whole world, have understood the relevance and the contribution of ICT and have become increasingly taken by it.

Jean-Claude T. K. Mwepu, Director of the NGO called "DRC antenna", was also interviewed and asked about the CATIA-linked events and the media in DRC:

CM: The CATIA meeting was for us an exchange meeting for CATIA representatives. It was an opportunity for us to share experience and enrich initiatives. What pleased us was learning to advocate for ICT by using the media. And that is what we are doing now since we left the meeting. We are integrating media people in our activities so that they can report on these in a good way, and we can also build their capacities in ICT and ICT policy issues. The situation so far is a process. It is not easy at all to get people who are interested in reporting politics and other

things considered important by them to start covering ICT issues. We are still struggling. We really hope that good governance through a democratic government will help us in our initiative.

3.2 Ethiopia interviews

“There is acute shortage of reporters and editors, who have competence in ICT.”

Name of newspaper/s or other medium	Name of journalist:	Gender	Educational background, including training in covering ICTs	Main beat:
Fortune Business weekly Newspaper	Tamirat G. Giorgis (TG)	Male		Owner & Managing Editor
Capital	Yayeh-yirad Taddess (YT)	Male		Columnist: ICT professional and owner-manager of Studionet Online
Fortune	Zelalem Wudineh (ZW)	Employee of Ethiopian Science & Technology Commission. He works as information senior expert & network administrator		Columnist
Reporter	Molalgne Girmaw (MG)		Working with United Nations Development Programme’s UVP a volunteer ICT expert	Columnist for two years

1. Based on your readings and your own experience, could you tell me the growth in the field of ICT over the past three years?

TG: There are several strides. The growth is mainly attributed to the attitudinal change of the government towards the sector. Two or three years ago, the government considered it to be a “luxury” to spend on ICT while there are millions of hungry and poor people in the country. That wrong assumption has changed now. At present, it is well understood that investing in ICT will create favourable conditions to minimise and eradicate poverty. Thus, currently the government of Ethiopia is investing millions of dollars on ICT. The government has spent over 1.2 billion Ethiopian Birr on Schoolnet

and Woreda-net projects alone. The impact of this big investment is visible not only in Addis Ababa and other big cities of the country. These days, plasma TV sets are being carried on donkeys to remote and rural parts of the nation for various trainings. In these areas, the TVs are operated on generators, as there is no electricity. Since the plasmas are interconnected, officials in Addis Ababa discuss with their counterparts in rural areas via plasma. For instance, training on good governance has been given in such a manner. Some 600 Woredas have interacted with Addis Ababa in the training. When you see all these endeavours, you can safely say that there is a visible growth in ICT. The private and international sector has a pivotal role to play in this regard, as they could introduce new and modern technologies.

contract with z company to automate its system. This is just news. You don't need a technology expert to report that. What you need to compile such a news story is just information. How much does the contract worth? Who are the bidders? ...etc. You don't need to be technology-oriented. But it needs special knowledge if we were to go deep into issues like: What is that technology? How many similar technologies do we have at hand? How does the technology operate? How does this technology differ from the one bought by other banks? If you lack such knowledge you don't go deep. Knowledge is gained from specialisation. That is the big problem.

6. One can't say that you have never published ICT-related news stories. On what kind of stories do you focus mostly?

TG: Money. The first question that we ask is: how much does the investment worth? Secondly, we cover technologies that introduce new things. Our motto is: “Follow the money and it will take you to the story”.

7. What are the sources of your news stories? Do you use press releases and similar materials as a source?

TG: Most of them are our own sources. We don't mainly depend on press releases and stuff like that. We use press releases just as starters. We further inquire for additional information. As a coincidence, I have now two press releases at hand. One is received through our e-mail. It says “we have invented a new technology that does SMS in Amharic language”. The other says: “We have made Microsoft tutorials in Amharic, Tigrigna and Oromiffa.” We use both of them as starters for stories.

8. Generally, what do you think is the reason that hinders extensive coverage of ICT stories in the press of our country?

TG: Lack of knowledge. There is acute shortage of reporters and editors, who have competence in ICT.

9. Can we categorise your newspaper as “policy influential media” in 2006?

TG: Yes! The community was polarised due to the political turmoil that followed the national elections. So were the newspapers. When we come to our newspaper, some categorise it as pro-the ruling party and others classify it as favouring the opposition parties. In this regard, our newspaper was controversial and influential.

10. Can you present evidence confirming that your

2. How do you translate this comparison when it comes to the media? Given the ICT infrastructure in place, can we say that media coverage of ICT is growing in terms of quantity and quality?

TG: When compared to the ICT growth, the media coverage is minimal. Covering this kind of thing needs specialisation. The country has not yet achieved that kind of specialisation. For example, we do not have a reporter specialised in ICT. If one asks us to give media coverage on a new ICT, we will send a reporter who reports, say for instance, on malaria. Since this reporter does not have any idea on ICT, he cannot put forward proper questions let alone critically analyse the concept. Thus, although there could be reports on ICT they are not refined or as well polished as they should be. The whole problem is due to lack of specialised professionals.

3. Are many businesses being conducted given the expansion of telecommunication infrastructure in the nation? Don't you report such kind of businesses?

TG: We report based on the prevailing circumstances.

4. In April, I monitored The Ethiopian Herald and found out that it had published 23 ICT related news items, 13 of which were on telecoms. On the other hand, your newspaper published only 4 ICT-related news items during the same month. Only one of these news stories was related to telecoms, and your source was The Ethiopian Herald. So, if your beat is business, why is it that there are few news stories related to telecoms in your newspaper?

TG: I am sure that these stories are event-driven. You cannot find a well documented and analysed piece of story in them. I do not have a reporter who is specialised in ICT. Don't forget that ours is a weekly newspaper. For example, one company may have an IT-related launch ceremony on Wednesday. You may be invited to the ceremony like other newspapers. Newspapers that are on circulation on Thursdays will publish the news item on Thursday. It is repeated on Friday and Saturday by other newspapers. So, how can you publish such stale news on Sunday unless you analyse it from a different angle? We sometimes publish briefs of news stories which we believe are important to our readers and which we could not cover but deem that our readers should know.

5. Can you tell me more about the causes that have minimised the number of ICT reports in your newspaper?

TG: It is difficult to cover ICT stories because they are too technical. For example, let us say x bank has made a

newspaper is policy influential?

TG: Let me start from the latest. We recently reported that the Embassy of Bulgaria has partitioned its villa and rented it to organisations to amass money illegally. The next day, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs took immediate action and drove away the organisations that had lodged in the villa of the embassy.

Second example: We were repeatedly reporting on the distribution and marketing of sugar. We wrote strong stories and editorials. One of the stories read: "The shortage of sugar is created not due to the stockpiling of sugar by some greedy business persons as the government alleges. The cause of the shortage is the government itself because it acts as the sole producer, distributor and seller and uses ration and fixed price. It should stop such activities and resort at least to the previous auction system." Two weeks later, the government returned to the auction system. Third example: We wrote up to three editorials arguing that the government of Ethiopia cannot continue subsidising the oil price. It should effect oil price re-adjustment soon. Lately, the government made oil price adjustment.

It would be naïve to boast that all these changes happened as a result of our stories and editorials. I do not have tangible evidence for this. However, one cannot deny that our stories have made a contribution to the measures taken. The stories were strong enough to push the government to act.

11. What is the role of the media in the formulation and adoption of the ICT policy?

TG: I don't think formulating and adopting a policy is the business of the media. The role of the media is providing timely, accurate and balanced information to the audience. This, in fact, can include reporting and commenting on policy issues. Indeed, the media can serve as a forum in this regard. The main problem is that this ICT policy does not have an owner. If it had owners, they would have shouted in its favour. The people at the Tourism Commission are pushing for the formulation of such policy for their sector because they know what they could do with it once it is ratified. But I am afraid that this ICT-policy does not have an owner.

12. As a journalist, what would you say is your role?

TG: My job is at its best when I help you make an informed decision. I remember once we did a news story about

an investor intending to construct a hotel and we were pressurised not to report about it. We told the investor that we had evidence that he took a plot of land with such and such Birr. He admitted that, but indicated he had not yet received the plan. We were surprised then perplexed by the situation. We published the story on our newspaper later on. The investor was infuriated. As we discovered it later, there was a villa adjacent to the land leased to the investor by the government. The investor wanted to buy the villa and construct a building. He was negotiating with the owner of the villa, who did not know that the land was leased. The investor was conspiring to buy the house as any ordinary buyer. The owner of the villa read in our newspaper what was going on and immediately increased the price by 4 million Birr. In fact, the owner of the villa could profit 4 million Birr and the investor could lose the same amount of money simultaneously. My responsibility is to present accurate and balanced information to both of them. Our information is accurate, neutral and timely. It can help or hurt individuals.

13. What should the government, the media and other stakeholders do in the formulation and adoption of the draft ICT policy?

TG: Hasn't the policy yet been approved?

Not yet. It is in process.

TG: Can you imagine: I am an editor of a newspaper who does not know whether the ICT policy is approved or not. Do you know what came into my mind now? Nobody cares about the policy because it has lost its relevancy. Take the tourism policy as an example. It is still a draft. There is a lot of pressure to get the policy endorsed. You hear about the policy whenever you go to meetings. You see people in the tourism industry lobbying for its approval. It is only you that I have heard talking about ICT policy.

Note:

It was not possible to interview the editor-in-chief of The Ethiopian Herald. An attempted interview with the editor-in-chief of The Monitor produced very little information, as the did the owner and editor-in-chief of The Reporter Amare Aregawi.

The voice of ICT columnists

In Ethiopian press there are three full page ICT columns - all in English. The columnists involved give this insight:

1. What led you to become an ICT columnist?

YT: As I'm an Information Technology professional and owner of an IT company, I am close to the subject. And as a principle I believe that it is when the level of public awareness widens, we shall all benefit. With this in mind I began to be an IT columnist - just to create the awareness.

ZW: I am working at the Ethiopian Science and Technology Commission. We have an information department. One of the objectives of this department is to introduce the latest science and information related issues to the public. In this regard we've been doing different activities. As regards the newspaper column, the aim is to create awareness.

MG: It's a matter of interest. I love to read about ICT-related issues, and I believe that there might be many like me. It was from these beliefs that I began to be a columnist - thinking that it may be useful for others too.

2. What contents do your columns contain?

YT: IT news, different crash courses and it also includes answering questions which may be raised by the readers.

ZW: I write about different technologies that develop, news, emerging gadgets, cyber tips and also giving answers to questions from readers.

MG: Considering the benefits of the nation, I frequently write articles on Open Source software and also present different articles related with computer, internet...etc.

3. How do you see your contribution when you do so?

YT: I give credit to myself as a gap-bridger - I feel like I am transferring information and knowledge among my people.

ZW: I am playing a role of disseminating information. Sometimes even having the internet you may not get information that I provide. You can get information you require via my column, without any tiresome searching. For example, readers can take care of themselves when I write about a dangerous computer virus in my columns, and so large number of people can be secured.

MG: I think I have created magnificent understanding about Open Source. Even sometimes I have had a chance to witness some enterprises making a lot of advantages out of it. For example, companies tended to use licensed software which cost them hundred thousands but now they are trying to use Open Source softwares for free.

4. What are the sources of your articles?

YT: Mostly the internet, I also use some IT bulletins/ magazines. The questions of my readers are also my secondary level sources.

ZW: Internet, IT magazines like the PC world and also the knowledge which I gain through experience.

MG: My sources are internet, text books, magazines, and the network I've created with the online community.

5. What do you think the reason for the lack of ICT-related local content in our press? And as ICT columnists, do you try to fill the gap?

YT: The main problem is that we are far apart from technology. And there is lack of awareness among the media people. But if you ask me personally regarding my column, I am trying to localise content to best of my ability - especially when I answer local problems raised from my readers.

ZW: It is because the media houses do not have trained manpower in the ICT field. When we talk about the local content, even though I'm interested, I will never have ample time for I am a government employee. Besides I'm just an IT professional not a journalist with the right writing techniques.

MG: The main reason is that journalists do not have the awareness for information communication technology. The ICT columnists like us again are part time workers, and we do not have ample time and resources.

6. What solutions do you suggest so that, ICT-related issues and reports could be appearing at large scale in the newspapers?

YT: First of all the editorial policy of newspapers should give attention and the journalists, including the publisher/ owners, must raise their awareness as well as change their attitude that ICT articles are worthless. They need to get training, particularly the journalists.

ZW: The journalists and the ICT professionals should integrate more so that they can exchange information, share experiences and at the same time run bilateral training in a win-win situation.

MG: Training those editors and journalist who have special interests in ICT is the easiest way to elevate this big problem.

7. ICT plays a remarkable role in the economic development

and social progress of a given country. In order to enhance its role, it should be put under a policy framework. What should the government, the media and other concerned bodies do to formulate and endorse an ICT policy?

YT: ICT should be first lobbied itself. There should be a movement like a revolution.

ZW: The main problem is that the government does not give due attention to the ICT policy as it does to the agricultural policy. Officials assigned to the development of ICT are changed frequently. Thus, the process started by one would be taken up by another before completion. The new official starts the process anew instead of continuing

from the place where his predecessor stopped. That is why the ICT draft policy has not yet been adopted. Hence, the government should pay attention to the issue and organise various awareness-raising workshops. I think there would be some change if the media people also give attention to the technology.

MG: The government, the media and ICT professionals should handle the case as their own and give the necessary concern.

Interviews with former Ethiopian journalists

Name of former newspaper/s or other medium	Name of ex-journalist:	Gender	Educational background, including training in covering ICTs	Main beat:
Was senior editor of Reporter	Emrakeb Assefa (EA)	Female	Journalism and Media Studies Masters degree, various ICT journalism courses through Highway Africa	Lecturer at the Addis Ababa University, School of Journalism & Mass Communication, Associate director of the Continuing Education & Research Center and RFI stringer.
Was Editor-in-chief of Fortune	Ayenew Haile Selasi (AHS)	Male	One Highway Africa course	Business person
Was senior reporter of The Daily Monitor	Tsedale Lemma (TL)	Female	One Highway Africa course	Media & Communication Officer with the Israeli Embassy in Ethiopia
Was senior reporter of the Sub-Saharan Informer	Nigist Abraha (NA)	Female		Media & Communication Officer at CARE - an international NGO with a branch in Ethiopia
Was editor-in-chief of The Daily Monitor	Halina Megersa(HM)	Female		Media & Communication Officer at Islamic Relief

1. Have you ever participated a training or workshop sponsored by CATIA?

EA: I know nothing about CATIA apart from hearing it being mentioned around Highway Africa Conference.

AHS: I never heard about it.

TL: No.

NA: I didn't.

HM: No.

2. Do you have any knowledge that you may suggest you gained from Highway Africa conference in regard to ICT?

EA: I had taken a training course on ICT use by the media in Africa. About 20 journalists who came from different countries, including me, had participated. Ten of us had been chosen and served as reporters of HANA for three years. Moreover, I have been one of the participants at the meetings which were related to WSIS (World Summit on the Information Society) in Tunis, Geneva and through all these processes I was able to gain tremendous experience and deep knowledge around ICT.

AHS: I think it has been long ago... yes, I was able to be introduced with the Information Society. It was there I heard about WSIS and related issues being analysed deeply. Earlier than that, I knew nothing. To tell you the truth, they bombarded you with concepts so you would be able to describe a lot about the Information Society, ICT, etc at a highest level. Yet some of it was useless, and also some of it was very technical and was not relevant. However, some of it, especially the hands-on training they gave about multimedia, was very good even though we can't apply it here.

TL: When I travelled for Highway Africa, there was ten days training organised by the Belgian Technical Corporation. Actually it is better to call it discussion forum rather than training. In my stay for these ten days, many journalists gathered from different African countries had participated. Several concepts related to ICT and its policy had been raised, so it helped me to have deep knowledge around ICT. In addition, I was able to compare our country's level in contrast with where other countries have reached regarding ICT policy. Moreover, I came across very talented journalists; and we are still exchanging information up to now, through the online discussion forum that we created there.

