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Appraisal of Internet Surfing and Television Viewing in Nigeria

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Abstract

The evolution of media consumption in Nigeria reflects the country's dynamic cultural, technological, and economic landscape. Internet surfing and television viewing have become significant aspects of everyday life, influencing education, entertainment, communication, and socio-economic development. This appraisal explores trends, impacts, and challenges while offering recommendations for optimizing media consumption in Nigeria. An appraisal of internet surfing and television viewing in Nigeria reveals both opportunities and challenges. While these platforms have transformed education, communication, and entertainment, they also pose risks that require careful management. By addressing the digital divide, fostering local content, and promoting media literacy, Nigeria can harness the benefits of modern media while mitigating its drawbacks. The paper argues that the Internet has become a basic tool for trading, entertainment, and communication, as well as education, in the contemporary world. Nevertheless, despite its positive uses, the presence of additive behaviours among some Internet users has drawn the attention of the public and helping professionals. The paper concludes that the interplay between internet surfing and television viewing in Nigeria is shaping the cultural and economic fabric of the nation. While these media provide opportunities for growth, education, and connectivity, their unregulated use presents risks, especially to younger audiences. A collective effort from stakeholders, including the government, media industry, educators, and families can help harness the potential of these platforms while mitigating their challenges.

Keywords
Appraisal, Internet, Nigeria, Surfing, Television and Viewing
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I. Introduction

The Internet sometimes called "the Net" is a world system of computer networks. A network of many networks in which users at any one computer can, if they have permission, get information from any other computer (and sometimes talk directly to users at other computers) it was conceived by the Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA) of the United States (US) government in 1969 and was first known as the ARPA Net. The original aim was to create a network that would allow users of a research computer at one university "to talk to" research computers at other universities (Vitalis et al., 2025).

Surfing is the exploration of the World Wide Web by following one interesting link to another usually without a definite objective or search strategy. In comparison, browsing is exploration with a definite objective but without a planned search strategy and search is exploration definite in both objective and strategy. The history of the Internet talks about the conflicting versions about the origin of the Internet but the common story is that the internet is a product of a cold war (Hafner & Lyon in Aondover et al., 2025). Its origin is traced back to 1957, when the Soviet Union launched 'Sputnik into space, as a reaction to this, in 1958,

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the United States founded the Advanced Research Project Agency (ARPA), a special agency under the Department of Defense whose mission was to develop a long term highly innovative and hazard research projects (Caroni & Trading in Aondover et al., 2025). In 1962, the air force wanting to maintain the military's ability to transfer information around the country even if a given area was destroyed-in an enemy's attack, commissioned leading computer scientist to do so.

ARPANET, the first prototype of the Internet, was developed by the ARPA department and saw the light in 1969 when four United States universities (University of California Los Angeles, University of California Santa Barbara, Stanford Research Institute Polo Atto, and University of Utah) were connected by network of computers (Aondover et al., 2025). Leonard Klein rock of (University of California at Los Angeles), UCLA, successfully developed the first computer network through "packet switching" to the concept of "distributed network", two fundamental concurrent inventions in the field of computer science. Packet switching is a process that allows the division of messages into packets and sending them to their destination following different routes. Once they arrive at their destination, they are all recomposed into the original message.

Paul, in 1960, developed the concept of a distributed network funded by the United States Air Force at the Research and Development Corporation (RAND), which is aimed at developing a telecommunication network which can stand a nuclear war (Paul, 1964:34). The growth of ARPANET a in the second half of the 1980s, through computer Transmission control protocol/Internet protocol which was adopted by ARPANET in 1983 and is still the core of internet (Vinton in Aondover et al., 2022). "The transition was, perhaps, the most important event that will take place in the invention of the internet. After the installation of (Transmission control protocol) TCP, the network could branch everyone' (Aondover & Aondover, 2023). In the same year, after the end of ARPANETs experimental phase, the network was split into two; a civilian network for the computer research community (ARPA internet) and military network (MILNET). In 1980, ARPANET was replaced by NSFANET, created by the National Science Foundation and in 1990, ARPANET was officially decommissioned, and the commercial use of the Internet was allowed in 1991.

