

Foreword

It's a brave new world!

Why the focus on digital communication once again? You may ask and you would be justified to. Humans are shaped by the connections they make with other humans, and digital communication is one of the major ways we connect in today's world. Digital communication facilitates the exchange of ideas through platforms birthed from advancements in information and communication technologies. Digital communication is pivotal not just in Nigeria but globally, shaping policies and activities across various sectors and tiers of society; in large part thanks to the continued evolution and vibrancy of the information and communication technology (ICT).

As a result, the contribution of ICT is not just monetary, but socio-cultural as well. It has provided a level playing field for members of society to communicate and interact, giving voice to feelings, ideas and thoughts that would have remained unheard otherwise, and developing and shaping new online cultures, and public spheres.

It has become a platform for power for members of society who are brave enough to engage with the platforms. And bravery is required when dealing with the constant transformations in digital communications which has led to creative self-expression and building of financial power houses both individuals and institutions.

These platforms have given individuals and organisations serious clout in the marketplace of ideas and any right thinking

government would want to leverage on these platforms to reach it's citizens. This is important with Nigeria having 36.75 million social media users in January 2024, at least 16.2 percent of the total population, and a total of 205.4 million cellular mobile connections active in Nigeria in early 2024 (Statista, 2024, data reportal, 2024]. More crucially, it is no longer business as usual, the future of digital communication is here; artificial intelligence is here (AI) - transforming how digital communication platforms work, and how humans interface with these platforms and the systems behind them.

It is important to point out that AI has both its incentives and disincentives. And there have been calls for governance of these platforms. However, we must not let it stop us; not as communicators whose preserve it is to shape the information people get and how it is used across platforms and industries. It is our responsibility to learn these platforms and leverage them to transform not just the citizens but governance of societies. If that is where citizens are, and it is the future, then we need to be there, study it, leverage it as a tool to achieve the kind of society that we want

There are many topical issues that have occurred in the last two years, some of which are dissected in the book. I sincerely hope that the ideas canvassed in this book will move us forward as academics, professionals and a society.

Professor Umaru Pate,
Vice-Chancellor,
Federal University of Kashere, Nigeria