NA: I travelled there two times, in 2002 and 2003. The discussions and experience sharing we made with the African journalists were very useful. I was able to gain much knowledge from the participants and research paper presenters at conference. Especially on my first participation in 2002 there had been a conference and training entitled World Summit on Sustainable Development. I stayed there for 15 days. And it was by then my eyes had been opened regarding what the Information Society was all about. Also in the next year they provided us a three day course concerning web designing and publishing. However, the course has no benefit other than giving some hint, because it was conducted in a hurry. Anyway in such places the knowledge you may gain is mostly from different elites at the conference in the form of discussion rather than the so-called trainings.

HM: Regarding me it was not Highway Africa I have participated in but an Africa Economic Editors Network forum. However, there is no point that connects it with ICT.

3. What contribution did you make for your newspaper from the experience you gained there?

EA: In fact, while I had been an editor for the "The Reporter" I had established a column entitled ICT News. In this column, I used to write different news and articles which were related to ICT. However, it was interrupted when I went to South Africa for continuing study. Yet, I was sending different articles even from South Africa for our newspaper. I feel I have promoted different issues of ICT through that.

AHS: Unfortunately, after I came back from there, I stopped the newspaper which I had established and worked at as chief editor, due to personal problems. Then, I started to work as a freelancer. At that time I had written an interesting article regarding WSIS and gave it to a newspaper. However, the editor there was not aware of WSIS and he thought that I prepared it to promote simply a small group, and he didn't publish it. Then I became a business journalist and I started to work as editor-in-chief of a business newspaper. Though I had intended to do many things, the environment of the newspaper was not favourable to report issues such as ICT. During my stay with the newspaper, the only ICT article I wrote was entitled something like "SMS in Amharic Ethiopian language". But this article became a source to many foreign correspondents here in Addis - it is on the internet up to now.

TL: Let me tell you two disappointing things. First, though I had gained beneficial knowledge through the training or the

discussion forum as I told you earlier, I couldn't apply it due to uncomfortable atmosphere I had with the newspaper I used to work. On top of that, even though I had seen and discussed great policies in relation to ICT, we have no tangible ICT policy here and we do not have a forum inviting discussion. On the other hand, I had worked as a journalist only for four months after return. I am now no more a practising journalist at my current position, so I can say I did nothing.

NA: I had written many articles for the Highway Africa and for the Sub-Saharan Informer, when I had been working at that time. Many of them were related to ICT.

HM: As an editor I have presented different articles for my newspaper; however not even a single one was related to the ICT that you are mentioning.

4. What is the reason why there are no increase in quality and quantity regarding ICT coverage in the newspapers?

EA: There is a misconception that ICT information doesn't attract readers. So newspapers give emphasis mostly to the political issues. On the other hand there is a tilted thinking of taking ICT only to be about computer and Internet. In addition to that there is a limited human resource (editors, journalist, etc), and even the existing ones are not very aware of ICT. As a consequence they think it is too technical to write about it. When we see it from another perspective, the ICT sector in Ethiopia is not developed and it is not inviting to the journalists and nor is it capable of inviting them. Also our local language has no capacity to describe the ICT concept, so the language problem is another one.

AHS: Just lack of awareness! On the other hand the people are far from the technology. For instance, if a news story is written here about the technology which is available in the other parts of the world, the reader reads it simply as news about the Americans, English, etc - people that he doesn't relate to in his everyday life. The fact is that although we are saying that the technology is available, we did not use it as much as we should. For instance, even though Internet is available here, with regard to our country's condition, we are not able to buy anything online, book a hotel room, or do other possible activities through Internet. So since there is no point that relates it with our daily activities. Its benefit is not much.

TL: The main problem is the journalists do not have deep knowledge of ICT. Since the profession of journalism itself is not much developed, so there is no specialisation. Due

to this most of the time an ICT story is considered as a mere filler. But at this time, some different columns can be noted. We can mention such as IT corner of Capital, IT Mail of Reporter and High-tech Talk of Fortune. However, when we see the published content there, it is very technical. The writers also have only the knowledge of ICT but do not have the profession of journalism. So, most of the time they couldn't fulfil the interest of the readers - because the reader does not properly know the technical things. Generally, we can say it is the result of a scarcity of integrated knowledge.

NA: It is due to the fact of our country's condition that the technology is not developed and that the journalists do not have deep knowledge of ICT. Thus, since they are confronting big problems to write about something they do not know, they prefer to retreat. That is the problem I think.

HM: The first one is lack of knowledge. Secondly, since the technology is not that much developed here in our country, you may not have something to write about. The main problem is also the ICT professionals themselves; they do not organise forums at which they promote their work to the journalists and the community. So, it is not possible to know what is being done by whom and what is going on.

5. How could these problems that have been mentioned above be alleviated?

EM: The main thing is to create ICT awareness among the media people. Moreover, to make the journalists and reporters get training. When the reporters who write with proper knowledge of ICT are created, I hope things would be in good shape through this process.

AHS: The answer is not simple. The subject goes in connection with our country's economic development. It is a process. Though we are saying that we are in the era of information, in reality we are not. To say this, we have to be able to start using at least the technology most of the people of the world are using - like telephone and mobile which are essential to everyday life. At the time that I can purchase things through Internet, able to pay the bills online...etc and when the technology became integrated to my life; the media itself may not have other alternative rather than reporting the phenomena. It is then the readers would be interested to read the ICT reports, which would be the reflections of their life, like any political and social issues.

TL: First, the interest of the reader has to be met. The journalists have to take training. The training itself has to be practical; but not the collection of concepts. Instead of

granting a scholarship for two persons, it would be better to bring two professionals and give training to 20 journalists. For instance, at the moment, I am working hard to bring professionals from Israel in order to prepare training for the journalists around political and gender issues. The others are also expected to do similar activities regarding ICT. The other point which I feel as a solution is, since the IT colleges are mushrooming, media organisations have to arrange bilateral forums with these colleges and find a way that the journalists could be trained.

NA: The media organisations need training so that they would be capable of giving emphasis and able to do the work of a pace-setter. In the current condition, sometimes, it is observed that the people are advancing faster than the journalists. Accordingly, the journalists have to consider the issue and have to adjust their things. In any case ICT training is a key issue.

HM: Awareness-creating workshops have to be done for the community, the government and the journalists. However, who is going to do and arrange this? This is another question.

6. ICT plays a remarkable role in the economic development and social progress of a given country. In order to enhance its role, it should be put under a policy framework. What should the government, the media and other concerned bodies do to formulate and endorse an ICT policy?

EA: On the part of the government, it should organise various discussion forums in order to facilitate the endorsement of the draft ICT policy based on the comments of the public. In addition, it should open its door to journalists and consider them as development partners. The media has to build its capacity and give due attention to ICT issues. If we take the experience of Kenya in this regard, they went to the extent of formulating provisions because they built their capacity. Other stakeholders should play a meaningful role for the ratification of the draft ICT policy.

AHS: With the growth of our economy and various technologies, a policy should become a mandatory thing. But at a time when we do not have even a well-developed agricultural policy, singing about ICT policy would please nobody except those groups who claim to be advocates of ICT.

TL: Let me start from the media. The media should establish a healthy relationship with the government and other concerned bodies. If the media believes in such a healthy relationship, I think they would be able to influence the government. The government on its part should display readiness to cooperate and work with the media. In addition, it should facilitate conditions to implement policies, either draft or ratified. Other institutions including NGOs should embark on result-oriented endeavours instead of engaging merely in publicity. ICT professionals should feel a sense of belonging to their profession and work harder than ever before. The cumulative effect of the things I stated above could bring about the desired result in the field.

NA: Ethiopia was [among] the first to talk about ICT policy. But to our disappointment the ICT policy has not yet been approved. The draft policy itself is outdated. It should be re-evaluated and updated. The public, the media and ICT-dependant sectors should come together and discuss the draft policy once again before it is ratified.

HM: There is an urgent need for lobbying activities. All pertinent bodies should strive for its success.

Researcher's comment on CATIA-supported project EFOSSNET:

EFOSSNET has become very popular among University IT students and IT professionals. Its champion is Dr. Dawit Bekel, dean of the Computer science department with Addis Ababa University and also an active member of the Ethiopian Information Technology Professionals Association (EITPA). In July 10-21, EFOSSNET planned a training and workshop for interested groups and a one-day special workshop for media professionals as well as policy-makers. In the interviews prior to the event, one ex-journalist, Ayenew Haile Silase, knew about it, and both Fortune's columnist Zelalem Wuduneh and Reporter's columnist Molalgne Girmaw had detailed knowledge about EFOSSNET.

3.3 Mozambique interviews

"When producing and presenting the programme, I feel that I have participated in the promotion and implementation of Mozambican ICT policy."

Name of newspaper/s or other medium	Name of journalist:	Gender	Educational background, including training in covering ICTs	Main beat:
TVM (Public)	Edmundo Galiza Matos, jr. (EGM)	Male	Advanced journalism and Marketing	Politics
TVM	Antonia dos Santos	Female	University degree in Social Science	Social affairs including ICTs
Radio Mozambique (RM) (Public)	João Matola (JM)	Male	University degree in journalism	Media management
RM	Sandra Isabel (SI)	Female	University degree. ICT training: ICT & Poverty	Children issues
STV (Private)	Atanasio Marcos (AM)	Male	Advanced journalism	Social affairs

1. Do you view your medium as policy influential?

EGM: Yes. TVM is a policy influential medium considering our capacity to reach all the Mozambican territory.

AS: TVM is, but it also plays only a little role. Some problems that society faces are not publicised enough. This impacts on the policies made in the country.

JM: Yes. Radio Mozambique (RM) has influenced the policy-makers by promoting debates between them and the public. We have served both – publicising politicians’ messages to the public, and the public’s messages to the politicians.

SI: Yes. It is. As a medium that reaches whole the country and has the largest audience in Mozambique, RM is able to influence the population and therefore play the role of link between the policy-makers and society.

AM: Yes it is. The issues we cover deal with political and social life in the country. Last week for example, we were working on the new educational curricula and it affected the decisions of the policy-makers.

2. What do you understand by ICT policy? How is it relevant to your audience and to your work?

EGM: ICT policy regulates the science, technology and innovations issues in a country. It allows people to develop their capacities using technology, on their behalf and on the behalf of the country. It also facilitates the interconnection between Mozambique and the rest the world. In my work, I interact with government, civil society or business organisations that are directly or indirectly connected to ICT.

AS: ICT policy is a set of decisions that promote citizens’

access to technology and information. The policy also intends to involve citizens in the effective process of its implementation.

JM: ICT policy is an instrument that regulates the development of communication and information technologies. It is relevant because it provides rapid access to technologies.

SI: ICT policy is a set of policies that regulates the technology of information and communication in a certain country. It is relevant because it permits the rapid development of technology and access to information.

AM: ICT policy is the policy that regulates the access to information and communication technology. In case of Mozambique, it helps the country face globalisation and be on the same level as developed countries. It facilitates my work in terms of quality of image and ways of delivering information.

3. How did TVM/RM come up with the idea of introducing a programme on technology?

EGM: We realised that there was a lack of information about technology among the Mozambican media.

JM: The idea of having programmes about technology came from government as one of the steps of the ICT implementation Strategy. Some senior staff received training on ICT to ensure a good quality of the radio programs.

4. Have you done any particular coverage that helps to promote national ICT policy and implementation?

EGM: Yes. My weekly programme “Tecnologias”. When

producing and presenting the programme, I feel that I have participated in the promotion and implementation of Mozambican ICT policy.

AS: Yes I have. I have produced short programmes on technology. I have also promoted and covered debates and workshops about science and technology.

JM: I have written some stories. But most of times I have promoted radio debates involving government and civil society.

SI: I have produced stories about ICT and the problem of HIV/AIDS.

AM: The latest stories I produced were about the launch of GOVnet – the government portal. I also worked on a story about an agreement between the National Institute for Communication and the National Telecommunication Company

5. Whom did you choose as sources for ICT stories?

EGM: My sources are part of the government and the different members of the civil society including students and academics.

AS: My sources are scientists, companies in the area, innovators and policy-makers.

JM: My sources are government officials dealing with ICT policy. I also quote some academics who deal with the ICT issue.

SI: My sources are the internet, books and government.

AM: When I wrote the stories my sources were the government, officials from the National Institute for Communication and also from the National Telecommunication Company.

6. How does your editor regard coverage of ICTs? If you are an editor, which criteria do you use to approve an ICT story for publication or broadcast?

EGM: As the editor of my programme and considering the weak production of ICT stories, I accept any kind of story related to ICT including coverage of workshops, debates, etc.

AS: Most of the times, my editor accepts the stories positively. Our stories are debated in the newsroom. But sometimes, when in one week I bring more than three

stories, my colleagues make fun and ask me how much I am getting paid to cover ICT issues.

JM: Speaking as an editor, every story that is relevant to public is acceptable no matter if it is an ICT story or not.

SI: I produce children’s programmes for radio and I am always happy when the little “reporters” bring stories about ICT. For me it means that very soon they are adventuring to world of technology. When selecting the stories, I make sure that they interest the public and have a link to civil society.

AM: I am in private media. The editors of private media are more likely decline ICT stories in favour of stories that make “polemic”. Stories that can sell. They are not sensitive to ICT stories. And the technology stories are most of the times a second choice.

7. Does language affect ICT coverage?

EGM: Yes. Language affects the coverage. The fact that technology is most of the times in English, creates a barrier to non-English speakers.

AS: Yes it affects. My language is Portuguese. And very few technology issues are originally in my language. English remains the language of technology.

JM: Of course it affects. The language of ICTs is extremely technical and it has a many jargons which makes translation to Portuguese difficult.

SI: If the ICT policy promotes access to technology in rural areas then there is a need to change the language. In the rural areas, people don’t speak Portuguese or English.

AM: Language does affect ICT coverage and how the message is received by public. ICT is in language spoken by the minority of population. It is difficult to translate it into Portuguese and to our local languages.

8. How do you think journalists in your newsroom make use of ICT?

EGM: Very little. Our journalism is based on stories that are easy to sell. And journalists seem to be less interested on developing issues. Another problem is in terms of the use of technology devices. People are resistant to changes and they rely on old equipment.

JM: There is a certain resistance to technology in the newsroom. To introduce mini discs, we had to convince

some journalists.

AS: They don't make enough use of ICT. And I believe the fact that English is the language of technology, makes difficult the interactions between some journalist and the computer, for example.

SI: No. they don't. Most of them do not know how to use ICT. They have no training in the area.

AM: Journalists in my newsroom try to make the best use of ICTs. But the problem is most of them do not have training on how. The ones who have training make adequate use.

9. Are there differences in coverage of ICTs and ICTs policy now, compared to some years ago?

EGM: Yes. Now there is more interest by the government to promote ICTs. This makes information flow in the media. Government is also more committed to ensure that ICT developments are covered.

AS: Yes, there is more coverage. In my perception, there is also more political interest and commitment to provide access to technology.

JM: There is a great difference. Three years ago, Internet for example was not very popular. These days, journalists are more open to understand ICT phenomena.

SI: Of course. Each day, technology is gaining more space. And we are slowly recognising that it improves our lives. Some journalists are even more interested in having training about ICT.

AM: Yes. The world is now dependent on technology. And journalists know that. I think they are more interested in knowing what ICT is and how it affects their life and work

10. Does the gender of the journalist affect sourcing or news angles on ICT reporting, and on ICT policy issues? How?

EGM: Not in my newsroom. Men or women do ICT coverage in the same way.

AS: In my newsroom, the coverage of ICT is done with no discrimination. Men and women do the same coverage.

JM: The idea is to promote gender balance. But very few women are working on the ICT policy. When reporting about ICT issues, women rarely appear as sources.

SI: I think when reporting about ICT there is a need to give more space to women. There are women covering ICT, but there is not many women covered in ICT issues.

AM: I try my best to respect gender equality when covering all kind of stories. But before that I have to ensure factual coverage even if sometimes only men are covered.