In 1995, the internet was just one networking system among many others such as Usenet, Fido net, Mintel, but with advent of the web, the internet became by far the most important networking system. That led to what is now known as internet, a global network of interconnected computers that communicate freely, share and exchange Sin information. The younger a person, the greater he or she has access to the internet (Kim in Aondover et al., 2022).

A little has to be said about the history of the television. When the first television came onto the market, you could only watch a play on a screen the size of a dollar coin. The actors also had to take turns in front of the camera, because the screen was only big enough to see one person at a time. The real millstone of the era- the Cathode Ray Tube (CRT) would in one form or another is the basis for all televisions for nearly 100 years. In 1931 Allen B. Du Mont made the first commercially practical and durable CRT for television. The CRT technology allowed TV screens to get bigger and better (Idris & Msughter, 2022). But it's easy to forget that all televisions during these early years were black and white. It wasn't until 1953 that the introduction of the first colour TV broadcasts occurred and manufacturers raced to make colour TVs for eager consumers. Most people did not get a colour TV until the mid

60. Television has become such an integral part of homes in the modern world that it is hard to imagine life without television. The boob tube, as television is also referred to, provides entertainment to people of all ages. TV is not just for entertainment value, but it is also a valuable resource for advertising and different kinds of programming.

The television as we see it and know it today was not always this way. Let's take a brief look at the history of television and how it came into being. Early television was quite primitive. All the action at that first televised baseball game had to be captured by a single camera, and the limitations of early cameras forced actors in dramas to work under impossibly hot lights, wearing black lipstick and green makeup (the cameras had trouble with the color white). The early newscasts on CBS were "chalk talks," with a newsman moving a pointer across a map of Europe then consumed by war. The poor quality of the picture made it difficult to make out the newsman, let alone the map. World War II slowed the development of television, as companies like RCA turned their attention to military production. Television's progress was further slowed by a struggle over wavelength allocations with the new FM radio and a battle over government regulation (Maikaba & Msughter, 2019. The Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) 1941 ruling that the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) had to sell one of its two radio networks was upheld by the Supreme Court in 1943. The second network became the new American Broadcasting Company (ABC), which would enter television early in the next decade. Six experimental television stations remained on the air during the war: one each in Chicago, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, and Schenectady, N.Y., and two in New York City. But full-scale commercial television broadcasting did not begin in the United States until 1947.

II. Review of Literature

2.1 Theoretical Framework

Perception Theory have been referred to as 'the complex process by which people select, organize and interpret sensory stimulation into a meaningful and coherent picture of the world’. Bennett, Hoffman and Prakash (1989, p. 3) states that 'perception is notably active: it involves learning, updating perspective, interacting with the observed'. Lahlry (1991) defines perception as the process by which we interpret sensory data. Sensory data come to us through our five senses. Research as identified two types of influences on our perception: structural and functional. Structural influences on perception come from the physical aspects of stimuli to which we are being exposed (Adewale et al., 2025). Functional influences are the psychological factors that influence perception, and therefore, introduce some subjectivity into the process. In conclusion, according to Severin and Tankard (2001, p. 80) say that three other processes which are similar to selective perception sometimes come into play in mass communication.

2.2 School Environment and Broader Community

The influence of school social dynamics is critical when considering Internet use among secondary school students (Burns, Cross, Alfonso, & Maycock in Vitalis et al., 2024). Whole of school approaches to school health promotion can have a significant impact on the factors that influence students’ behaviour in school. The World Health Organisation's Global School Health Initiative, which is guided by the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion (1986) has been the basis for a growing Health Promoting School Network (Vitalis et al., 2025). According to the World Health Organization, a health promoting school is a school that is constantly strengthening its capacity as a healthy setting for living and working (WHO).

Thailand began participating in the (Global School Health) GHS Initiative in 1998.Subsequently, all primary and secondary schools (both public and private) in Thailand were encouraged to participate in the “Health-Promoting Schools" movement (WHO).

