

Online Political Campaign Communications in Nigeria: A Study of Information Contents and Political Orientation of Nigerian Websites

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Abstract— This study has investigated on the level of political orientation of some of the Nigerian Web sites. Content analysis was employed to collect data from 350 web sites. The unit of analysis being the first page of each web site. Online political campaign communication weblog tool is a new phenomenon among Nigerian politicians to reach across diverse voters and prospective ones. Overall findings of the content-analysis show that the origins of the majority (65%) of the Web sites were within Nigeria, while political issues accounts for (69%) of the contents of the Web sites with their domains named as blog or weblog totaling (60%), and the ownerships of the Web sites belong to ‘society’, which accounted for (91%) of the Web sites. Information type on the Web sites was feature articles (58%) that focused on political issues. The study concluded that online political campaign communication is still very low in Nigeria political context and amongst Nigeria citizenry.

Keywords—online campaigns, website politics, website contents, political focus, web political analysis

I. INTRODUCTION

A great deal of research efforts has gone into assessments of the role played by news media in providing information that citizens need to fulfill their civic duties. This is a highly controversial research area because there is no agreement among scholars about the requirements of democratic citizenship and the implications of the findings about citizens’ political knowledge. Nor is there agreement about the way political messages should be framed and expressed to assure that most voters can understand them. Many theorists and pundits consider most citizens to be woefully ignorant and poorly qualified for citizenship duties. There is a huge gap in citizens’ factual knowledge about political events and many blame inadequacies in news coverage for this state of affairs (Graber & Smith, 2005).

Graber and Smith (2005) explained further that average citizens’ opportunities to observe their government in action have mushroomed with the proliferation of cable TV channels and the birth of the Internet has lured scholars into these areas. These new media venues bring many new opportunities for interested citizens to participate in politics.

Among the young voters, it is hoped that the Internet would increase their civic engagement, while others see new technologies as merely new tools that current power elites are using to maintain their dominance. For older age people, their participation patterns were developed in a pre-Internet period and would be affected only marginally by the introduction of new media, whereas, young adolescents have yet to develop firmly engrained political habits and therefore much more open to be influenced by new experiences. But there is a mixed feeling about the civic and political participation of young people. Although, critics have dispelled this negative feeling by arguing that it is only the levels of political participation of young people that are declining, whereas their levels of community involvement and civic participation are on the rise (Quintelier & Vissers, 2008).

Graber and Smith (2005) enumerated that most people do not yet take full advantage of the massive amounts of political information available via the Internet; some people have access either from home or from their workplace. By 2010, access is expected to be nearly universal. Currently only the well educated and economically secure regularly use the Web to access political news offerings. Relating from Norris (2003), Marcela, Baxter and Cheah (2008) elucidated that the mid-1990s witnessed a general wave of enthusiasm about the potential impact of new information and communication technologies in the political sphere, many commentators believed that the Internet facilitated a new, more participatory style of politics, which would bring politicians and an increasingly disaffected electorate closer together, and would draw more people into the democratic process. Therefore, ICT that was once the myth of the educational machine had been established, both the ICT industry and politicians were quick to capitalize on it, for, it gave credibility to the educational programmes of politicians running for office (Nivala, 2009). The Internet, generally, has revolutionized political campaign communications. As public access to the Internet has surged past 70% of the U.S. population, the Internet has claimed front-and center status in campaign strategies (Panagopoulos, 2007).

A. The Internet and Weblog Emergence

Developed in the 1960s to facilitate military research, the Internet had expanded to other research uses by the end of the 1970s. By 1981, it had grown to comprise 213 host computers, linked in an unorganised collection of networks that included local area networks, dedicated computer lines, telephone lines and satellite links (Starr, 1997). Barely a decade later the Internet has included more than two million host computers, a growth largely driven by the popularity of the Web, which only became available in 1990. Lehnert (1998) sees this rapid growth of the Web as stemming from the increased availability of inexpensive, powerful computers, widespread access to Internet, the combination of the easy to use HTML and graphics, readily available Web browsers, and significant attention given to the Web by the mass media. Carey (1988) argues that the infrastructure of our postmodern communications is now set, with the Internet at the center of a new media ecology (Sutherland & Stewart, 1999).