11. Are there ICT stories which you think are NOT being published/broadcast enough, and which should be?

EGM: I think ICT stories should be more elaborated. They need more investigation. Do you know that there are two Mozambicans at NASA? But no one has ever done a story about them.

AS: Stories about rural areas. How can ICT help develop rural areas ...development of new medicines, farming techniques? How can it affect the development of medicine and poverty alleviation?

JM: Speaking as an editor, I would like to see more stories about the effect of ICT policy in rural areas. It is easy to speak on radio about things like satellite, radar, Internet, etc., but the difficulty is to ensure that the ordinary citizen understands what I am talking about.

SI: Stories about the use of ICT in agriculture and population's daily life.

AM: There is a need of more stories about the Informatics Policy. Also more investigation on how it benefits the population. And of course there is also a need to cover the bad side of technology. We are only covering the benefits.

3.4 Nigeria interviews

"After much agitation, ICTs have begun to make the front page these days, as much as business stories do."

Name of newspaper/s or other medium	Name of journalist:	Gender	Educational background, including training in covering ICTs	Main beat:
Champion Newspapers Ltd/ ITREALMS Online	Remmy Nweke (RN)	Male	First Nigerian IT African Siemens Profile Award winner-2004’ Second prize winner, ECA-AISI Media Award-05. Two-time winner, African Siemens Profile Award IT Business Solution-2005’ Senior Reporter on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Head, ICT Desk with Daily Champion, and also edits ITRealms Online www.itrealms.blogspot.com . A graduate of Journalism from Institute of Journalism and Management Enugu, Enugu State- Nigeria. He has attended several international courses in journalism and contemporary media.	ICT
IT Edge Magazine	Segun Oruame (SO)	Male	BA, English Studies MA, Law & Diplomacy. Was IT Reporter and Editor The Comet, Editor IT & Telecom Digest, currently the national coordinator of the Joint Action Committee on ICT Awareness and Development (JACITAD) and Editor of IT Edge News. He was also a member of the National Strategic Committee on Information Technology and head of the Ministerial Sub-Committee on IT Popularisation & Awareness. Has received awards as Consumer Writer 2003, and Winner ECA AISI/IICD Award	ICT

1. What role does the media play in policy development? Give some examples of where you have played a role in the past. Can you provide some stories you have written?

RN: Definitely, media has played a significant role in education of the policy-makers themselves on certain issues as far as technologies are concerned. We have had cases of receiving phone calls from legislators from Abuja on some of our articles as being educative and expository, which means they were able to understand them. For example, what is relevant for a policy such as plans to introduce e-voting in Nigeria. You can check out 'Right time for e-voting' on my <http://www.itrealms.blogspot.com>. In addition, media strengthens the process of policy development, in such a case, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) was excited to be receiving support for e-voting from the media. Also there were lots of media publications about what Unified Licensing Regime is all about. For example, I wrote: "Unified licensing is good, but ... Odufuwa"; "Understanding digital convergence"; "ULR to engender consumer-centric choices - Ndukwe"; "NCS versus convergence"; "Onyekwere advocates arbitration panel for ULR"; "VoIP, crashing the call tariffs".

SO: The media still has a lot to do in getting government to act decisively and positively on certain issues. But

it has, in the last three or four years, been able to influence government action with respect to consumer protection in the delivery of mobile services, maintaining the independence of the telecom regulator and initiating actions to help ICT diffusion. The media influenced the creation of Nigeria's first-ever National IT Policy and has remained consistent in expressing the view through several reports on the need to make NITDA an independent and fully-funded IT agency.

2. Do you view your medium as policy-influential in 2006? Why/ why not? How has it changed over the past three years? Give examples.

RN: Usually talking about oneself is somewhat difficult; it is better left for other people to do the evaluation. However, we did marvellously in the preceding years till date. This was shown in our honour with the African Siemens Profile Awards for 2004/2005 in the IT Solutions category for excellence in science and technology reporting. These were awarded simultaneously to an individual reporter and media and that is for two years running.

SO: Years back, the body of IT reporters had little impact on policy formulation. But things have since changed. Policy-makers generally refer to reports by journalists on

issues and why certain actions needed to be taking. But the level of impact is still [fairly] low and the ability of the media to influence government thinking on ICT is still not [very] significant.

3. How do you see your role as journalist? Are there examples where these roles have been relevant in covering ICT issues, including ICT policy?

RN: I see my role as an opinion moulder and mentor as well as this being relevant in coverage of ICT issues. As matter of fact, after showcasing my blog at last year's Highway Africa conference, many ICT reporters from Nigeria and beyond began to think and some even started opening their own blogs, including members of Highway Africa News Agency (HANA) team which has since increased individual weblogs to about five within HANA family. The effect is to increase local content from this part of the world. Moreso, under the AfricanMediaICT4Dnig yahoo group which I moderate, journalists are encouraged to take advantage of several exposures to be more acquainted with issues especially policies. Recently, two journalists specialising in ICT and members of the group - AfricanMediaICT4Dnig - attended a course on Reporting ECOWAS. At that course, several issues including how policies are made within the ECOWAS were brought to the fore. On the other hand, journalists in Nigeria under Joint Action Committee on ICT Awareness and Development (JACITAD) - a joint stakeholder NGO between ICT media professionals and industry - have organised seminars. They are even planning one on the IT bill which the NGO also recently made some inputs on during Senate public hearings on the bill.

SO: While other genres such as political or economic reporting may have grown to influence government's thinking, this is not generally the case with ICT reporting. This genre of reporting is yet to develop to the level where the ICT reporter may consider him/her-self a watchdog. Only a few journalists with ability for insightful reports are so regarded. But generally, the body of ICT reporters is considered as no more than news hounds who are best at 're-writing' press releases. In IT Edge, we have built a reputation as non-event journalists, that is to say we are not really interested in attending events that have to do with XYZ company launches this or that. We are more interested in taking a critical/analytical look at a particular issue in ICT and examining it from the perspective of service delivery, policy or financing.

4. What do you understand by ICTs? What do you understand by 'ICT-policy'? What is its relevance to your readers?

RN: By my own understanding, ICTs means Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) or better still convergence of technologies in the 21st century. Policies have to do with how ICT could be deployed by operators or service providers and optimised for the benefit of the society and end-users.

SO: ICT Policy infers the set of rules or vision by government to achieve specific ICT goals. Only few readers appreciate this and at IT Edge, our niche is to service these readers with content and increase the body of ICT readers.

5. What is your main beat? How does this speak to your coverage of ICT and ICT policy in particular? What kinds of ICT stories do you give more attention to? Why?

RN: My main beat is reporting on ICTs and I think it speaks well given numerous awards I have garnered in recent times. I am still the only Nigerian journalist to have won the African Siemens Profile Award for excellent reporting on science and technology since 2004, that is two years running now, and last year I got the second place at the local content application award from the African Information Society Initiative (AISI) media award focused on ICT media.

I endeavour to give every story that comes my way equal attention, but what I have discovered is that because ICT is still new in our environmental evolution, the policy aspect is much underreported. Hence I have a personal interest in making policy issues known to the stakeholders as could be seen in my coverage on the Unified Licensing Regime which I published before the system was introduced on March 1, 2006. However, after seeing the first report of CATIA published with Highway Africa, we still have a long way to go.

SO: At IT Edge, we report ICT. We focus solely on ICT policies, initiatives and ICT related businesses. The reason is that ICT is under-reported in the general media and we feel in IT Edge that we have the duty to report/analyse ICT issues for the benefit of policy-makers, operators, the ordinary observers and other stakeholders.

6. Have you done any particular coverage that helps to promote national ICT policy and implementation?

RN: I have written on the need to be part of the Digital Solidarity Fund, and about the part stakeholders should play in getting the National IT Development Agency (NITDA) fund off the ground. I also did several pieces on issues raised in the IT bill, both before the public hearings and after.

SO: I have been active long before I joined IT Edge as editor. In 2004, in IT Edge I published "Healing is in Data" which helped to strengthen the arguments of ICT apostles in the health sector that only ICT could salvage Nigeria's health sector.

7. How does your editor regard coverage of ICTs? Is there support, or are stories frequently thrown out for not being newsworthy? Explain. When and why do you place an ICT story in your paper?

RN: After much agitation, ICTs have begun to make the front page these days, as much as business stories do. But the subject could suffer a natural death if the political system is "hit up" - like now the issue of third term is dividing the country. But the only means of ensuring that these stories are not thrown out is to ensure they are saved so that if they are not used as news material that day, they can be recalled, updated and used as weekly material. Yet, the throwing out is not as frequent as before and we have a nine-page pull out published every Wednesday.

SO: IT Edge's core area is reporting ICT within the context of social and economic developments. This was borne out of two facts. ICT issues were under-reported. And even the few publications on the newsstand focusing on ICT were not doing any analytical reports.

8. Whom do you choose as sources for ICT stories? Why? Do you rely mainly on press releases? Is most of the material cut and pasted from other sources etc? Where do you get most of your information – give some examples in relation to particular stories.

RN: Usually those chosen depend on the stories. If it has to do with a company-related issue, one has to make contact with CEOs/MD or in the case of where media relations officer exist, I deal directly with media officers. But if it has to do with an industry issue, you make links with presidents or officials of the group; any of the officials could do for a source. At times there is information given from an interested source which then allows you to investigate further and make your report. Usually it is an interesting source, especially for scoops.

9. Does language affect ICT coverage?

RN: Yes it could but mostly in Nigeria we have English as an official language so most of our respondents and interactions while covering the industry are in English.

10. Do you feel comfortable reporting on ICTs and ICT

policy? Do you have enough background? Where did you get your background? How do you feel about covering of the very technical parts of ICTs? How about the economics and policy and international dimensions?

RN: I feel comfortable reporting on ICTs/ICT policy because I have undergone several training courses in this regard, although I still want some more. I attend the yearly Highway Africa training for Highway Africa News Agency (HANA) staff since 2003 except for last year when I was in Berlin for 72 days on training at the International Institute for Journalism (IIJ) and then attending stakeholders' conferences/seminar/workshops. As for the economics and international dimensions, I was at Malta for the Way Forward confab organised by Diplo Foundation as a follow-up to WSIS-05 last February. I am also striving to make technical issues accessible to readers by relating them through historical African story telling methods.

11. Are there differences in coverage of ICTs and ICT policy now, compared to three years ago? If so, what and why?

RN: Of course there are. Our views are respected by people/stakeholders; they buy dedicated publications for ICTs on specific days of publication and newsrooms are being equipped increasingly with PCs connected to the internet and more and more reporters are actually agitating for these kind of PCs on their desk to ease their job and relate with the outside world. If laptops with WiFi were cheaper, most journalists would buy one on their own. In Nigeria more publications are springing up, with monthly magazines too. As such we have within JACITAD over 32 members with most of us based in Lagos and specialised correspondents for communications in Abuja, the nation's capital, for most media houses. Nigerian journalists scooped the AISI award last year with eight awards out of about 13 coming to this country. It is an attestation to the growth in ICT reporting in Nigeria.

12. If you have been at a CATIA-linked event, tell us if and how it impacted on your coverage of the field? In what role were you involved in the event [observer, training, reporting, participating in debates]?

RN: I was at the Malta-event facilitated by CIPACO – the Centre for International ICT Policy for West and Central Africa, run by Panos Institute West Africa in Senegal. [CATIA has supported CIPACO]. I participated actively through observing, reporting and taking part in debates, and made a presentation on "Nigerian ICT media interventions 1999-2005" for the 2006 Postgraduate Diploma Students of Diplo/University of Malta. I am also

going to be undergoing a course with Diplo, courtesy CIPACO.

13. In your view, what specific ICT Policy issues do you think are not being adequately published/broadcast enough (or in enough depth)?

RN: One aspect is the rural telecommunications because I believe that if this is fully tackled, penetrations to these areas would be optimised and urban migration would be abridged and the same time it would enhance development.

14. How many female journalists have you come across who also cover ICT issues? Do you think they/she finds it easier to have access to ICT Policy newsworthy stories than their male counterparts?

RN: I have come across some of them - about five currently within ICT sector in Nigeria - except for those who are intermittently assigned to cover ICT-related issues from their organisations. For core ICT reporting, about half left to join other organisations but still are interested in ICT development through their work as corporate affairs/

Name of newspaper/s or other medium	Name of journalist:	Gender	Educational background, including training in covering ICTs	Main beat:
Radio Waumini 88.3fm	Anthony Wafula (AW)	Male	Currently pursuing PGD in Mass communication, holder of B.Ed (Arts) Hons. Never had specific training on covering ICTs.	He is a programmes producer /presenter with varied areas of interest although responsible in health, science, ICTs and education
Highway Africa News Agency (web-based)	Roseleen Nzioka (RN)	Female	Masters degree in Journalism and Media Studies, plus three training courses on covering ICT - Rhodes University.	ICTS / Development stories/ human rights stories
The People Daily	Wanjohi Kaburuku (WK)	Male	Registered as part-time Post Graduate student journalist	General, fulltime staffer on the newspaper
Capital FM Radio	Eric Ombok (EO)	Male	Undergraduate in mass communication.	Business, secretary to ICT Media Kenya
The Standard newspaper	Cathy Ochung (CO)	Female	BA Communications – Daystar University, Kenya	Features/Business including ICTs

public relations executives. Of course every one can have easy access to ICT policy news depending on their modus operandi and what they really want to achieve.

15. Have you observed any gender-bias in the number of journalists actively involved in covering ICT issues? If so, what would you say may be responsible for this situation?

RN: Ordinarily ICT issues are seen as difficult due to the various terminologies embedded in the stories, so this puts many of our female colleagues off. I have had cases of explaining several of such to some of them so as to enable them come up with good and quality stories for their medium. But one other thing is that they are usually afraid of male domination whereby old social values encouraged females to go in for less technically-oriented professions.

3.5 Kenya interviews

“When I began producing programmes on ICTs, the idea was to help the people realise what they are missing by not

1. What role does the media play in policy development?

AW: The biggest role I would say is to be found in lobbying and advocacy. We [the media] influence policy formulation and development by the way we disseminate critical information to the public, shaping discussions and public opinions based on what we suppose would be a good policy decision. For instance, the debate on the second national operator, the ICT policy formulation would be good cases in point. As purveyors of news and information, the media's capacity to influence decision-making plays an important role in policy development. Radio Waumini is a fairly young station and we may not have played a significant role in policy development. But prior to the formulation of the current ICT policy we assisted by way of highlighting its importance through a series of ICT radio programmes. This was prior to the Tunisia WSIS. See www.madeinkenya.net. Radio programmes produced are available on request.

RN: The media plays a major role in policy development. Recently in Kenya the media has been instrumental in influencing several government-proposed policies. For example, journalists have written commentaries and analytical/ critical articles that challenged the government's proposal to introduce electronic cash registers for use by business people. Also recently the Kenya government has threatened to go it alone in laying fibre optic cables to enable ICT technology to become accessible and affordable. I wrote an article for HANA which indicated the urgency of getting the east African section of the fibre optic project operational.

WK: The role of the media in policy development cannot be overemphasised. Reason is the media not only provides a channel for divergent views but also gives room for interrogating proposals advanced by different stakeholders. Much of what is said of the Kenya National ICT Policy can be credited to the media. For the better part of 2005 I dedicated an ICT column “ICT & Society” in the The People on Sunday discussing the issue at length. For this I was invited to make my submissions to the National Committee running the policy formulation process.

EO: The main role played by media in policy development is to disseminate the various policy proposals given by stakeholders. Apart from that, sometimes media practitioners attend workshop and seminars where their input is sought and they give views of what they think should be included in a particular policy document. An example is where we would pick a story and say that if policy XYZ passes, it has proposals ABC and then the impact it would have on people and the industry in general. For instance,

there is a new communication bill, which is at its draft stage and which among other things proposes to change the Communications Commission of Kenya into a multi-media authority. So the analysis I disseminate is that CCK will get an increased mandate, and that more operators currently not covered by the Kenya Communications Act will now be covered by the new bill if it becomes law.