All schools are evaluated on their implementation of the strategies to be classified as a health promoting school, and as such, are ranked as bronze, silver, gold or diamond status, depending on the level of their success. In 2009, a total of 35,183 of all primary and secondary schools in Thailand (98% of the total of all schools) participated in Health-Promoting Schools; 94% achieved the goal of being considered a Health Promoting School with 16.8%/o reaching bronze statues, 20% reaching silver status,57.1% reaching gold and 0.1% reaching diamond status. In 2010, five public secondary schools in Chiang Mai were awarded diamond status (Department of Health, 2008). Four of these five diamond status public secondary schools in Chiang Mai participated in this research investigating the impact of Internet use. While the focus of "Health-Promoting Schools” is one of strengthening school capacity as a health setting for living, learning and working, Internet surfing has not appeared as a specifically targeted area as yet. For example, there is a corresponding global school-based student health survey (GSBHS), with some key topics addressed by the survey; Alcohol use, Dietary behaviours, Drug use, Hygiene, Mental health, Physical activity, Protective factors, Sexual behaviours, Tobacco use, and Violence and unintentional injury (Aondover & Akin-Odukoya, 2024).

The GSHS has been applied in 43 countries to date (WHO,) including Thailand. In the Thai primary and secondary schools surveyed the findings show that 37.5% of students spent three or more hours per day doing sitting activities, such as watching television, playing computer games, or talking on the telephone during a typical or usual day (Department of Health in Aondover et al., 2024).

III. Result and Discussion

3.1 Internet and television

Research exploring the use of Internet surfing among college students, in comparison to students in elementary and middle grades, is quite limited, and the results were sometimes inconsistent. It is worth noting that while only two recent published studies addressed the impact of television viewing and video games on reading, their subjects were elementary and middle-level internet surfer rather than college-level internet surfer. The Internet has become a basic tool for trading, entertainment, and communication, as well as education, in the contemporary world. Nevertheless, despite its positive uses, the presence of additive behaviours among some Internet users has drawn the attention of the public (Maradun et al., 2021).

Our interest in studying the impact on Internet (and television) use on college students' reading habits and practices stemmed from three interrelated reasons. First, our review of the literature indicated that the research exploring the reading habits and practices of college students, in comparison to students in elementary and middle grades, is quite limited; and the results were sometimes inconsistent. Emphasis of published research appeared to have been placed on the study of the reading practices of adults (Mojaye & Aondover, 2022),the recreational reading habits of college students, the reading habits of native and non-native college readers (Mokhtari & Sheorey in Msughter, 2023), the reading habits and attitudes of preservice teachers (Applegate & Applegate, 2004), and meta-analyses of the declines in voluntary reading and reading achievement among American youth and adults. It is worth noting that while only two recent published studies addressed the impact of television viewing (Msughter et al., 2023) and video games on reading, their subjects were elementary and middle-level readers rather than college-level readers. We were disappointed by the scarcity of published research studies that addressed the impact of Internet use and television watching on the recreational and academic reading habits of college students.

Second, findings in two recent reports by the National Endowment for the Arts (2004,2007) and the National Centre for Education Statistics, which examined the declines in voluntary reading and reading achievement among American youth and adults. Both reports indicated that Americans today do not read as much as their counterparts did in past years. According to NCES, the percentage of adults age 25 and older who reported reading any literature in the previous six months went down from 56% in 1982 to 47% in 2002. The National Endowment for the Arts reports indicated that Americans are reading less, that they are reading less well, and that these declines have generally negative civic, social, and economic implications (Oreoluwa et al., 2024). We wanted to find out whether these trends are true for our college student population.

Third, our review of published research in this area indicated that a common complaint among readers and researchers with respect to traditional time-use surveys is that respondents often have hazy recollections when asked to recall specific details of what they did in large blocks of time over days and weeks; thus, they tend to exaggerate, forget, or underestimate some aspects of their reading habits. In this study, we used a modified version of an innovative time-diary technique originally developed by Robinson and Godbey in 1997, and refined by Nie and his colleagues when exploring how the Internet affects interpersonal communication and sociability. In our study we focused on students ‘reading habits, not socialization, but we adapted the time-diary technique so as to gather more complete and accurate time measurements of students' reading habits and practices.

Finally, we were particularly interested in one of Nie and colleagues' findings that high levels of Internet use are associated with reduced amounts of time spent socializing with family, friends, and colleagues-in support of the “displacement “hypothesis-and wanted to find out whether this is true for college reading habits. The displacement hypothesis is based on the premise that the Internet has created a shift in people's allocation of time during the day: more time on the Internet equals less time on other activities. An alternate “efficiency “hypothesis is that the Internet offers an added resource, which makes users more efficient and results in less time spent on other activities.