Among the new phenomena brought about as a result of the Internet proliferation are blogs. Blogs are known for being highly opinionated and often political, have been on the Internet since 1997. Blogs are Web pages or Websites that are frequently updated with posts centered around one topic arranged in reverse chronological order (Blood, 2002). Blogs are very attractive for voicing political messages. Even though blogs are Web pages, there are some distinctive differences between blogs and Web sites, the differences lay in the presence of hyper-linking in blogs (Blood, 2002), and several structural differences, which include the content structure in providing a clear and automated record of changes made to the page (Trammell & Gasser, 2004). Blogs have been said to offer interactivity at a higher rate than normal Web pages by the greater frequency of hyperlinks and feedback features (Trammell, 2004). These appearances of interactivity are common on blogs, as many posts are designed around hyperlinks to external information and some bloggers allow readers to comment on posts. Additionally, blog contents are highly personalized, which signifies that the blogger is writing a note directly to the reader (Blood, 2002). Thus, this conversational style of writing online has been identified as an indicator of interactivity (Endres & Warnick, 2004).

However, weblogs, as it is synonymously called, have literally burst onto the media and public consciousness with an estimated one new being created every second. The number of weblogs nearly doubled in five months from 7.8million in March 2005 to 14.5million by July 2005. The blogosphere is the latest potential challenge to the dominance of the mass media on political communication. It has introduced a body of people, bloggers, whose equivalent do not exist offline.

Perhaps more importantly, where traditionally political communication has been vertical and top-down giving greater influence to political elites and political parties, the blogosphere opens up the possibility of horizontal communication. Communication between citizens could be a challenge to the control of discourse by political elites. With this bottom-up growth of blogosphere, large corporations and political actors have been increasingly considering how they can utilize weblogs for their benefits (Jackson, 2006).

In addition, the web has become a hot news medium, News agency around the world, including newspapers, radios and TV stations, have established their web presence to attract more audience. Compared with their traditional counterparts, news web sites have remarkable advantages including immediacy and virtually unlimited space. An even more important advantages is the hyperlinks to the news web sites which are potential doorways leading readers into the site. An increasing number of people have opted for this medium to retrieve needed news or other information (Williams & Nicholas, 1999).

B. The Internet Use for Social and Political Mobilisation

Quintelier and Visser (2008) elaborated that with the emergence of new information and communication technologies, various scholars and politicians view the Internet as a new source of political socialization and a way to bring young citizens closer to the political process. High expectations emerged concerning the Internet's potential for the political mobilization and engagement of new groups that are currently excluded from politics. Best and Krueger (2005) enumerated that the Internet is becoming an important source of political participation for young people, who are normally not attracted to politics. The potential for the Internet to attract new people, who were under represented in more traditional forms of participation known as 'mobilisation thesis' (Norris, 2001).

Quintelier and Visser (2008) related from several other scholars that the literature about mobilization thesis provides four reasons for the potential of the Internet. The first expectation about the Internet's potential is that it provides a lot of opportunities for political engagement: online voting in polls, debating, blogging, and so forth. Second, the Internet lowers the cost of participation. Once someone has a connection, there is no extra cost for going online, which might lower the barrier for citizens to participate in online politics. People with a broadband connection are consequently more likely to engage in online activities. Hence, a justification for the argument that online participation is more open as it provides for more equality of opportunity in political participation (Bimber, 2001).

Third, the Internet is quick and up to date and that it can provide a lot of information necessary to participate in civic life and public discussion (Tolbert & McNeal, 2003). Fourth, as an interactive medium, the Internet can strengthen the workings of direct democracy and improve relations between citizens, politicians, and their intermediaries through processes like e-government (West, 2004). Finally, the Internet also might be a solution to the 'democratic deficit' that several political institutions experience (Norris, 2001). Further yet, research has indicated that young people are more enthusiastic about online political participation than are older people (Mossberger, Tolbert, & Stansbury, 2003).