CO: The media plays the role of an informer and catalyser as well. They also blow the whistle and bring to public attention matters that could have otherwise have caused injuries to the public. In short, the media serves as a public watchdog. The Kenyan media has done this in the past and even at present.

2. Do you view your medium as policy-influential in 2006?

AW: Radio Waumini has been in existence for only three years and this might not have been enough to influence any policy. We are still in the process of making it a formidable force given our limited area of coverage and resources. One point though, influencing policy would take concerted efforts of all media houses pulling in one direction. It is my considered opinion that no single media house can do it alone.

RN: Yes I view HANA as policy-influential. This is because it is the only African news agency dedicated to the production of stories on ICTs in Africa and for Africans. We specialise in not only general news but also analytical articles which address policy making and implementation in the whole continent regarding ICTs. In the past three years HANA has grown from covering ICT events to covering ICT issues.

WK: The simple act of being invited to present my own views to the National ICT formulation policy process is enough testimony of the influence my medium wields. In the last three years, little was written about ICT. The situation has now changed thanks to training of journalists on the subject coupled with their sheer determination amidst plenty of odds.

EO: Yes, since ICT falls under business news and our key audience are mainly policy-makers in the public and private sector. We do get a lot of feedback after something goes on air: people will call asking for contacts to talk to in order to get more information. This makes me believe that we are an influential media. Talking of changes over the past three years, I think policy formulation is now more participatory than ever. There are a lot of stakeholder meetings in which the media is included and we go through various proposals placed on the table, refine them and give a final draft to the

government. This is happening to various sectors in the country.

CO: Standard is the one of the two widely ready newspapers not just in Kenya but in the region as well. So raising policy related issues will stand a good chance to influence policy making.

3. How do you see your role as journalist?

AW: As a journalist I consider myself to be a watchdog especially as pertains to the way the three arms of the government operate. I perceive my role to be that of agenda-setting so that the government and any other relevant parties fulfil their obligations to Kenyans and people in the society at large. In a way I also see a complementary role of assisting the same government achieve its noble intention by disseminating the relevant information for the same purpose. When I began producing programmes on ICTs, the idea was to help the people realise what they are missing by not having the right policies. For instance we speak of e-government yet the average Kenyan has to come to Nairobi to look for a passport form, files still do conveniently disappear from government registry, yet we should be able to access backups by the click of a button...these are just some of the issues, not forgetting the question of access, cost and other related factors like education.

RN: My role as a journalist is to not only report issues accurately but also to incite public debate over issues of public interest. As journalists we have proximity to the policy-makers and I believe therefore it is my duty to be a public watchdog by reporting on the whys and wherefores of our policy-makers and other stakeholders who determine policies either directly or indirectly. For example I recently wrote a story addressing issues on using modern technology for tax collection in Kenya and another on the potential of e-learning in Kenya and Africa as a whole and another on the reality of e-governance based on the South African government experience.

WK: My role is two-fold. [1] Messenger: Purveying accurate, timely and factual ICT information from the source and broadcasting it. [2] Watchdog: Questioning, investigating, probing and testing the information I gather to the 'court of experts and public opinion'. The results too of such an investigation are highlighted for public debate and action. There are many instances when these two roles have been instrumental in my coverage of ICT issues.

EO: I think we have a role both as a watchdog and

informational medium. We have a duty to disseminate information on various policies and propositions that are being put on the table. However, if we are of the opinion that they will not benefit the country, we have the responsibility to point out potential repercussions that they will have on the people or particular industry. We act as watchdogs for the ordinary members of the public and the policy-makers as well; the policy-makers may hear of a point of view which they had not considered before and this may make them change their mind about a particular standpoint.

CO: At times circumstances have forced me to investigate issues including ICT related, where I acted as a watchdog, but most of the time I just provided simple information to the public.

4. What do you understand by ICTs?

AW: ICTs are not anything new although the general assumption has been to think of the technology bit of it [computers]. I consider them to include all tools and technologies we use to make life bearable. This would include information media from newsletters, posters to i-pods, ATMs, amongst many others. In a nutshell, technologies that impact our lives. My take on ICT policy is a piece[s] of legislation that guides the use, access and development of ICTs in the country. My listeners need to know how ICTs impact their lives so as to make informed decisions. They also need to know how their country is responding to challenges that might make investments in ICTs a more viable option. They need to know the best ways of maximising on ICTs and profiting from them.

RN: ICTs are information and communication technologies and they come in various forms including computers, cell phones, PDA, etc. ICT policy is guidelines that are set in order to influence and determine decisions, actions, and other matters concerning ICT issues in a country or region. Readers need to know about ICT policies in order to make informed decisions about the access and use of ICTs in their capacity either as providers or users of ICT services.

WK: ICTs are the convergence of diverse media [radio, TV, mobile phones, wi-fi, digital radio, internet, fax, e-mail etc] to make communication and information exchange easier. ICT policy is a framework by which all these media operate. That said, these two facets are extremely important to my readers as they affect how they will interact with the rest of the world. A good example is if a policy puts a ceiling on the number of cell-phone operators a country should have. At the end of the day, the policy determines the level of growth in the telecommunication sector, which in the final

analysis verifies economic and social-political expansion and engagement.

EO: ICT by definition is information and communication technologies and this will include the Internet, mobile and fixed telephony, data communication, various technologies, the media, and satellite among others. Today ICTs are more relevant than ever to our audiences, and to the media as well. However, we have to give our audiences real life examples, for instance, with the VoIP – Voice over Internet Protocol, what VoIP means and how it can help cut down the cost of international phone calls. But if you use a lot of jargon, they would not understand it and instead think that such a story was not meant for them.

CO: My definition here is textbook-based: ICT (information and communications technologies) is a term that includes any communication device or application, encompassing: radio, television, cellular phones, computer and network hardware and software, satellite systems as well as the various services and applications associated with them, such as videoconferencing and distance learning. Now when you bring in the policy, it refers to guidelines, rules and regulations to guide operations of the above. It is very relevant, since people use ICTs in their day-to-day lives.

5. What is your main beat?

AW: I am a programmes producer who has to comment on a couple of ideas within a given timeframe. Coverage of ICTs in this case is motivated by any happenings in the sector, for instance my listeners need to know much more about the EASSy project and the hullabaloo around it. They might have an idea about the contents of the ICT policy but not all. Sporadic information does not help them. In my position I am more reactive than proactive concerning ICT issues given the amount of work that I have to do. We might introduce an ICT slot, but then the capacity of our producers needs to be enhanced. This exactly what determines the topics I choose to comment upon.

RN: I write general news on ICT, but with a preference for gender and ICT. This is because the gender dimension of ICTs tends to be ignored yet it is a well known fact that gender imbalance in use of resources in general has been identified as one of the key reasons that many development policies fail especially in Africa where women are treated as second class citizens.

WK: I am not on a beat. I decide what stories I will cover. It is for this reason, I chose to cover the National ICT formulation process for a record four months. Giving the

diverse shades of opinions influencing the process and the outcomes. ICT stories that showcase novelty, innovation and the policy which affects us all are sure to get my attention on 'any given Sunday'.

EO: My main beat is business and that includes ICTs. In the media we have come to see that ICT-related press conferences are very few - unlike other sectors such as banking, insurance, manufacturing, and the government agencies and departments. About giving attention to particular ICT stories, I think we judge ICT stories against all other business stories on a daily basis. So I won't say that for instance if a story is sourced from for instance Celtel or Safaricom, it will get priority. All business stories are treated equally.

CO: Feature/Business writing. ICT coverage in this country mostly falls under the business section, which is again the reason why most ICT stories are more of business-oriented and not developmental. This is so because the ICT industry is more vibrant than the civil society. I pay attention to all ICT stories I come across.

6. Have you done any particular coverage that helps to promote national ICT policy and implementation?

AW: Yes, I ran a three month campaign on Radio Waumini with WSIS youth Kenya prior to the Mombasa ICT policy conference and WSIS Tunisia. Since then my programmes have been limited to issues arising in the ICT sector.

RN: Yes, several.

WK: Yes I have. And they are plenty. Actually one of them was selected by ECA (UN Economic Commission for Africa) for reprint in one of their publications during WSIS Tunis Phase.

EO: Yes, we have covered various workshops where participants are discussing the ICT policy; one was at the Kenya School of Law for the proposed ICT Policy last year. We always attend workshops as often as we are invited and relay the outcome to the public as disseminators of information.

CO: Not that I can quickly remember at the moment.

7. How does your editor regard coverage of ICTs?

AW: My programmes manager has been very supportive to the extent of allocating airtime within our daily shows for ICT issues. What has been lacking is capacity-building on

ICT reporting. For instance I may be the only one currently reporting on ICT simply because I appreciate more what they are. I could not sustain the timeslot allocated as I was moved to other duties. Single-handedly I can't do much although I've been trying to impress my colleagues to show some interest as well.

RN: Luckily for me I write for a news agency whose main agenda is the coverage of ICT issues so all the stories I write get used.

WK: A good ICT story will always be published. As long as it is interesting, catchy - not dry and full of facts. Even editors need to learn sometimes. It is with this approach that most of my editors have accepted my works. There is tremendous support as long as my stories catch their eye. The basic rules of journalism still remain the same even on ICT issues.

EO: Personally I am an editor. However, I know many journalists and even fellow editors who see ICTs as a technical subject, so you need someone experienced in ICT, someone who has done it for a while, to be able break it down for the ordinary people. However, many media practitioners are still quite apprehensive about going for ICT stories unless it is a product launch and even for a product launch not the technical ones like VoIP. They would instead like to go for the stories like a new handset has been launched, such straight-forward stuff. Editors, even if they don't throw away a story, they will chop it into a very small piece because they don't see its value to their readers or audience. And, since they don't understand the subject, they are likely to downplay its important to the public. As to how can this be dealt with, regular capacity building programmes, not one week conferences, but one day regular training sessions will help them get in touch with developments in the industry, and get them to realise the importance and relevance to their audiences. This should also be extended to all ICT writers and reporters.

CO: We carry several ICT related stories every week, but stories have to compete with others and that is journalism.

7. Whom did you choose as sources for ICT stories?

AW: My sources have been found within KICTANET (Kenya ICT Action Network) depending on the subject at hand. As a programmes producer, the press releases only trigger my interest and I always try to go deeper than what has been offered in them. I'm also subscribed to a number of ICT sites and list serves, like Highway Africa, iconnect, KICTANET, Sangonet, Femnet, IDRC, among others and am

able to sieve emerging issues and turn them into relevant story ideas for some of my programmes. I hardly cut and paste any stories.

RN: I use a diversity of sources for my ICT stories including ICT service providers and users of the services.

WK: I have no single source of information. Diversity of sources helps shape an all-inclusive ICT policy, and ICT stories too are good if they come from different sources. I rely on industry players, civil society stakeholders and the internet.

EO: We source from everybody: government officials, operators in the industry, public and private sector, users, all of them are our sources because they give different side of a story. We sometimes rely on press releases and press conferences. And most of our stories today we get from the private sector. Occasionally, they will invite us for news events or when they have something to say. For instance, ISPs will sometimes call you whenever there is something they do not like; they will use the forum to make their point of view.

CO: Most of sources are players in the industry and the government, a little bit of civil society, with press releases from the all of them. This is so because they are mostly informed of happenings in the sector.

8. Does language affect ICT coverage?

AW: Yes, it does especially when one considers the jargon that accompanies the subject. Explaining concepts like the EASSy project to my listeners requires more than just the basic knowledge. When "experts" are invited they don't make it any easier. Although I try in most cases to "humanise" the stories, such attempts at times water down the issues under discussion.

RN: Yes the ICT area has many new and unfamiliar jargon terms for the readers and as a journalist I have to be conscious of this fact and always explain terms and ICT jargon as I write. My stories are in English and there I do not encounter the problems that reporters who use indigenous languages encounter.

WK: Yes it does.

EO: Yes, it does, for example, ICT news in Kiswahili. I will have to watch the English bulletin version to get to know what was being said. For instance, in the very first days, they would call Internet – Mtandao, computer – Tarakilishi,

email – barua pepe, fax – kipepesi ..etc.. Now we have got used to them, but in the first days it was difficult. I believe still a lot of people do not understand what these words or terms mean, it sounds like speaking another language.

CO: Yes, mainly the jargon, but I must first understand what I am reporting before giving it to my editor and finally the public. Given that I write for a mass publication not a journal, I must break down the jargon to accommodate all my readers.

9. Do you feel comfortable reporting on ICTs and ICT policy?

AW: I am comfortable reporting on ICTs. My association with KICTANET has exposed me to new ideas and resource persons, hence I am in a better position to address ICT issues from an informed perspective. It also depends with one's interest just like reporting on health and science. Covering the technical aspects might be problematic but I suppose proper research will address the issue. Maybe regular interactions with stakeholders in ICT sector will help demystify some of the concepts and reduce the burden of reporting on ICTs.

RN: Yes, I feel comfortable covering ICTs and ICT policy, and I have enough background. I get my background from reading extensively about ICTs in newspapers, magazines, journals and of course the internet. I do not enjoy covering the very technical parts of ICTs because they are complex. However I always seek the opinion of experts for them to simplify information to layman terms. The economics, policy and international dimensions of ICT issues are very interesting to cover especially for comparative reasons.

WK: I am comfortable reporting ICT. However just as ICT is dynamic and changes all the time, I would be more than happy to attend training workshops continuously to update myself and rebuild my knowledge reserves. This is because it will be of strategic importance to share knowledge and experiences with other stakeholders from different continents to help me understand the geo-politics and economic dimensions affecting ICTs and the 'techie' bits of the same.

EO: Yes, I am at home with reporting ICTs, I do have enough background. When I began my journalism career, I spent two years reporting ICTs while working for a ICT publication "tele.com". I do cover the very technical aspects of ICT as well but this takes a lot of one's time since you have to break it down more than you would do with other stories.

CO: Yes, I am comfortable covering ICTs and the policy as well; I have got some background from computer classes

as well as from chats with some members of KICTANET which includes some top ICT writers in this country.

10. Are there differences in coverage of ICTs and ICT policy now, compared to three years ago?

AW: From what I have seen and read in the papers there is a remarkable increase. ICT stories are making news and have got more space than three years ago. The coverage is also more qualitative with lots of human interest stories as opposed to conference coverage. But then on the electronic side more still needs to be done. I am not aware of any radio station, though, that has some interest in the coverage of ICTs in a more comprehensive way (save for our Radio Waumini). ICT stories in such media are still relegated to the occasional newsbeat stories that mostly originate from press releases and conferences. Investigative stories on ICTs are yet to be realised on radio and I believe time should be found to air them.

RN: Yes there are differences. In the past, ICT stories were mainly event-based with very few analytical articles. There was also very little interest and therefore space dedicated to ICT issues in print and broadcast media. There were hardly any policy issues to cover three years ago because most African countries did not even have a draft of an ICT policy. Now the drafts are out but are far from being becoming legislative policy. Also the ICT service providers such as cybercafés in the past operated as individuals but now they have formed associations and groupings that are powerful enough to challenge governments about ICT policy matters. Regarding the journalists, more are now trained on covering ICT issues than three years ago. Nowadays there are even some journalists who specialise in coverage of ICT issues and give critical comments. Also the editors are more aware of the importance of ICT issues and therefore give more space in print and broadcast media.

WK: There is a lot of difference. A number of journalists are picking up the subject nowadays as compared to three years ago, although more should be encouraged. Again as compared to three years ago, the articles now are more informed and better organised. They are also free from jargon.

EO: I think there is a lot of improvement. We are seeing a lot more stories getting into the media than ever before. The stories are of better quality, good length and of wider variety and a variety of sources quoted as well, as compared to how it was three years ago. I attribute this to an increase in knowledge about ICTs, and more people now including journalists are using ICTs in their day-to-day work.

Journalists are today using computers, internet, email and mobile phones to go about their routines.

CO: Oh a lot, today. There are a lot more stories and well informed stories than three years ago. This is due to the fact that the media has been recently recruiting young and dynamic journalists, some with interest in new technologies unlike the old guard some of whom I think suffer from some kind of technophobia.