The Internet has become a basic tool for trading, entertainment, and communication, as well as education, in the contemporary world. Nevertheless, despite its positive uses, the presence of additive behaviours among some Internet users has drawn the attention of the public and helping professionals. In 1995, Ivan Goldberg borrowed criteria for defining psychoactive substance dependence in the DSM-IV and coined the term “Internet Addiction Disorder" to represent those having problematic Internet use behaviour. Since then, much research and debates about Internet addiction have been generated. Similarly, as a leading expert in the field of problematic Internet use behaviour, Kimberly Young developed the 7-, 8-, 10-, and 20-item scales for assessing "Internet dependent" or “Internet addicted” behaviour. In one of her studies with a sample of 596 Internet users, Young found that 66% of the respondents could be classified as “Internet dependent", with the addictive behaviours including tolerance, loss of control, withdrawal, and functional impairment, which caused negative academic. Adolescent Internet Addiction the Scientific World JOURNAL (2008) 8, 776-787--777 financial, and occupational consequences.

There are other attempts to construct Internet addiction measurements. For example, Brenner developed a 32-item questionnaire entitled “Internet-Related Addictive Behaviour Inventory"(IRABI) to assess Internet addiction and found that most of the respondents experienced at least one of the Internet addiction symptoms, including tolerance, craving, and withdrawal. Egger and Rauterberg also designed a questionnaire to examine Internet behaviours and addiction tendency of 454 Internet users in Switzerland and other countries, and reported that 10.6% of the respondents were addicted to or dependent on the Internet (Vitalis et al., 2023). With the development of new media and with user directed technology applied to old media, every man can surround himself with various potent forms of entertainment and information wherever he goes. The increasing availability of new media can, as well enable content-consumers to make changes so that the media can better serve them.

New technologies are transforming how media are used. In the days of network television there were nationwide audiences, all watching a few channels at the same time. But today, the highest-rated programs would not rank in the top twenty-five from 1975. To sharpen the focus of this study, literature would be reviewed to exclude more source-dominated media perspectives. Rather, it will majorly focus its inquest in the areas of audience-centred theoretical framework. Therefore, these would include the cultivation effect theory, perception theory, Media richness theory. These are theories which generally regard the audience as an active part in the communication process (Owens-Ibie & Aondover, 2024).

3.2 Internet Activities

Apart from the amount of time spent online, Internet activities are also important factors predicting Internet surfing of note, Internet addicts used predominately two-way communication functions such as chat or Multi-User Dungeons/ Dimension (MUDs), whereas non-addicts preferred search functions (Chou & Hsiao, 2000; Young, 1996). Nevertheless, there may be some gender bias in Internet surfing and TV viewing since the activities of males and females have been found to be different when using the Internet. Males tended to seek violent movies and games whereas females did not. Similarly, Young (1996) found that men participated in relaxed online activities such as games, whereas women looked for friendships and anonymous communication, often looking for romance in cyberspace. Young's study in Saint et al., (2024) was discussed because it is the first study in this issue focusing on the differences between Internet addicts and non addicts.

The online community appears to provide a sense of belonging and opportunities to share feelings privately that may be more attractive to females. In terms of where computers are used, early research, such as that of Chang and Lin (2003), found that Internet cafes mostly provide rapid Internet connections which are necessary for a gaming experience and a variety of games. As a result, Internet cafes appeared to be considered primarily a male gaming place and thus were seen as highly gender specific. In the last decade, males and females have been using the Internet in different ways (Msughter et al., 2022; Saint et al., 2024). Recently, this trend of differential Internet use has been changing, however, as the penetration of female Internet users grows. In 2008, Hsu and Chuang (2008) reported that male and female Internet users used the Internet at about the same patterns (e.g., online activities) and the same rates (e.g., hours spent online) (Aondover et al., 2025).

IV. Conclusion

The interplay between internet surfing and television viewing in Nigeria is shaping the cultural and economic fabric of the nation. While these media provide opportunities for growth, education, and connectivity, their unregulated use presents risks, especially to younger audiences. A collective effort from stakeholders, including the government, media industry, educators, and families can help harness the potential of these platforms while mitigating their challenges. Thus, the television has become such an integral part of homes in the modern world that it is hard to imagine life without television.

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