Considerable numbers of authors have argued that new technology could be the means to link youth to the political process. This is because the young people spend increasing amounts of time in the 'online world,' the Internet must not be overlooked or underestimated as an effective educational tool that can foster political learning and participation among youth (Weber, Loumakis, & Bergman, 2003). The World Wide Web contains a wide range of educational and informational web sites, but the problem is that young people rarely access these sites. Therefore, efforts must be taken to make these web sites more accessible and appealing to youth. With the high penetration and popularity of the Internet among young people, high expectations emerged about the Internet's mobilization potential within this part of the population (Pasek, Kenski, Romer, & Jamieson, 2006).

At this juncture, the researcher would categorically declare that political participation and citizen mobilization is a function of the amount of time that users spend online, and whether users actually access the appropriate political web sites which are meant for informational and educational purposes. Hence, the next sub-section will be devoted towards elaborating on users' time online in relation to their political participation.

C. Internet Use and Political Participation

Unlike the earlier period of the Internet usage, many scholars have refuted dystopian views of newer technologies. Many studies have found a relationship between informational uses of the internet and social capital (Shah, Kwak, & Holbert, 2001a), political participation (Shah, Schmierbach, Hawkins, Espino, & Donovan, 2002), and civic engagement (Jennings & Zeitner, 2003). Wellman, Quan-Haase, Witte & Hampton (2001) provided evidence that online interaction supplements interpersonal relations, resulting in increased voluntary association membership and political participation.

Kraut and colleagues claimed that the negative effects of using the internet on communication, social involvement, and well being (Kraut, Kiesler, Boneva, Cummings, Helgeson, & Crawford, 2002).

While some expressed fear that news in the online environment may have resulted in societal fragmentation and displacement of community concerns, others view the online environment as a space for political re-engagement and re-engineering, particularly for young people (Delli Carpini, 2000). Research has shown that online news use supplements rather than supplants traditional news consumption (Althaus & Tewksbury, 2000). In fact, online information-seeking is related positively to group membership, community involvement and political activity (Kwak et al., 2006). Similarly, online information-seeking has been linked to increases in online interactive civic messaging that ultimately result in higher levels of civic participation (Shah et al., 2005).

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Uses and gratifications theory attempts to explain the uses and functions of the media for individuals, groups, and society in general. There are three objectives in developing uses and gratifications theory: 1) to explain how individuals use mass communication to gratify their needs. "What do people do with the media". 2) to discover underlying motives for individuals' media use. 3) to identify the positive and the negative consequences of individual media use. At the core of uses and gratifications theory lies the assumption that audience members actively seek out the mass media to satisfy individual needs.

This study is anchored on the Uses and Gratifications Theory. Sweetser and Kaid (2008) relating from several other authors, mentioned that uses and gratifications theory has been more recently used to determine the gratifications of entertainment media, the theory has a long history of investigating political information seeking motivations (Blumler & McQuail, 1969; McLeod & Becker, 1974). Blumler and McQuail (1969) found that gratifications sought from watching political broadcasts clustered into three constructs: political reason such as reinforcement or vote guidance; surveillance for keeping up with the issues; and excitement such as seeing which party would win. During the 1972 presidential election, McLeod and Becker (1974) reported surveillance as a primary gratification for seeking political information.

With the expansion of political information on the web, researchers have applied the uses and gratifications perspective to online political information seeking. Specifically, Garramone, Harris and Anderson (1986) found surveillance to be the key motivation for using computer bulletin board systems.

Kaye and Johnson (2002) later examined gratification for seeking political information online and found the primary motivations to be: guidance, information seeking and surveillance, entertainment and social utility. They also linked media use to political attitudes and behaviors. Kaye and Johnson (2002) reported that higher levels of self-efficacy are associated with information seeking and surveillance, and higher interest in politics is correlated with accessing political information online for social utility and information seeking and surveillance. The researchers reported that self-efficacy predicts guidance and information seeking / surveillance as motivations for using the internet to find political information. The measure of blog use is consistent with previous measures of media use employed within the uses and gratifications tradition (Rosengren, 1974, cited in Kaye & Johnson, 2002), but has been expanded to include the potential for increased audience activity that is inherent to the internet domain.

III. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

However, the study aims to provide answers to the following research questions in line with the hypotheses that followed below:

- 1) What is the focus of the information on most of Nigerian Websites with domains in Nigeria (ng)?
- 2) Which type of websites ownership is the most highlighted for the origin of Nigerian Websites in this study?
- 3) Which countries can be ascribed as having the majority of the Websites as originating from it?
- 4) How current are most of the Websites analysed for this study?
- 5) What information type is the most highlighted contents on the Nigerian Websites?