11. If you have been at a CATIA-linked event, tell us if and how it impacted on your coverage of the field?

AW: My participation in KICTANET events has gone a long way in appreciating ICT issues. I am able to get the latest information on issues related to ICTs in Kenya and in the process generate new ideas for my programmes. Coverage of ICT issues using electronic media and radio in particular needs to be intensified. Much attention has been concentrated on print, yet radio and TV can also play an important role. I also realise that we need to enhance the capacity of journalists who can cover ICTs in our newsrooms. While appreciating that not all editors will be willing to let reporters specialise for obvious reasons,

Name of newspaper/s or other medium	Name of journalist:	Gender	Educational background, including training in covering ICTs	Main beat:
<i>Nouvel Horizon</i>	Issa Sall (IS)	Male	Journalist	Editor in chief
<i>Sud Quotidien</i>	Madior Fall (MF)	Male	General	Politics, acting chief editor
<i>Le Journal de l'Economie</i>	Ndiaye Sady (NS)	Male	Journalist, historian	Economics, ICT economics and policy
<i>Le Populaire</i>	Mahmoudou Wane (MW)	Male	Journalist	Politics; social; judiciary
<i>Le Soleil</i>	Jean Pirez (JP)	Male	Journalist	General, culture
<i>Walfadjri</i>	Fatou Kine Sene (FKS)	Female	Journalist	Social
<i>Le Quotidien</i>	Fatou Faye (FF)	Female	Journalist	Social

1. What role does the media play in policy development? Can you give some examples of where you have played a role in the past and provide some stories you have written?

IS: That is not our objective in the first place. Our main purpose is to provide information. We do not really pay attention to what happens to that information after we have

periodic workshops for journalists won't do any harm.
RN: No.

WK: If Highway Africa and a training session organised by ECA qualifies as such then I am home and dry.

EO: I have been to one, the [KICTANET] editors training that was held in March 10-13 this year in Mombasa [supported by CATIA]. I learnt a lot of things about developments taking in the sector. I was at the event both as a participant and a reporter and afterwards reported to the public the new things I realised had taken place in the ICT sector. There is a lot of room to link the media and ICT practitioners, and apart from the editors, reporters who are actually the foot soldiers should also be included in programmes such as the one that was held in Mombasa.

3.6 Senegal interviews

"ICT touches on everything, so we should make it interesting to all. Why not in Wolof, Fula, Seereer if that can help introduce it to the farmer ..."

published it.

MF: The media do have an impact on policy-making in general, whatever the sector of public life - if only because of our position in relaying public opinion. For example, Sud Quotidien has been very influential on the critical issue of the Casamance secession war. Even if we cannot talk of

any policy that was influenced, we can say that the series of articles produced by Sud Quotidien definitely influenced the solutions that the government adopted. Another issue was the famous "Jaxaay Plan" for social housing which the government decided to activate shortly after Sud Quotidien published a report on the conditions that the victims of floods were living in. So yes, it is fair to say that in Senegal the media do have an influence on policy-making or public decision-making.

NS: I cannot say for sure that journalists play an active part in the making of policies but I can certainly say that journalists do sensitise people on various social and economic phenomena. The government of Senegal has announced the liberalisation of the telecommunications sector since July 2005, but there is still little sign of that. We still have a de facto monopoly. In August 2005, I contacted an official of Sentoo [note: Sentoo is the main Internet provider in Senegal], to interview him about Internet telephony. He would not speak openly, calling it a sensitive issue. In the end, I had to limit the story to raising issues. We know the issue is a difficult one even in the North, let alone in African countries. Some people do have things to say, yet they will only speak off the record. For example, an engineer of a major ICT company in Senegal said clearly that no law actually forbids anyone from doing Internet-based telephony but no operator dares start it. Even if Senegal is ahead of many African countries, we still have a lot of efforts to make. Accessibility is still an issue. For example, one hour of connectivity costs 3000 CFA francs [note: 5,50 US dollars] in the countryside where as it is an average of 300 CFA francs [note: about 50 US cents] in the capital city Dakar. When we write about this, we do get feedback but it is generally very biased and it serves specific interests.

MW: The daily work we do can generate awareness. We the press are at the crossroads of diverse political forces. Our work somehow plays the role of opinion polls and allows everyone to know what the leaders of political parties have in mind. When it comes to parliamentarians, it is not that obvious. The press hardly ever anticipates on policy-making issues and processes. We focus more on politics. For example, we also tend to neglect crime topics. It is all about the means to cover these subjects: political news is so much easier and cheaper to cover and treat. A communique, a press conference and you have an article, whereas social issues require real fieldwork journalism – i.e. investigation. Unfortunately, very few of our newsrooms can afford the financial and human resources that requires.

JP: The first role of the journalist is to inform, to

disseminate news, about the politics practised by leaders and the authorities. In general the media willingly echo these decisions. In general, it's about communicating immediate events like a public authority decision, an inauguration, a signature of an agreement, an electronic equipment gift or an internet site opening. It's often on such occasions that the media have the opportunity to deal with subjects connected to the ICT. They also deal with this subject without waiting for such events, but they do try to know what is happening in terms of news. My relation with covering ICT is a long one. If you visit the collections of the newspaper at the training school (Cesti) you will see the file I wrote in 1986 on ICT which at that time was in its infancy in Senegal. There were a few computers. It was a subject that already fascinated me. I produced a file at "Soleil" on the same theme ten years ago. Back then we were not technologically supplied at "Soleil". At that time I talked about the period when people would stay in front of their television and channel-hop, but at this period we only had one channel in Senegal. The subject fascinated me, and my interest has remained. Today, even if we don't like ICT, we're obliged to use them, because they have rushed onto our desks, in daily life and in our homes. We use them in one manner or in another with the cell phone, the computers, the digital channel we have by satellites, all the possibilities we have. We also talk about a digital identity card. In any case, even if we're not fascinated, we have to do our best to know all the wheels that condition our daily life.

FKS: I cannot see any role played by the media in the field of ICT or ICT-policy. Simply because the Senegalese media hardly deal with subjects related to ICT. Or, if it is the case, it's in a superficial and boring way. It comes as out as something basically factual, when there's a computer gift ceremony, or a computer equipment gift, among others. It means nothing in relation with the place occupied today in the 21st century by the ICT. Considering the small space they dedicate to the topic, I even dare say that if it were only for the media, ICT would not have developed to this level in Senegal. According to a Panos Institute document, the space dedicated to ICT in three media (Soleil, Sud Quotidien and Walfadjri) is a small percentage when compared to topics such as politics, economy, social, culture and sports reports. I never wrote any article that made a contribution to any ICT policy process.

FF: As for the role of the media in general, I believe the press has an important part to play in every action taken. Talking about ICT, we are the first concerned as in ICT, you have the letter "I" for Information. It is our duty to disseminate information on ICT so that the disenfranchised can access information. Compared with other countries in

the sub-region, Senegal offers lower telephone costs, but I believe this can still go down. Sonatel holds a position of monopoly and it has to accept the liberalisation that was passed. If Sonatel still does not accept it, it's because it holds the golden key. I remember writing three articles on that theme. And I remember writing an article on the need for education about ICT. I mean building ICT literacy.

2. Do you view your medium as policy-influential in 2006?

IS: I would say yes. Simply because we deal with economics, politics, legal issues and decision makers have to read what we publish and take into account the feedback from the readership. We have gained some influence. Not one single newspaper can claim influence, the media in general can. The media do publish and broadcast some comments that are taken into account.

MF: Sud Quotidien is obviously less influential in 2006 than it was in the past two years because of the particular situation it is going through [note: there are major tensions between the current regime and the Sud Communication group]. Yet it remains pretty influential as it does set the tone on major issues covered by the press. It is fair to say that Sud Quotidien's editorials on public affairs still structure the coverage of issues within the sector. For example, in the current management crises at the ICS, the national chemical company, at SENELEC, the national electric company, and at SAR, the national energy company. Sud Quotidien gave the scoops and opened the debates which led to official investigation on the ICS management, to a public hearing of the SENELEC authorities, and to public awareness of the gas and oil shortage in the country.

NS: I think Le Journal de l'Economie has real impact in several sectors. Good indicators are the frequent contacts that the business operators in general but also the national telecom regulatory agency in this case maintains with us - even though some of this is off the record. Many other players in the sector insist on giving us their vision and opinion after we have published an article. They send us a lot of documents. They react a lot. Apart from that it is difficult to say. The situation has pretty much been the same since 2003. Players have generally wanted to associate Le Journal de l'Economie with their activities whether they are economic operators or consumers' organisations. It has to do with the strategic role that we play by providing information.

MW: In my view, it is a question of power balance. It has to do with the politicians and how many of them will deal with this or that medium.

JP: There are plenty of things we can do. But "Le Soleil" as a public service medium and more than any private newspaper is involved and concerned with the democratisation of ICT. Everybody saw that priority of President Abdoulaye Wade. "Le Soleil", as a public media, is interested and implicated in the democratisation of ICT, even if it can do much more. Perhaps our work pace, and our state of being in a developing country, are the reasons why we don't have the means to totally play our role in this domain. As a tool of development, then, we can do nothing but support these politics. I think that there is more and more a sharp awareness of ICT since we use it every day. We have an internet site, we are technologically supplied at the editorial section of the paper, we work on a network. We totally use the possibilities offered by the ICT. Take yesterday [Thursday, 5 May 2006], there was a convention to agree on the digitalisation of archives with the Francophone international organization. So, there is a set of decisions that show goodwill in this area of ICT.

FKS: I don't think that my newspaper can influence the decision makers on the elaboration of ICT policies. Because to be able to influence, you must propose worthy articles which after being appreciated, can have a certain impact, raise awareness at various levels. If I take the case of my newspaper, Walfadrji, it rarely carries articles related to ICT. But it's not only my newspaper, it's the same for other media on the place. Research produced by Panos and CATIA shows it. ICT stories are relegated at second level or in the back pages. I think journalists' interest in ICT issues has gone down drastically. Years ago, people considered that it was something new hence the interest. Remember, it was then called "New technologies of information and communication (NICT)". That was true for the general public as well as for the media. It's the reason why press talked about it with interest in that time. We're in a global world, the media generally feel they need to bring home a sense of what is happening out there. Today, we suppose that everybody is aware of the issue and that maybe the job is done. This decline may explain the fact that the media no longer talk about these questions. Beyond the fading of the initial hype, there was the lack of knowledge on computer related issues and all accessories. Then it can be explained by the fact that the ICT vocabulary was way too technical for journalists. Organisations and experts must make efforts to train the journalists who are connected with the sector, so that they can add value to their coverage.

FF: No! Not our newspaper, simply because the structures and mechanisms are not there. I mean, we do not have a section dedicated to ICT and we generally dedicate very

little time and space to ICTs. Same as other Senegalese newspapers. So we know we have not influenced any policy process. And Senegal does not have a clear policy anyway. It can be up to three months before we publish anything on ICT in Le Quotidien. You basically have papers on the topic when there are seminars or other isolated activities. That's all. I remember that after attending a sub-regional training workshop organised by the Panos Institute, I wanted to produce a dossier on the mushrooming of blogs. I have to confess that I never did. You are a journalist... You know how it is in our newsrooms... We have to hit the field all the time, reporting on hot news. You may have a dossier in the making, but they never give you the time to finalise it. And, you also tend to lack the necessary will to finish it. That also needs to be said.

3. How do you see your role as a journalist?

IS: As journalists at Nouvel Horizon, all we do is news, and maybe comments and columns very now and then. We publish editorials sometimes, but news is really our focus. Whether ICT or other issues of public interest, we deal with news. If an issue strongly brings up national interest, then we may consider giving our opinion.

MF: Truth is: the role of watchdog is as important as the role of information provider. We are not neutral and do not pretend to be. We do have an editorial project and a vision for our society which determines our approach to journalism beyond professional rules and ethics. About ICT, we have to say that we still have not decided to address the issue, let alone any policy issue concerning ICT. We are mere consumers of computers, of the Internet. At best our media have a presence on the Internet. We do need to start thinking this whole issue through. There is a lot to be done. Even in our own field we are not thinking usefully. Some 12,000 Internet users visit Sud Online every day. If all those visitors would pay, we would not have difficulties paying salaries! How to take advantage of these new technologies? We have to think of it and make it happen.

NS: I do not think of my work as a watchdog. The main thing is to inform people. Even if I tried to influence in one direction or another, they would soon find out. So, I only try to raise issues, show what is at stake. Give facts. It is up to the reader to analyse. There are many battles to fight on ICT-related issues. Again, we have been talking about liberalisation but up to this date, any newcomer has to seek authorisation from the historical operator before they can start their business. Today, we are witnessing a phenomenal development of cellular phones and there is a second company on ground, Tigo. This company still

depends on the historic operator, Sonatel, to provide and allocate numbers. This delays operations unnecessarily and without justifications. The regulatory agency, ART, should be playing a part. Or again, Tigo has recently introduced billing per second and has been advertising heavily for that. ART has recently prohibited that advertising, but ART's mandate is technical, and therefore it should not interfere in tariff competition. It is the role of the media to be highlighting these issues. There are lots of opportunities to draw from the Internet, but access to Internet remains a luxury in Senegal. We talk about digital solidarity. We want the North to assist us but we are not doing our minimal part. The basics that Senegal should ensure are a fully powered regulatory body, clear regulations, facilities for new operators to enter the field. In short, the main battles to fight are the battle for visible progress in the sector and the battle for fairness between new operators and the historic operator.

MW: As I see things, Senegal is lagging behind. You hardly find media that take editorial stands for a particular initiative. And yet, a respected newspaper should be able to do that. This has nothing to do with facts. We all know they are sacred. Senegalese media and journalists should not be afraid of taking stands. Journalists still tend to be shy, although they actually have leanings behind the scene. That does not help our readers and does not make our editorial lines legible. Coming back to politics, in my view, there is nothing wrong in endorsing a candidate's programme for presidential election if it matches your editorial line. It just helps the readers to understand better. Such newspapers exist in France, in the USA where we draw lots of our references. And yet, in Senegal, we journalists still shy away when we are confronted with high stake issues like that. Beside hard facts, there is room for position papers. Nothing to be ashamed of. In the ICT field, there are lots of opportunities. Senegal is a country where it matters. I believe we are ahead of Magreb even in terms of the development of Internet. But the press has not kept the pace and it is disappointing. Online media do not even update their news. That would be the minimum. Look at the poor quality of the websites. Look at the contact sections. They are often outdated. The space dedicated to advertising shows no strategy. Those online media have little initiative or expertise while there is a growing market and potential. A large section of our readership has gone virtual and advertisers such as travel companies or banks are ready to pay. It is a shame! Also, cyberspace is really democratising. Opportunities are growing in terms of news and advertising. Unfortunately, colleagues aren't doing much. They are still very shy, and you would wonder why. Print media are losing. Even us at Le Populaire, selling a copy for 100 FCFA

– approximately 20 cents of a dollar- [note of the editor: similar papers are generally sold 200 FCFA], loses. Thank God, we have good advertising revenues. The advantages of an online publication are clear: you cut down on so many expenses. With good information and serious journalism, you can have a good online medium. I hope it takes off in the coming years.

JP: I have benefited from many training sessions and placements and I am a member of a journalists' network that is engaged in popularising ICT and making people aware of ICT as tools of development. It's the same as the journalist's mission which is to inform but here, if we are specialised, we must make people understand how to work with ICT. For example, about what we can do with the phone via internet. There are many issues about it, and it's important for people to know them. Concerning telecoms between the regions, one can do a lot of things with the new packages. With the reduction of the connection price, it will be easier for all the citizens to have the Internet at home. Specially for those who have the means, then there will be the possibility to do remote learning or work and many other things. Our role is to decode all this with the aim of lighting the way for people on the usefulness of ICT.