A. Hypotheses:

Therefore, this article posits the following hypotheses:

H₀₁: Nigerian Websites with information that focused on any form of political issues or activities will signify the political orientation of the Nigerian Websites.

IV. DESIGN AND METHODS

A. Consideration for Designing the Coding Guides

Considerable numbers of studies have provided suggestions as to how to embark on web sites analysis for their contents. For example, a study by Reavy and Perlmutter (1996) (cited in Latimer, 2009) suggested some key issues that can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of a website. These include content, audience, purpose, interactivity, timeliness, appearance, and linkage.

Similarly, Ireland and Nash (1999) listed ten criteria which may be used to evaluate a campaign website: (a) online credit card contributions; (b) volunteer sign-up; (c) form to collect email addresses; (d) form to collect US postal addresses; (e) links to issues; (f) newsletter sign-up; (g) sign-up for alerts; (h) events calendar; (i) updating and providing date of last update; and (j) a download time of 15 seconds or less. Also, in a study tracking the progress of 1680 state and federal websites, West (2005) found that e-government had made substantial progress in making information, services, and interactive features available online. In looking for material that would help an average citizen, the study examined the content of the websites for the presence of 32 different features, such as office phone numbers, online publications, video clips, subject index, email addresses, online contributions, and volunteer forms (cited in Latimer, 2009).

Taking precedence from suggestions from previous researchers and methods that they used to websites, the researcher of this current study analysed each web site for their contents, such as, Title of the Web Site, Focus of the Web Site, Domain Type of the Web Site (i.e. Blog, Web Site, Homepage), Information Type that are available on the Web Site (News, Press Release, Report and Feature), Source or Ownership or Sponsorship of Web Site (Government, Agency, Society, Individual), Currency and URL Addresses of the Web Sites.

Since the study aimed to understand the level of political orientation and focus of some webs sites in Nigeria, therefore it is paramount to survey the current internet availability and accessibility in the country. This particular task was achieved through a content analysis of available web sites those that were either owned by the government, non-governmental organizations, both private individuals and societies within and out the country that were dedicated to serving social and political purposes. Therefore, samples were drawn from available Web Sites that were dedicated to online political campaign communications. These Web Sites might have originated and own by the Nigerian government or non-governmental organisations, society, agencies or individuals, either based in Nigeria or abroad.

For the purpose of this content analysis, a coding guide and coding sheet were developed by the researcher. Data were gathered from 350 Web Sites through content-analysed based on the information availability on the web sites, such as, the title of the web site, focus, domain type (i.e. Blog, Web Site, Homepage), information type (News, Press Release, Report and Feature), source or ownership or sponsorship of web site (Government, Agency, Society, Individual), currency and URL addresses of the web sites.

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These web sites were content-analysed to conceptualise and understand the levels of the political orientation and its possible influence on online political campaign communications during election campaigns in Nigeria.

Therefore, to embark on this content analysis, the researcher started by using a search parameter: *Nigeria Political Campaigns*. After the search results were displayed, the search engine instructed the following: *In order to show you the most relevant results, we have omitted some entries very similar to the 690 already displayed. If you like, you can repeat the search with the omitted results included.*

Therefore, 690 results were displayed and out of this number, the researcher of the study selected list of Web sites that were considered relevant to the study. Therefore, 350 Web sites out of the 690 sites that were displayed were content-analysed based on their relevancy to the study. The unit of analysis was the first page of each and every web site for their relevancy as stated in the coding guide.

B. Coding Guide Reliability

The coding guide reliability was established by requesting five professional academic staff to look through it for corrections, comments, and possible suggestions for its improvement. After returning of the coding guide all the highlighted corrections, comments and suggestions were incorporated as mentioned by the professors before the coding was finally used to analysis the contents of the web sites. A total of 350 Web sites were analysed by the researcher of the study for the information that they contained and subsequently, two additional coders were requested to do the analysis. This was meant to compare their coding with that of the researcher to establish the reliability of coding. The unit of analysis was the first page of each Web site and the information they contained therein. The results of the coding from two other coders revealed that there was considerable uniqueness in the reliability of all the coders.