FKS: We have a vanguard role, plus that of a sentry, and we act as a news supplier for the populations we have to educate. It would really be beneficial to the ICT, but unfortunately, the barrier is at the technical level. Journalists don't have the latitude to better understand, and as basic as it may sound, you have to understand first before you communicate. I think that journalists have to be equipped to better play a role.

FF: Of course what we do has an impact because people read us and listen to us. Journalists' work forces people's attention on issues. Therefore, I believe we have a role to play. In Tunis, although I did not attend, I followed everything that took place there – decision-makers confessed they made a mistake by not involving journalists from the beginning of the process. That statement speaks a lot! They are aware of the role we can play in policy-making, in sensitising and in so many other dimensions.

4. What do you understand by ICTs and 'ICT-policy'? What is its relevance to your readers?

IS: If my understanding is correct, ICTs are about the way all communication in the world has gone immaterial. ICTs allow our countries to skip steps which would otherwise take us another 100 years. ICTs are valuable shortcuts in the development of our economies and therefore of

great interest to our countries. To boost economies and to reduce distance. As for ICT-policy, Senegal has had one for quite sometime. There has been a plan and it is being implemented. The problem today is more about the new generation of doers. The pioneers do not seem to have successors in terms of imagining the ICT landscape for our society. The authorities should really focus on that aspect. Some 10-20 years ago, pioneers dug for this gold mine and found interesting and diversified niches. Young people then had more general training and skills in ICTs and created companies, hence the development. Today, the young people in the field are very specialised and look for jobs. They do not create that much any more. In the past, the same person would have a fair understanding of information, telecommunication and business. There is less horizontal knowledge today.

MF: For me, ICTs are a formidable capacity to shrink time and space, to communicate almost in real time across the planet. For journalists, it means being part of the newsroom, wherever we are located. ICT policies should help bridge the digital gap within our corporation. For example, promote the possibilities to produce more information on regional, remote parts of the country. All of this could happen with appropriate policies, and if decision-makers would create a conducive economic and social environment for the press and all the other sectors. The reality is that, in general, we have a very theoretical discourse on ICT. Very little practical purpose. There is a lot of gesticulation around ICT, with little grasp on everyday life. I do not know of any substantial measure, bill or parliamentary debate on the issue. Actually a lot of education is necessary for journalists and parliamentarians. Again, another concrete example concerning the sector: we watch more and more online news providers appear on the Internet. Most of them are mere looters, picking for free information produced by colleagues without any kind of consequences. There is no law to protect those media and journalists who produced the information in the first place. So what law for better and regulated access? That is a very relevant question which remains unaddressed, even by those concerned in the first place! Let's talk about the hot issue of the digital ID. We are one year ahead of the elections and the whole process of registering citizens and voters has started without any serious debate on the critical issues that lie behind it. What use, improvements and advantages? All the issues of individual liberties related to biometric data are not being discussed. What risks? What limits? Should the electoral code be reviewed in light of this major change? We are doing things in reverse order. In the field of education, there should be urgent and proactive policies to promote and frame access for the

young. Cyber pornography is not addressed anywhere, yet we know that teenagers attend cyber cafes every evening for as little as 200 CFA francs [note: approx 40 US cents]. What's the social impact? This is a real problem. Are we equipped to engage in these debates? The truth is we are still very dependent on European references for that. Many more segments of public life are now ICT dependent or will be very soon and we need to engage in reflection. Our very lives have been totally modified by ICT. We are a society in mutation and we are hardly observing, studying the phenomenon to provide adequate frameworks. Why keep consuming passively?

NS: Strictly, ICT means Information and Communication Technologies. But it has to be understood as a broad sector that encompasses the Internet, data transmission activities, cellular phone, landlines, any devices used to communicate, inform, propagate messages... An ICT policy in a country like Senegal is the power of public decision-makers to determine all that will happen in the ICT environment. Taxes, operations, regulation, legal environment. For our readers, the most important thing is to be kept abreast and sensitised because it is a fast evolving industry. New applications appear frequently such as online payments. There is a lot in it for them and they want to know.

MW: ICTs are information and communication technologies. ICT-policy in Senegal is lagging behind the actual development of the Internet. There is a legal void and a lot to be done. The technology is here. Human resources are here to take it further. If there was a good policy to promote investment, Senegal could explore more of this area. If businessmen would take more risk, we could take significant steps.

JP: ICTs are electronic devices like the CD. People were unwilling to use them five years ago. But, this changed suddenly. There are indeed all these engines that constitute ICT. We have to sensitise the reader on the interest of the macro level, national or international, and the considerable stakes involved. During the WSIS, Internet governance was one of axis of the debates. It's an issue: who is to govern Internet? Who is going to profit in this? And how would Internet be governed? And if we stay in the background, just following the players, are we going to lose? It's also one of the issues that we must try to master and light the way for readers.

FKS: ICT as its name indicates is "New technologies of information and communication". It's the computer tool, the search engines, and other tools that allow us to communicate with others elsewhere. They are tools that

we, the journalists use much. We cannot go without these tools, they are helpful.

FF: When we say ICT, we think science, scientific studies. We should think and write about ICT in such a way that the six year old pupil or the person who holds a PhD can understand what it is about. ICT touches on everything, so we should make it interesting to all. Why not in Wolof, Fula, Seereer if that can help introduce it to the farmer in the regions of Sine or Saloum? Show them what's in it for them. It is all about how we address the topic.

5. What is your main beat? How does this speak to your coverage of ICT and ICT policy in particular?

IS: At Nouvel Horizon, we have a section called MEDIACOM which focuses on communication and media. It does not focus on ICT. We try to deal with a diversity of topics. We do not write for an ICT readership as we don't believe it exists. As editor in chief, I can hardly propose a new section or new product in that area. We don't have any editorial line concerning ICTs really.

MF: In general, we cover issues related to communication, telephony, access to telephone, access to the Internet. All of these call our attention professionally on a daily basis. But we are confronted with one major obstacle: it is difficult for the press to cover issues related to telephony as the press is somehow held hostage by the national telephone company. Any [critical] article is quickly followed by retaliation. The national telephone company holds a position of monopoly and holds important economic and political power. We do tend to pay more attention to issues related to access in terms of cost, tariffs, technical availability.

NS: My personal interest is in innovations - any development in the sector worldwide. In Senegal, I follow and cover policy issues, reforms, the liberalisation issue, economic competition. Sometimes I receive invitations by Sonatel when they want to protest against this or that allocation that goes against their interest. I generally do not pay attention to such events.

MW: We, at Le Populaire, generally pick stories from the Internet, from various European agencies or from Google. You know Google is a big online library for us journalists. For example, if we want background documents even on Abdoulaye Wade, our president, or on Jean Paul Dias, one of the opposition's leaders, the fastest way to find archives is to go to Google! National archives in Senegal are so complicated, inaccessible and dusty that it turns us off. So...one click of a mouse and you are ready to cut and

paste! Think of the time we are saving and of the energy we save on any topic we decide to cover.

JP: ICT is a large subject. Coverage is specially aimed to sensitise the population on the technologies which arrive here - technologies that we sometimes don't use perfectly because we are ignorant. Somebody has to use the terms "to teach" and "uneducated" in ICT because that is the issue today. We are going to be more linked with sophisticated software whose functioning must be known. Just for a computer, there are packages, a system. We have possibilities such as digitising files, photos or other, and manipulating them. There is study, and training to do to know ICT. Today, there are many people, even school children or high level students, not able to do the basic practices. In the short-term, with education we'll have young people mastering the packages and other technological tools and even creating them. I think that it's also about building the Information Society, the society of knowledge.

FKS: My centre of interest in relation to the ICT is always how it affects the population. As I realise the disparities and all the problems that the people and communities are confronted with to access ICT, I feel the pressure to write. I had a problem of time, which prevented me from doing reportage on this regrettable situation. For one hour of connection in the country side, you have to pay two thousand CFA francs [approx. 3.5 to 4 UfS\$], while in Dakar, you just pay just 150 CFA francs [approx. 30 cents of a US\$] for one hour. I am very sorry and worried for the students who live in those areas and need to do research, especially if they know what's going on elsewhere. Even in Podor [north of Senegal], the situation is the same, we wandered through the district for nearly a day looking for a cybercafe: in vain. I think what we experienced in Podor really calls on us to do something. We have to highlight these disparities to get the authorities to react. It's really distressing that in the 21st century, we see part of the planet suffering from a lack of computer tools and Internet. Unfortunately, I haven't been able so far because of time. But, I think that I'll do it. I wish to go back to these localities.

FF: I mainly do factual reporting. I have always felt that editorials and comments are for the chief editor, his deputy and journalists who have at least 10 years of experience. You know those seasoned journalists who know the tricks, or know certain issues well and have built some authority. But I personally believe that journalism is not just about strong analyses. Unfortunately, here in Senegal, only those who write analyses are considered great journalists. I believe the great journalist is the one who goes to the field, on reportage, and produces dossiers and investigations.

I believe that is also a way to influence policy processes. Again, not just analyses and comments. Coming back to our production on ICT, I have personally done a lot of facts-based reporting, but I owe it to the truth to say that all of it was rather tedious and boring. Nothing close to the interesting articles we could write on the topic. Now... when we manage to go out with the clear purpose of producing reportage, it is generally lively and we actually start offering useful answers and comments to the questions people ask or have in mind.

6. Have you published or republished any particular coverage that helps to promote national ICT policy and implementation?

IS: We have published quite a number of papers but I cannot tell about the impact. I have received no feedback either...

MF: I cannot recall any such coverage. Even though I, myself, am member of an ICT network of journalists. We have not done any serious advocacy work on the matter.

NS: I have written a lot but I cannot say whether people have taken my writings into account to refine or change things. Really I could not say. What I can definitely say is that I have had feedback. People have tried to influence me. But whether any of my papers ever influenced one particular policy or decision is difficult to measure.

MW: Le Populaire did publish one or two dossiers about access to Internet in telecentres to highlight the urgent need for a policy to protect the youth. Although telecentres all have disclaimers up the wall, we know teenagers of about 15 have unrestricted access to pornography for instance. There are some dangerous fora. Paedophilia. Online dating... And we know young people are experts of the Internet. That dossier must have been published about two years ago, and I don't think anything came out of it. I still have not seen any law or bill to that effect. Senegal is lagging behind on social considerations linked to Internet. I go to cyber cafes. I sit and check the list of last visited websites. It is a serious issue that requires attention.

JP: I have followed the development of ICT, trying to inform as much as possible, perhaps to sensitise on the advantages and on the issues. The drawbacks if they exist, are minor. The advantages are much more at the level of a tool for development. I don't remember dealing with a subject which particularly struck minds or which pushed the government or other to take measures. But if I could do so, I would not hesitate because it is a positive sense.

FKS: In general, all the subjects I dealt with are reports and documents connected to the ICT. Perhaps the reportage I want to do in Kebemer and Podor can bring the authorities to take concrete decisions.

FF: Senegal does not have a clear national ICT policy and it is a shame especially as we are pretty much ahead of many other countries in terms of regulations. I know I have not made any input in the process that led to those regulations but I also am very much aware that it is an important thing to do, as we cannot talk about ICT in the 21st century or about information society in general without regulation. I am a member of a network working on ICT issues. I am the secretary general of Connexion des Medias en TIC (Com Tic) [Connecting Media and ICT]. The network was set up during the sub-regional workshop organised by the Panos Institute. We even have a plan of action which we have not yet submitted to our main partner. We will do it soon. And then also propose it to other potential partners such as CATIA or Next Telecom.

7. How does the editor (or if you are editor) regard coverage of ICTs? Are ICT stories frequently dropped for not being newsworthy?

IS: I have never thrown out any article, unless it is not well written. This is simply because the topics are decided, discussed and planned in advance. Our newsroom has a clear top down way of working. We cannot ignore ICT anyway: it is everywhere around us, in our everyday life. Any well-documented article is published but the truth is we need to go beyond the current level and address economic and social aspects of ICT.

MF: If any good article falls on my desk, I do give it space in the paper. But truth is we really need to go beyond factual coverage of ceremonies or whatever event. We need to question ICT for their economic and social value and implications.

NS: I cannot recall any paper rejected or even modified in content.

MW: I assess the relevance on an article to the paper. Le Populaire's readership is different from Le Soleil's or the other dailies. The readership is more "of the people". So that determines a lot of what goes in.

JP: Our newsroom is sensitive to the evolution and development of the ICT, and especially the interest we have to be in the sector. We begin with the manager who did all

his best for us to have a website. I think that there are a lot of ideas for the "Soleil" to totally participate in popularising ICT as a tool of development. We talk about digital solidarity, but besides there is a kind of solidarity when the media are popularising, sensitising, people to fight the digital divide.

FKS: My editor-in-chief is very sensitive to articles related to the ICT. He never rejected an article concerning ICT. On the contrary for all the reports I had to do, he put in the order or gave me the request to cover.

FF: Our editor-in-chief is very open and interested in all things related to ICT. But it is not the case with other editors. He authorised me to attend an ICT workshop in Saly. If he was not open, I would never have attended. When I came back from Saly, I wrote a series of articles. It took two months to get them published. The editors in the different desks would throw them at each other like burning potatoes, each claiming it did not fit in his section. It went on and on like that until I finally gave the articles to the editor-in-chief. He published them in a week-end edition. It is true we are not where we should be in terms of ICT, but the main problem is that all topics suffer from the dictatorship of political news. Only culture and sports manage to get by. Environment, sustainable development, among other important topics should find their way into the various sections, but no. Can we seriously think of developing ourselves if we keep ignoring ICT? It is fair to say that today, ICTs are the cornerstone of everything. Unfortunately, our bosses in the press are like builders who keep refusing that very stone under the excuse that ICT does not sell. This commercial concern is misleading them. It is really a pity.

8. Whom do you choose as sources for ICT stories? Do you rely mainly on press releases? Is most of the material cut and pasted from other sources?

IS: We generally rely on news agencies, web sites of well-known international media. We also use a lot of press releases, especially from organisations and companies focusing on ICT.

MF: First, we have to say that the level of journalists' knowledge on ICT - at least at Sud Quotidien - remains very basic. Hence the pretty poor factual coverage of activities initiated by the big players in the field such as the national telephone company. Journalists do not produce documented dossiers and there are little studies available or known for them to draw from. Our main sources are the very communication departments of those same key players in the telecommunication sector or computer industry. Sometimes we draw some good information from

the Internet but report it rather haphazardly.

NS: I do not rely on press releases. Most of the time I get my information by meeting people which allows me to exchange with them and get their points of view. I can only remember one time when I drew most of my information from a communique. The source was the ITU. It was for an about VoIP development. I generally do some investigation: just before the liberalisation, I produced articles on regulation using a document in which the World Bank was advising Senegal to adopt a particular framework for ICT and to avoid certain mistakes. I try to meet a variety of players to balance my coverage. For me, the best source is the ITU. I also rely on a variety of organisations that specialise in ICT. Financial institutions provide valuable information on various economic sectors, including ICT. For example, they provide annual figures on the number of subscribers, the providers' balance sheets. Operators can also be a good source. Dailies do not generally cover ICT related issues. Sometimes we attend the same ICT events and when I read their productions, I am not sure we really covered the same meeting. At Journal de l'Economie, we have a way of working based on data, and our tradition is to show progression or regression. Compared to what we do, other media could seem more superficial so they are not of great use to us. About official sources, in the field of ICT, it has become a bit confusing. ART, the regulatory agency was created to draft an ICT policy for Senegal. Now, ART has been put under the President's office with a bureau in the President's palace. A Special Advisor to the President on ICT has been appointed and is located in the President's palace as well. A Ministry of Telecommunications has also been created. And in terms of policy-making, this ministry's and ART's works clearly overlap. Responsibilities are blurred. It is a bit messy.