B. Inter-coder Reliability

Therefore to establish reliable measurement, the researcher invited two colleagues to use the coding guides and coding sheet developed for identifying the information categories. The researcher prepared distribution tables for the two coders, and each of their coding was compared with that of the researcher, based on their agreement and disagreement on the coding sheet, and a reliability test was conducted using William Scott's (1955) formula of intercoder reliability (Cited in Stempel III & Wesley, 1989, p. 148).

According to Scott, the inter-coder reliability index is the "ratio of the actual difference between obtained and chance agreement to the maximum difference obtained and chance agreement. It can be roughly interpreted as the extent to which the coding reliability exceeds chance (Scott, 1955, p.323). Scott wrote his formula as follows:

$$\pi = \frac{Po - Pe}{1 - Pe}$$

Where Po = Observed percent agreement

Pe = Percent agreement due to chance

The researcher then compared his own coding of the Web Sites to those of his colleagues, and inter-coder reliability was calculated. The result of the calculation is as follows:- For the Inter-coder Agreement Distribution.

C. Percentage of agreement between coders:

Coder 1 (researcher):

Po = Observed percent agreement = 2757 / 2800 = 98

Pe = Percent agreement due to chance = 2%

$$\pi = \frac{Po - Pe}{1 - Pe}$$

$$\frac{.98 - .2}{1 - .2} = 98\%$$

Reliability = 98%

Coder 2:

Po = Observed percent agreement = 2709/91 = 97

Pe = Percent agreement due to chance = 3

$$\pi = \frac{Po - Pe}{1 - Pe}$$

$$\frac{.97 - .3}{1 - .3} = 96\%$$

Reliability = 96%

However, the slight differences in the reliability level were due to varied understanding of the coding sheet by the three coders. The two coders (second and third coders) were taught how to use the coding sheet separately. The results of the reliability showed that the second and third coders demonstrated a high level of reliability which is very close to that of the researcher. The researcher took more time to teach the second and third coders how to use the coding guides efficiently and every concept was explained to them in detail. This could be the reason for the high percent of reliability which the second and third coders demonstrated.

V. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The first item of the analyses was the focus of the information that was contained in the Web Sites. This item was subdivided into three areas, namely; research, politics, non-politics and conferences. This is followed by the domain area, which include blogs or weblogs, online information (online news), homepages and face-book. The next item of the analyses is the source of the information, which was subdivided into government, society, individual and agency. Finally, subsequent items of the analyses focus on the type of information and currency of the information on the Web Sites respectively.

A. Focus of Information

According to Table 1, which provides report findings for the Focus of Information on the Websites, the majority 69.4% of the Websites that were analysed focused on political related information, be it in form of news reports on politics, opinion articles on politics, views, and others that pinpointed on politics. Whereas, considerable amount of the Web Sites 30% focused on non-political issues in the form of health related campaigns posted by various non-governmental organisations advocating particular cause or societal interests.

Therefore, it can be deduced that considerable amount of Nigerian Websites were used for political activities and their orientations are much more political.

Table2
Type of Domain

DOMAIN	Frequency	Percent
BLOG/WEBLOG	211	60.28
FACEBOOK	2	0.57
ONLINE	135	38.57
HOMEPAGE	2	0.57
TOTAL	350	100

n=350

Politics is a multidimensional endeavour; it can come in very many forms. For example, in form of campaign, news report advocating for an issue or issues of social importance, opinion articles to adjudicate for a personal stance in relation to an event, issue or other matter, etc.

B. Test the Hypotheses

Ho1: Nigerian Websites with information that focused on political issues will be positively related to orientation of the Nigerian Websites.

Focus of information refers to the particular information that the Website that were analysed contained. Therefore, considering this non statistical conjecture, the majority 243(69.4%) of the Websites that were content analysed focused on political related information in form of news reports on politics, opinion articles on politics, views, and others that pinpointed on politics, while non-political issues only totaled 105(30). Therefore, hypothesis Ho1 is confirmed. This finding has indicated that most Nigerian websites are of political orientation and focused on political issues and activities.

Table 1
Focus of Information

FOCUS	Frequency	Percent
RESEARCH	1	0.28
POLITICS	243	69.4
NON-POLITICS	105	30
CONFERENCE	1	0.28
TOTAL	350	100

n=350

Research question 2: What domain title or name can be ascribed to most of the Websites analysed in this study?

C. Type of Domain

Table 2, shows the findings for the Type of Domain, the majority of the Websites 60% were Blogs or Weblogs, where the owners posts information and create forum for visitors to the Web Sites to add their comments. Whereas, substantial amount of the Web Sites 39% were online related information posted for easy access of interested viewers.

Research question 3: Which type of weblog ownership is the most highlighted for the origin of Nigerian weblogs in this study?

D. Ownership of Information

In terms, of Table 3, the majority 91% of the Websites were created and owned by society, that is, group of individuals who are advocating for the same cause in the society. Whereas meager percentage, 3% each were owned by each of the agency, government and individuals respectively.

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Table 3
Ownership of Information

OWNERSHIP	Frequency	Percent
Govt	11	3.14
Society	317	90.57
Agency	10	2.85
Individual	12	3.42
TOTAL	350	100

n=350

Research question 4: From which country is the majority of the information on the Nigerian weblogs originated?

E. Source of Information

Regarding Table 4, which shows findings for the source of the information on the Websites, the Table reveals that the majority 65.4% of the information originated from Nigeria. This implies that most of the Websites were created in Nigeria and ownerships were shared by amongst the government, society, agency and individuals. However, considerable number 20% of these Web sites originated from the United States of America, whereas only meager amount 11%, were created in the United Kingdom. And the rest 3.4% of the Web sites were created in other countries, such as, the India, Netherlands, Australia, New Zealand, Germany, etc.

Table 4
Source of Information on the Websites

SOURCE	Frequency	Percent
USA	72	20
UK	37	11
Nigeria	229	65.4
Others	12	3.4
Total	350	100

n=350

Research question 5: How current are most of the websites analysed for this study?

F. Currency of the Websites

Table 5
Currency of the Websites

YEAR	Frequency	Percent
2002	5	1.42
2003	18	5.14
2004	6	1.71
2005	12	3.42
2006	10	2.85
2007	47	13.42
2008	25	7.14
2009	38	10.85
2010	33	9.42
1995-2001	156	45
Total	350	100

n=350

As regard to the currency of the Web Sites as shown in Table 5 (above), the majority 13% was created or last updated in the year 2007, which was followed by 2009 with 11%, and 2010 with 9% respectively. However, considerable amount 7% was created in 2008, and 5% in 2003, 3% in 2005, and finally 1.4% and 2% were both created in 2004 and 2002 respectively.

Research question 6: What information type is the most highlighted content on Nigerian Weblogs?

G. Information Type on the Websites

With regard to the information type that were contained in the Web Sites, according to the Table 6 (below), the majority 59% of these Web Sites contained feature articles that were mostly opinionated editorials written to highlight on certain issues that were of interest to the writers or owners of the Web Sites, whether to advocate for a cause in society, community or to highlight personal issues. Whereas, considerable amount of the information were reports of some kind, for example, journal, research, etc. Considerable amount 10% of the information were news reports on the trend at the time of posting. Finally, only 26 7% were information dedicated to political campaign. The rest were shared between views, press release, research, records and list of tables respectively.

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As for the reports on information contents and orientation of the Nigerian Websites, the majority of the Web Sites focused on political related information, be it in the form of news report, opinion articles, views, and others, while considerable amount of the Websites focused on non-political issues. As for the Type of Domain names that were popular among Nigerians, blogs or weblogs seemed more commonplace, whereas, online single application was also common. In terms of ownerships of the Websites, society tends to have created and owned many of the Website, whereas meager numbers of the Sites were owned by agency, government and individuals respectively.