JP: In general, the press releases wake us a little from our drowsiness because we are generalists. We don't only cover ICT. The fact of being everywhere disperses us and weakens all the weight we would have in working on ICT. Out of that, some new facts can attract us. I myself have a list of subjects I would like to deal with, but my work doesn't give enough freedom to do it totally. I'm obliged to follow current events. If I have free time, I try to exploit it by dealing with an ICT subject. With the practice we have had during training courses, we founded a journalists' network. When reporting, we now know who to call – the experts in ICT. There are Alain Just Coly, ATI's people, CATIA people. There are also Ken Lohento and many resourceful persons we have met. In addition to that, they teach us to better know the Internet, we know that there are possibilities to have the news in real time. These people are plugged into ICT so

that you can have answers automatically when you send them questions by mail. There are sites you can visit to get answers. I don't have enough time but there are subjects and I would do interesting things if I start to do so.

FF: I know a man at the Panos Institute called Ken Lohento. He is in charge of CIPACO. He is a good source on ICT and he is always ready to help and share information. Even if he is overworked, he always finds the time to answer your questions and give you the courage to move on with your paper. When I was shortlisted to represent Senegal at a meeting in Burkina Faso, I had to make a presentation on "ICT and globalisation". I called him and we had a long chat on issues. He is the main source I use.

9. Does language affect ICT coverage?

IS: That is a real issue and problem. ICT coverage and documentation is stuffed with jargon and almost only in English. Specialists do not make it easy for the public. They do not help the press either. The whole thing is really not accessible.

MF: The general level of illiteracy in the country must have an effect on how ICT evolves here and therefore on the way we cover it. One thing we can observe is that more and more young people visit cybercafes for long hours. A majority of those young people do not have a high level of education. That reality generates a new language. They tend to communicate with basic, essential words which we journalists of an older generation do not fully understand. Their language is no longer very accessible to us. There is also the issue of local languages which is more political. The Internet does accommodate Chinese, Swedish and other languages, why not our African local languages even though most of them remain to be codified? Actually ICTs may be the catalyser for the codification. Or else this should give us the courage to declare our languages inappropriate to contribute to the evolution of ICTs. We have to draw lessons from what happened within FM radios over the past 10 years. The use of local languages has expanded dramatically and young people have done outstanding work of semantic research, creating vocabulary to cover modern reality, such has the "doxu naxtu", the Wolof word for demonstration. It does speak to natives because it literally means "walking to express grief". So, in short, it works both ways. ICTs affect our language as well as our language affects the evolution of ICTs. There is a dialectical interaction.

NS: Yes, the ICT sector is a very jargoned one. If you decide to write an article, you really need to explain for your

readers. This jargon is the reason why so many people are not well informed. Journalists find it difficult to turn the jargon into accessible language. For example, Internet-based telephony is known and referred to as VoIP. If you do not know it, you can be stuck. Many journalists just chose to avoid certain topics because they do not know the jargon. There is also the predominance of English. Most of the information on ICT is only available in English. If the journalist is not able to translate before he can write, then he or she has a problem.

MW: There is an awful amount of jargon that mystifies people. The terminology is too complex for the average Senegalese citizen. And yet, I can say that in Senegal, people – urban – are reasonably knowledgeable on ICT. They know the basics. They know how to use navigation software.

FF: Yes, one has to admit that language always stands as a barrier, a stumbling block. It is a problem. Myself, I still have no idea how to say "new technologies" in Wolof! Imagine if I were a radio journalist and I had to translate an element... I would be stuck, helpless and embarrassed. I think that we should lead an advocacy campaign to have certain softwares translated to Wolof. Enough with this passive attitude, waiting for things to happen elsewhere and come to us ready for consumption. It is time for action. It is simply unthinkable and unbearable that in the 21st century, that Africa and its children should be still waiting for somebody to think and prepare the future for them – us – somewhere out there. How long will we stand aside and watch things happen? We have missed a lot of opportunities and I believe we will miss more and miss this revolution for want of a proactive attitude. Are we seeking an alternative? Again, the challenge is to struggle to have Wolof which practically stands as a national language be recognised at the international level, so that we start having software in Wolof. And why not software in our other languages: Seereer, Fula? I am sure there are lots of competent people out there on the continent who can create relevant software in our national languages. We have geniuses that we keep idle. They should be able to work on these challenges and we should put them to work. Good strong efficient lobbying needs to be carried out.

10. Do you feel comfortable reporting on ICTs and ICT policy? Do you have enough background in terms of technology, legal, economic issues and international policies?

IS: We get by... But we are not properly equipped and we cannot produce big dossiers. We cannot confirm any article and that is a weakness for a newsroom like ours. Our

expertise is very limited. That impacts on our capacity to cover and to control [quality]. It is a big, big problem!

MF: Not at all! It just shows how illiterate we are in ICTs. We may be capable of upgrading ourselves in so many other fields, we have hard time with ICT and we remain pretty ignorant. Not enough training opportunities, not enough documentation. We also have to say that we tend to marginalise ourselves. We are willing to be consumers but we make little effort to become actors. As though the tools were somebody else's and we should just take advantage of it. Nobody really seems to care. The weakness lies in the newsrooms.

NS: In life, you always learn. I do have the basic tools. When I have to cover any particular topic on ICT, I have to prepare, get some background, either from the Internet or some other way. There are innovations all the time anyway. Even for things you thought you knew or understood, you realise that you can shed a different light on them every now and then...If you don't want to remain a mere spectator.

MW: Personally I believe I spend more time online than I read news in hard copy. I know almost all big papers of the world that are online. Only the language barrier stops me as my English and my Spanish are limited. But I don't feel totally lost and ignorant. We may not be up to the level on the issues but we know how to do business with Google! If you have a good website for example, you can make up to 2,000 US \$ every year with them. I have limited knowledge of the law but I have a rough idea of issues related to domain names. How to open an account. A server... Just enough to get by...

JP: I like ICT and I wish to know much more about it. When I compare myself to our computer engineers, knowing all the things they can do, I realise I have much more to learn. I would like to create a web site. We can learn these things. Nevertheless, I can say that I'm really at ease in the covering and treatment of these questions. In general, when there are questions, these must be tackled in an understandable way by everybody and technology explained.

FF: One is never equipped enough. We are under the constant need to update and upgrade our knowledge in all areas of life anyway. In my case concerning ICT, I think I have acquired a useful knowledge kit thanks to the various training sessions I have attended. With them, I now feel comfortable writing, publishing, sharing what I know with average readers. I can better understand and project my thinking. I feel better equipped when confronted with a document on the topic. I now dare write beyond mere facts

reporting! Yet I still feel under-equipped...

11. Are there differences in coverage of ICTs and ICT policy now, compared to three years ago?

IS: I don't think so. I think our coverage remains very superficial. Which means that we still deal with the issue with little authority.

MF: Of course. There have to be differences. The mere fact that computers have entered more newsrooms, especially new generations of computer equipment with LANs and networks has changed journalists' rapport with ICTs. Journalists have access to more information and are aware of it. They have suddenly become more exposed to a worldwide knowledge. And yet, journalists are still not taking the next step. They remain users. They hardly ever propose to cover the effects and defects of ICTs.

NS: Yes, things have definitely evolved in Senegal. In a recent past, people would only talk about ICTs in terms of companies' balance sheets. For example Sonatel would invite journalists every year to publicise their annual report, and show their benefits, the number of subscribers. Today, people talk more about consumers' rights and responsibilities, and about technical issues. Consumers' organisations are more vocal. People compare prices in other countries. Some organise lobbying activities, including even Sonatel. Publicity on ICT products and services is everywhere. Things have changed a lot and people's concerns have evolved. So journalists cannot ignore that. Do journalists take consumers' concerns into account? Yes, we cover that. ART, the regulatory agency, has summoned some operators in some cases, and of course that has called media attention. Another example: Sonatel has been boasting of extraordinary benefits. That raised the media interest about the quality of service and improved access that Sonatel was providing.

JP: In my opinion, it's gaining ground. I think that people are more and more sensitised. With the registration on the electoral roll and the making of digital identity cards, we did not realise at the time, but it was a formidable mean of popularising ICT. People who are going to have their names put on the electoral roll and see all these technologies know that they are in an environment where ICT is used. They are inside. A lot of things can be done with ICT such as telemedicine. We talk about a networked government, and the possibility to have administrative papers from the governmental internet. The evolution can make us feel optimistic. The journalists must play their role by trying to identify the aspects where there are problems to shed light,

inform, sensitise and accompany the subject's future and evolution.

12. If you have been at a CATIA-linked event, has it impacted on your coverage of the field?

NS: The training at the Terrou-Bi turned out to be very useful for me, especially the pamphlet that was distributed. I refer to it for ICT-related terms and concepts. There are clearly defined and explained in that pamphlet. It is very useful. Today, VoIP, and Skype, are words that are clearer to me. I know what they refer to.

JP: I learnt plenty of things. The experience offered moments of knowledge reinforcement and of new knowledge acquirement. This permits today to talk with relative ease about these questions. It also helps me to feel less stressed because I could understand, speak, ask questions during the workshops and training sessions. I could really understand something.

13. Other issues?

MW: Right now e-governance is developing in Senegal: the government's online administrative information website is up and running. I personally went to that website but I know that very few people did. They should have advertised it better. They did not send out press releases. It was not even mentioned in the weekly communique of the Council of ministers. No politician's blog ever mentioned it. Another issue is that women's presence in the ICT field is still very marginal. Generally they just do typing to earn some money. I don't know of any hosting or maintaining any websites. Frankly, I don't see them much in the field.

1. How have you been covering the issue of the telecom liberalisation since it was officially announced? Have you been dealing with the whole issue of transparency of the law and the practicalities of its implementation? The bidding process? The tariffs? Who the new investors are? The third operator who has been long awaited?

JP: I don't master the subject a lot. I know that when we talk about liberalisation, it's about commercial contracts between government and private sectors or between institutions. What's interesting that there will be an increased competition in which the customer is the winner because he'll have a choice. Inevitably, the operators will think in terms of quality price. It's an interest. This must be accompanied by a good information, a good sensitisation of the people to know the usefulness of one or another option. I think there is a lot of information to convey because as we

say it's the media educating about ICT. The sensitisation must be sustained. And there are perhaps a lot of fields where it can be done in a gradual way. There was a time when ICT was for the privileged. Nowadays, it's in our daily life. I think there is a progression and we all must accompany it.

FKS: Actual liberalisation should take place soon, but in reality now, Sonatel still holds a monopoly on landline telephone. The regulatory agency (ART) promised that the new operator will be known shortly. The bidding process for the third operator is all very fuzzy. Only the state, the ministry and ART have an idea of the when and the how it will work. The liberalisation is a good thing because it will give customers and other users a larger choice and multiple products in relation to their buying power. There must be a loyal competition. They have to take in account customers' needs.

FF: The government of Senegal announced liberalisation. As a matter of fact, the monopoly is over concerning mobile telephone. Nevertheless things have not made any progress concerning landline telephone. It was supposed to happen last year. Well... nowhere to be seen yet! The blessed 3rd operator is still not here and it's a matter of political will. Sonatel still holds a monopoly over fibre optic links. There must be a strong power to twist their arm. People suffer from this situation and are helpless. Although one must recognise that tariffs have come down significantly and you can tell if you compare with other countries in the sub-region.

2. Did you cover the launching of the government's administrative website at the end of 2005?

JP: I recognise that I don't know it very well. I know that it exists and its interest is that it permits all the citizens to able to visit the site to have some administrative information.

FKS: The site will showcase all the ministries and administrative services. It allows users to have all the information they need without moving. It will save them time if it is well presented and if the site is well fed and updated regularly. For the time being, only the Prime Minister's Office and some ministerial departments are on the site. If it is well done, it will be really pertinent and help us lose less of time in seeking information. I visited the website only once. I haven't met anyone telling me that he has ever used the governmental Internet to have an application or news or administrative paper.

FF: We have to say that is a good initiative. I also have to confess that I don't have any information about the quality of the service rendered to citizens. We should ask them. All I have picked is that the service is not what it was meant to be in terms of quality. It is not yet where it should be. Why? I can't tell. We should get the people in charge of it to tell us.

3. Right now e-governance is developing in Senegal: the government's online administrative information website is up and running. Banks are offering online services. Have you been covering issues related to those developments?

JP: It's also a field that I don't master a lot and I also think to a certain degree the same goes for Senegalese society. Perhaps there are some informed computer scientists who use it. I had a colleague here who when he needs a product, he uses a relative or a friend in Europe who pays and sends it to him. When banks begin to be interested by the system, we'll be first to sensitise the Senegalese people. But I think it'll be very fast like electronic bank cards for getting out money. With this method you can pay on the Internet and after the bank deducts you a certain sum of money.

FKS: I have never used it. I know people who use it every day for money transfers and check the level of their saving.

FF: I think what is needed is a series of short papers that can help people understand what e-commerce is all about. What it can do for people. How it works. To get readers familiarised with these new devices and how they can affect their lives.

4. How do you assess women's presence in the ICT field?

JP: If I take the case of our editorial team, there is only one woman. At Zenith, a weekly magazine produced by "Soleil", it's the same there. These women are sensitised to use ICT because they are journalists. But the place is really imbalanced. When girls are taught how to read and write, they should also be taught to use ICTs.

FKS: The disparity is at an educational level. There are more educated boys than educated girls. Educated girls use Internet like their male counterparts. In general, educated girls often visit the cybercafes to do research or watch other things.

FF: I don't have data on this particular issue. But I know more and more women are paying attention and interest. Some try to be involved.

CHAPTER FOUR:

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 A sister study: South African ICT journalism

In comparison to the current findings and the previous research cited above, South Africa offers an interesting case study. Research for a Masters degree conducted in 2004 asked a sample of this country's ICT journalists about their role, and also looked at media content (Vandenberghe, 2005). It found that the South African journalists saw themselves as being able to influence policy by promoting support or pressure, although they also conceded first place to the ICT industry in this regard. They recognised that their coverage could, however, stimulate both lobbying and government action. Some journalists said they themselves actively tried to influence public opinion on ICT policy questions.

Vandenberghe then also studied 45 print articles dealing with South Africa's complex process of drafting a Convergence Bill (which later became the Electronic Communications Act). The complication of this legislation was that it was not preceded by a developed policy formulation process. The result was that the law-making stage saw unresolved policy matters being subjected to contestation via submissions to parliament – mainly by business (telecoms and broadcasting), but also by the regulator and civil society.

On the negative side, Vandenberghe found that 60% of the articles on the experience did not define convergence, and 65% gave no background. Most articles were superficial and focused only a single aspect of a wide-ranging matter. He further found that the focus was on policy decisions, not on options or impact. The language used was economic and legalistic, although he did establish that technical issues were being explained. Other problems were that almost 60% of the articles did not link the draft legislation to consumer issues – and there was almost nothing on how convergence regulation related to other government policy objectives like universal service and Black Economic Empowerment. While reporters told him that they used a range of sources, his research showed many reports deriving from press releases, and from a majority of official sources. Further, there seemed to be very little questioning or critique of any of the sources, and 60% of articles were single-sourced.

Drawing partly on Vandenberghe's research, the Convergence Bill experience can be analysed as showing that despite these weaknesses, the media did play a policy-relevant role. Although journalists did not present

their own independent assessments, they did report on those of industry and opposition political sources that were highly critical of government's policy. The downside of this is that these critics were also not critically questioned or contextualised as to their own particular interests. As a result, journalists repeated the jargon of "technology neutral" licensing without question, and perpetuated exaggerations about a "threat" to license websites – while also ignoring the law's proposed increase in ministerial powers and introducing regulations around "significant market power". Weakest of all was a lack of attention to the flaws in the policy process underpinning the problems in the draft law, and indeed also of what the government incorrectly describes as a "policy" (in this case, the unelaborated phrase "managed liberalisation"). And yet, despite all these weaknesses, a vibrant diversity of views was mobilised by the media, and the legislation, over almost three years, was substantially amended for the better.

South Africa has a more advanced ICT and policy environment and tradition, plus a larger private media sector, than most of the other countries studied in this current CATIA project. The current study was also based on a shorter time frame than the Vandenberghe South African one. Unlike his, it also did not coincide with any similar policy-legislative issues in the countries concerned. As a result of these differing situations, one cannot simplistically conclude that the performance South Africa ICT journalism is superior to that of the six countries in this study. But what the coverage of the Convergence Bill does show is both that media can indeed contribute to putting policy perspectives into the public arena, and that this is even when the quality of coverage has substantial room for improvement in terms of realising the full potential role of the media. There is, it seems, sufficient motivation amongst the journalists interviewed for this current study, and the achievements in some of their work, to suggest that there will be a growing contribution of African mass communicators towards the policy requirements of building the African Information Society.