Table 6
Information Type on the Websites

INFORMATION TYPE	Frequency	Percent
News	36	10.28
Bulletin	1	0.28
Campaigns	26	7.42
Press Release	6	1.71
Talk	1	0.28
Editorial	1	0.28
Presentation	1	0.28
Features	205	58.57
Statement	1	0.28
Debate	1	0.28
Reviews	1	0.28
Records	2	0.57
Reports	47	13.42
Forum	1	0.28
Journal	1	0.28
Speech	1	0.28
Table	2	0.57
Lecture	1	0.28
Opinion	1	0.28
Proceedings	1	0.28
Analysis	1	0.28
Research	2	0.57
Views	8	2.28
Notes	1	0.28
Story	1	0.28
Total	350	100

n=350

With regard to the origin of the information on these Websites, reports have shown that most of the Websites were created and originated from Nigeria, although few were created in the United States of America, the United Kingdom, India, Netherlands, Australia, New Zealand, and Germany as indicated on their URL addresses and on the first page of the Websites. As for the information type on these Websites, feature articles tend to dominate the Sites, while reports of some kind, such as, journal, research, etc were present, but News reports and political campaign information were commonplace. The rest of the information types were shared between views, press release, research, records and list of tables respectively. Finally, most of the Websites were created or last updated in the year 2007.

However, considering the contents and orientation of information on the Sites that were analysed for this study, there is propensity for inadequacy in Internet accessibility in Nigeria and among Nigerians. Many reasons could be implicated for this inadequacy, although several report findings, such as Awolaye et al. (2008) has highlighted that the respondents have found erratic power supply to be a major issue, which has to be tackled. In other African countries, for example, Ghana constant electricity is not a problem as it is the case here in Nigeria (Idowu, Idowu, Adagunodo, 2004). It is essential, therefore, that government policy be directed at encouraging the reliability of electric power, to avoid further deterioration. Initiating of adequate ICT training is also very important, not only for educational use, but also for imparting political knowledge, mobilisation and participation among society.

Therefore, to achieve this, changes in not only in school curricula, but in attitude among users may be necessary in order for ICT to become commonplace tool that it ought to be. These policies must be reviewed periodically and properly monitored for compliance. This aside, provision must be made to increase the amount of, and access to, up-to-date ICT equipment in point of access, especially all higher schools of learning, as well as provide adequate resource including bandwidth relative to the country political population. Adoption of effective strategies to enhance skills in the use of ICT is also very important.

VI. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the Internet World Statistics has catalogued the penetration of the Internet and its usage worldwide. It reported that as of December, 2011, there were only 45 million Internet users in Nigeria, which amount to 26.5% of the total population, with roughly 10 million (7.2%) face-book users. These percentages may not be supportive of the Internet as an adequate channel for political information seeking and political campaign communications. Nevertheless, more facilities are still needed to be put in place to get the Internet usage become widespread among the populace.

Finally, this study concluded that the educated conjecture in the hypothesis Ho1: that Nigerian Websites with information that focused on any form of political issues or activities will signify the political orientation of the Nigerian Websites, was confirmed because findings in this study have shown that the majority of Nigerian websites contained political related information which came in form of news reports on politics, opinion articles on politics, views, and others that pinpointed on politics, while non-political information only numbered few. This indicates that most Nigerian websites are of political orientation and focused on political issues and activities.

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Yet, more facilities are still needed to be put in place to ensure wide spread of ICT in the country so that users will have more access, adequate power supply, broadband internet connection to ensure more online participations.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the findings, the study makes the following recommendations for further research:

A. *Improvement on study of new media use for political campaign communications*

It is hoped that future studies would include more variables that touch on the issue of online political campaign communications in Nigeria.

B. *Longitudinal study of new media use for political purpose*

User perceptions on consideration of new media influence on political environment in Nigeria can best be understood through longitudinal studies. Therefore, a longitudinal study of user perceptions on internet use politics could be more informative and enlightened to future researchers.

C. *Comparative examination*

Findings in this study have revealed on contents and orientation of the Websites. An appropriate next step would be to take existing measures to apply them to the Nigerian web site in a comparative manner.

D. *Use of the internet by individual politicians and parties*

Now politicians have to engage in more active profile building and public relations activities and to demonstrate closer ties with their constituencies. This indicates that the personal internet activities of politicians should be considered seriously.

E. *Use and effect*

Moreover, studies should be conducted as to whether the provision or non-provision of political information has any impact on the perceived status of any particular politician and people's likelihood of using the new media in the political domain and beyond to vote in an election.

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