4.2 Understanding policy

Policy theory may sound rather abstract to many media people. However, if ICT journalists are going to track their stories back to the issue of national and international policies, then there is definite insight to be gained by examining what academics have come up with. Part of the weakness shown by the South African study above, was the lack of awareness by journalists of the ingredients of good policy practice, and how the Convergence Bill experience could have been assessed.

Policy can be taken to mean a plan or course of action intended to influence and determine decisions and actions (Hornby 2000). Policy is not the same as law, but it is usually embedded in law (and regulation). In fact, policy is what should guide legislation and regulation, as well as strategies and plans. In turn, good policy also needs to rest on a clear foundation of values (such as freedom of expression, and pluralism, rather than monopoly), and on thorough research. The scope of any policy also needs spelling out. While many African countries have, or are working towards, ICT policies, this is too often seen in a very narrow scope – for example, concerned only with telecoms. At the end of the day, specific ICT policies need to be seen in a much wider context of an Information Society policy framework – which ideally will deal in a coherent and cross-referencing way – with the fields of media, telecoms, intellectual property, local content, competition and investment, security, education, health, governance, etc. Any journalist covering ICT needs to keep in mind the bigger policy picture, and strive to see how it adds up (or does not, as the case may be).

How policy works can be examined according to diverse paradigms, in particular functionalism, liberal pluralism, power, radical democracy, and chaos (see Berger 2004 with insights drawn from Colebatch 2002; Grindle 1980; Ham and Hill 1984; Lindblom and Woodhouse 1993; Parsons 1995).

Paradigm 1: Functionalism

Policy in this outlook is regarded as a system to harmonise and align behaviours in the interests of the reproduction of the whole entity – for example, a given African country, or the global frequency spectrum. This approach highlights common interests and consensus. It thus sees policy playing the role of integrating different forces. As such, the point of policy in this perspective is to provide predictability and to avoid ad hoc actions. To do this, policy must spell out the agreed rules of the game, and ensure that there are unambiguous roles that are clearly understood by the various players. From this perspective, it is readily apparent how policy can be intended to clarify relations, and mediate tensions, between different ICT policies, and indeed other Information Society –relevant policies. However, this paradigm has some blind spots – and in particular, it ignores the politics of policy.

Paradigm 2: Liberal pluralism

Policy in this view reflects differing interests in competition. The perspective assumes that the outcomes will depend

on the degree of pluralism present, and on the possibilities for informed choices and debate amongst those making policy. Highlighted by liberal pluralism is that apart from government, there are usually several interest groups (typically elites with organisational resources) that are involved in the initiation and formulation of policy (Lindblom 1980; Ham and Hill 1984). Though policy formulation may eventually entail aggregation and compromise between differing interests, liberal pluralism tells us that even this is not necessarily stable: politics can easily continue in the implementation (or non-implementation) of policy. In all this, we have a perspective that is of value for journalists when delving into policy questions – into the politics of who initiates, formulates and implements policy. But, again, something else needs to be taken into cognisance: namely, power.

Paradigm 3: Power

In this perspective, policy is also about authority and responsibility. Politics around policy do not necessarily take place between equal parties, nor do the most rational proposals automatically win the day. Instead, policy is very often about the exercise of power, by those with power. But by the same token, wielding power is intrinsically bound up with responsibility, so this approach also highlights where “the buck stops” – i.e. where final authority and accountability lie for formulation, implementation and review of policy. This perspective stresses who has the authority and responsibility to adopt, enforce and review policy on behalf of the public. It also sensitises us to noticing that much power in policy may come less from the policy-initiators and policy-makers than from the implementers – the mandarins and the foreign consultants. The perspective is further valuable in reminding us that policy is sometimes about legitimisation – about the symbolism that “something is being done” by those in charge. All these aspects are valuable to journalists in analysing ICT stories. Yet a focus on the top-down power aspects can also hide another dimension in understanding policy.

Paradigm 4: Radical democracy

This grassroots view observes that policy is not simply a tool to be brandished unchecked by those with power, but also often something that is constrained by those at the bottom of the heap. It indicates how grassroots actors can impact on policy, even by active non-co-operation, and set its parameters accordingly. It also implies that effective policy should explicitly go further than recognising the role of the liberal pluralist elite of active stakeholders, and explicitly canvass the views of grassroots groups whose experiences

and insights – that are not normally presented in mobilised forms – can often enrich the policy outcome and make a difference to implementation. A radical democratic paradigm also puts value on the notion that policy can empower and liberate; that it does not only have to be about strictures. A policy on Internet roll-out, in this view, should include issues around pornography and cybercrime for instance – but a good ICT journalist will also raise issues of developing cyberliteracy, promoting self-regulation and advancing “progressive” local content. Being conscious of bottom-up policy aspects is a valuable point, however, there is a danger of this approach becoming a romantic populism that reduces the role of final authority (and even of trained expertise) in policy formulation and implementation. This insight into the possible dangers in a policy “free-for-all” is provided by another approach.

Paradigm 5: Chaos theory

This outlook sensitises us to several situations. One is when there is a policy vacuum – and the fact that “no policy” can in fact be a policy in the sense of allowing authorities (as for example those running a broadcaster) to avoid having to develop something to which they can be held to account (Barker and Minnie 2000). In this sense, chaos can also serve power. Also highlighted by this paradigm is that even when there is policy, it is often ad hoc, inconsistent, arbitrary, half-baked, unknown, arcane or ineffectual. Chaos can also exist when there are too many policies, or too much detail about them, and when there is a lack of integration and prioritisation. The chaos approach further points to irrationalities in processes, flawed facts and poor research, the likelihood of unintended effects, and confusions as regards roles, responsibilities and review. In general therefore, the chaos paradigm underlines what is poor in much policy – and the antidote therefore points to some kind of functionalist order and harmony. On the other hand, chaos is not always intrinsically negative. There can be dangers in an “over”-policy-ised situation that lacks any flexibility. Accordingly, ICT can sometimes flourish in the absence of policy detail, precisely because of the creativity and “space” entailed.

In summing up the perspectives outlined above, policy can be integrative and harmonising or continuously contested. Policy can also be checked by the grassroots and be potentially empowering. Its absence (or lack of specificity) can create either a messy vacuum or a flexible environment. Applied to Information Society, what is needed is the formulation of policies that are functionalist in nature and therefore capable of serving all sections of the entire society. Cognisance should, however, be

taken of the contested interests in policy, and of whether grassroots input is present or incorporated. The power paradigm points towards where final decision-making and responsibility lie.

Understanding policy in all these dimensions can empower ICT journalists to be pro-active, rather than reactive, and to deploy a rigorous understanding for critical coverage.

4.3 Telling the ICT story: the teenager who tried to build the African Information Highway

In 2004, Sivuziwe Mzamo was one year off completing high school, when he became the modest inventor of a bicycle-powered cellphone charger. That year, he was invited to show off his achievement to journalists at the Highway Africa annual conference at Rhodes University. The young man upturned his bike on a desk, spun the wheels, and his plugged-in Nokia started charging. The phone was projected onto a screen in the conference venue, and delegates burst into applause.

The teenager had spent R10 (about \$1.50) on parts for his device, which links to a R60 (\$6) dynamo that powers a bicycle light. His creative idea could bring telecoms into practical reach of many rural people in signal range, but who otherwise lack the necessary electrical power. There were various stories that could be told about him:

- TECHNICAL: The science entailed - probing the safety and reliability. What are the elementary physics that explain how the device actually works – and how you can prevent the cellphone blowing up with a power surge when the bicycle picks up speed?
- BUSINESS: A second story could zoom in on economics, eliciting from the young man his views on market prospects and pricing, and bundling the device in package deals offered by cellphone service providers. International patents and intellectual property rights also come up. Last but not least, what is the national policy framework in regard support for young ICT entrepreneurs?
- CAPACITY: A third focus is a human interest one: what are the young man’s science skills, how did he develop them, and what is his advice for his peers.
- GLOBAL: A fourth story interrogates the location of production bases, whence investment might come, and what the export potential might be. (Mzamo said that although he had won acclaim at a science expo in Germany,

he was still looking for a backer, from anywhere, to commercialise the charger.)

- **CULTURE:** A fifth story was the lifestyle significance of the invention. Would it stimulate cellphone uptake in rural areas – with what effect? Could it find a trendy home on exercise bikes in First World gyms? (As one journalist participant later wrote: “By cycling off the cellulite, one can have an instant cellular charge on their cellphone.”)

Mzamo’s story can be richly told through any, all or some of these lenses. The basic perspectives come from an academic called Frank Webster, whose writings have highlighted these five aspects of the Information Society.

Accordingly, we can analyse social changes today in terms of changing technologies especially in regard to information and the changing economics related to this. In addition, there are the new skill sets to be prized; the world as increasingly globally inter-linked, and massive cultural change (and increasing brand-awareness). And, of course, all of these are profoundly affected by national and international policies that affect information and ICT.

For ICT journalists, there should be no shortage of stories. And if the stories can also take cognisance of policy ramifications, the innovation of many Sivu Mzamo’s could do a lot to advance the African Information Society.

4.4 A range of recommendations

Many of the journalists interviewed in this report have valuable suggestions to make about improvements. Among the researchers themselves, a number additional and amplified points emerged.

From Mozambique, Zenaida Machado said that in retrospect, the Mozambican ICT Policy Implementation Strategy Plan should have included a section on training of the media in it. In addition, she drew attention to the multi-lingual character of her country (16 national languages plus Portuguese) and the need to develop communications that deliver ICT messages in people’s home languages.

In Nigeria, John Dada says there is a growing pool of ICT knowledge among the journalists, but “rural connectivity, gender mainstreaming, universal access and what it means in real terms to the people are areas that need more coverage”. He also notes a dual carriage highway, where more high level communication occurs (and there are more ICT-informed journalists involved) in online Nigerian discussion, as compared to the coverage in the selected

policy-influential media. He reasons that this relates to the more ICT-savvy character of the online audience and the requisite coverage standards that follow, as compared to off-line media who serve an audience most of which has no access to the Internet. In his view, the challenge is to spread the expertise concentrated in the online media into the mainstream. He further recommends that a significant number of veteran journalists and ICT professionals both within Nigeria and in the Diaspora, who are able to contextualise global ICT developments for Nigeria, could be harnessed as an asset for the various media.

Kenya’s Kenneth Alari analyses the widespread call for training by breaking it down into refresher courses, training workshops, ICT Reporting at journalism schools and developing ICT Reporting Guides. He further encourages the formation of forums such as the ‘ICT Media Network – Kenya’ where members can share ICT related information.

One promising initiative that coincides with such recommendations is the development of the Centre for Learning ICT (Clit) in the New Media Lab at Rhodes University’s School of Journalism and Media Studies. With support from South African company Telkom, this three-year project is pioneering online delivering of ICT journalism training. (Telkom is the sponsor the South African annual ICT journalism competition). The modules, to be launched in 2007, will be accredited, assessed and certified. The programmes will involve peer learning, and cover both content issues, as well as the communication skills involved, of ICT journalism. More information is available at <http://nml.ru.ac.za>

4.5 Looking ahead

ICT and its policy import is a very fast-moving field. Whether the issue is Internet governance, the EASSy cable, telecoms investments, or the expansion of broadcasting across the continent, one thing is certain. This is that policy, law and regulation needs continuous updating – which in turn requires monitoring and review of existing practice, plus new agenda-setting, and the maximum dissemination of information and education. The quality of all this, and its outcomes, will be enhanced by the informed participation of the many stakeholder groups that exist (including organised ICT journalists) – and by a climate of public opinion that prioritises the issues and sets developmental and democratic parameters.

Media people can choose to be part of this, and indeed can help make it happen. Or they can fall behind, and be implicated in delaying social progress through ICTs, and in

leaving unharvested the most important prospects in the Information Age. However, for those journalists excited by these developments and who want to be engaged, the current research suggests a number of challenges.

First, reporters who cover the terrain in a casual or occasional, rather than specialist, way cannot do full justice to the topic. There is no way they can have the contextual knowledge, or know the range of role players, let alone the policy, technical, legal, business, global, developmental and other issues involved. It is also not possible to be authentically critical when one is relatively ignorant about a body of knowledge. Criticism is not a case of likes and dislikes, but of informed evaluation. Conversely, it is easy to fall into press release and single-source journalism, if you are a reporter who is insecure about the content. The lesson for generalist reporters is: lobby your editors about ICT journalism and demonstrate through your output the interest value of the topic. Failing this, African ICT journalists will continue to languish under what one reporter in this study describes as a “dictatorship of political news”. ICT can be political, and often should be – but it covers many more aspects as well.

Second, to build a cadre of competent ICT journalists requires investment in expertise not only in the dynamic subject field, but also in its relationship to policy. Such investment needs to include how to translate general sentiments about playing a role, into practical journalism that links single stories to broader policy issues. This means making connections to government decisions and indecisions, and to implementation or lack thereof. It means seeing the media role in a sophisticated way that encompasses roles of agenda-setting, watchdog and educator.

Third, such investment has to encompass capacity-building in how to localise international or foreign stories, and how to explain or avoid jargon. Editors, it seems, are not opposed to running ICT stories – but these have to be unearthed and then crafted in a way that is competitive with other stories.

Fourth, the role of ICT journalists will remain limited if their work is only to do reactive reporting. Instead, they need to be ahead of the story: and able to pro-actively ensure angles or stories on gender, poverty and rural issues where appropriate, and without jargon. They need to alert the public about key developments before these become burning issues. There are vital topics here – for example, who governs the Internet, and who are the recognised authorities that can give out (or remove) domain name

addresses for websites. This is not to forget issues like intellectual property and information security.

Fifth, without compromising their independence and role as credible mediators of all manner of information, journalists can – and arguably should – take forward their direct interests in ICT and ICT policy. This entails becoming active participants in policy processes – ensuring at minimum that rights to free expression and media freedom should be respected; and, at maximum, helping to promote a policy regime that ensures optimum access for society to means of communication.

These five imperatives can be summed up as (1) creating a cadre, (2) investing in topic knowledge, (3) building story-telling capacity (4) promoting pro-active journalism, and (5) playing a direct role as a stakeholder. These, in effect, constitute the mission of the Highway Africa (HA) conference (www.highwayafrica.ru.ac.za) and the HA News Agency (HANA – <http://hana.ru.ac.za>) that has grown out of it. Out of the conference network of some 500 journalists, a core of some 30 African journalists has been trained each year for three years. A new group will commence in September 2006. The cadre to date has acquitted itself with credit in covering major ICT-related events relevant to Africa, and it volunteers a weekly newsfeed as well. Through support from the Swiss Development Co-operation, funds are also now being made available for pro-active project suggestions for HANA stories that would otherwise not be on the daily news agenda.

The Highway Africa initiative as a whole, and not least the annual conference – marking its 10th anniversary in 2006 – seeks to advance a policy and legal environment suited to taking the continent forward into the African Information Society. In regard to this objective, the multi-stakeholder workshops conducted by CATIA, and attended by some of the interviewees, have not only contributed to the education of a cadre of ICT journalists, but also helped draw them into the movement as participants who contribute more than only reportage to ICT policy development. In addition, CATIA’s activities in Senegal have specifically focussed, since April 2006, on training workshops for journalists on ICT issues, including ICT policy, liberalisation, and universal access issues. More such initiatives are welcome. The self-organising of ICT journalists into groups such as in Senegal, Kenya and Nigeria is a very positive development.

There is much work to be done, yet there are signs of progress since the earlier research of 2003 and 2004. The picture, as documented in this current study, gives

cause for optimism that remaining problems will be chipped away at. The impact of African media on ICT policy development can only increase in the coming years.

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