

THE EXTENT TO WHICH WOMEN IN MAINSTREAM MEDIA IN KENYA HAVE EMBRACED THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY



REPORT
JANUARY 2025



Abstract

This study surveys the significant impact of technology on women journalists in mainstream media in Kenya. It focuses on the role of technology in their career development, growth, practice, opportunities, and challenges.

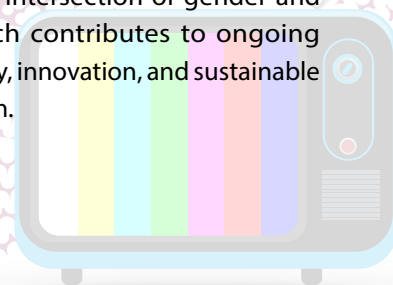
The research uses a gender lens in analysing how digital tools and platforms have empowered women journalists to profile themselves, boost their visibility overcome cultural barriers and stereotypes while navigating the predominantly male media landscape.

The study explores the disparities in access to technological resources and skills that entrench gender gaps in the newsroom and field reporting.

It embraces a mixed method approach drawing on questionnaires, interviews with key informants and focus group discussion to seek qualitative and quantitative insights.

The survey provides insights into how technology has redefined journalism in Kenya while calling for inclusive policies and training programmes to bridge the digital divide.

In shedding light on the intersection of gender and technology, this research contributes to ongoing conversations about equity, innovation, and sustainable development in journalism.



Acknowledgment(s)

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IAWRT also thanks Ms Rachel Nakitare, for playing a vital role in coordinating the team that carried out this research. The association also appreciates the generous support of the Association of Progressive Communication (APC) that has not only enabled the research and the production of this report but ensured that we continuously engage in leveraging on opportunities for female journalists to embrace use of technology, advocate for better policies within media organisations, and also in the media industry.

We would also like to acknowledge the invaluable contributions from Mr Joseph Kipkoech (Director, Directorate of Information, Ministry of ICT and Digital Economy) and his team of directors, Mr David Omwoyo (CEO, Media Council of Kenya), Dr Lydia Radoli (Associate Dean, School of Communication at Daystar University), Ms

Julia Majale (Managing Director, Tuko Media), Dr Grace Githaiga (CEO, KICTANet), Mr Oliver Mathenge (formally Managing Editor Audiences and Engagement at Nation Media Group), Mr Anthony Makokha (Audio Visual Editor, Standard Group), Mr Charles Mungai (Deputy Digital Manager KBC), and Ms Madelena Mkirema (Station Manager, Radio Amani in Nakuru).

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

IAWRT:	International Association of Women in Radio and Television
AI:	.....	Artificial Intelligence
AMWIK:	.....	Association of Media Women in Kenya
APC:	.....	Association of Progressive Communication
DNA:	.....	Deoxyribonucleic acid
ECOSOC:	.....	United Nations Economic and Social Council
FGD:	.....	Focus Group Discussion
KBC:	.....	Kenya Broadcasting Corporation
MoJo:	.....	Mobile Journalism
NMG:	.....	Nation Media Group
OB:	.....	Outside Broadcast
KIIs:	.....	Key Informant Interviews
NGOs:	.....	Non-Governmental Organisations
PWDs:	.....	People With Disabilities
SDGs:	.....	Sustainable Development Goals
SPSS:	.....	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
WAN-IFRA	.....	World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers

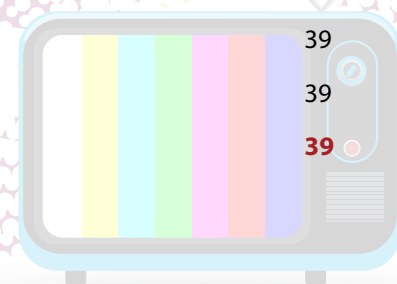
Description of Terms

- Citizen journalism:** It is the active participation of citizens in public communication which over time has transformed the traditional role of the media. This is a participatory aspect where people out there can report stories on specific media house's platforms.
- Legacy media:** Media houses which enjoy long histories.
- Mainstream media:** Reputable and established broadcasting or publishing outlets.
- Mobile journalism (MoJo):** It is a form of digital reporting where trained journalists use mobile devices to gather news. A mobile device in this particular form of reporting refers to a Smartphone or a Tablet with iOS or Android operating systems. Journalists use mobile devices as tools to shoot, edit and broadcast news content. MoJo helps media organisations and even freelance journalists and entities to spend less on hiring crew and acquisition of expensive broadcast equipment. This form of digital reporting comes in handy where it would be challenging to send Outside Broadcast (OB) crew.
- Personal data:** This term refers to all information that has been provided by the client relating to one's personal needs such that one can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identification number such as social security number or one or more factors specific to individual's physical, physiological, mental, economic, cultural or social identity like name and first name, date of birth, biometrics data, fingerprints or deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA). DNA is the molecule that carries genetic information for the development and functioning of an organism.

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About International Association of Women in Radio and Television (IAWRT)



International Association of Women in Radio & Television (IAWRT) is a global network of 14 national chapters and members in 54 countries. IAWRT is a members group of professional communicators or researchers in media and communications.

The Association strives to meet the urgent global challenges faced by women in and around the media. IAWRT is committed to the enhancement of women's role and participation in media as gender equality cannot be achieved without gender parity in media and communication.

It is a non-governmental organisation (NGO) in consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

Executive summary

This research focuses on female journalists in Kenya and how they utilise technologies in their work of informing the public and shaping conversations in matters development of people and institutions in the country.

The study commences its examination from the premise that the media landscape in Kenya has made notable progress in embracing new technologies, enhancing content creation, distribution, and audience engagement, but the extent of adoption varies by various factors including media outlet and type (broadcast, print, digital).

While studies have looked at the influence of new technologies on mainstream media, research taking a gender perspective remain scanty, prompting the commissioning of this particular research.

The study highlights the importance of technological advancement and emergence of instantaneous media posting tools such as Instagram, Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), TikTok, YouTube, Telegram, and others.

It looks at how the emergence of new technologies has brought about disruption in newsrooms, including the assignment of roles from a gender perspective. These conventional approaches to journalism are rapidly evolving. The disruptions have resulted to technology-powered journalism.

The study titled the “**extent to which women in mainstream media in Kenya have embraced the use of technology**”, looks at how female journalists compare to their male counterparts on the use of technology, opportunities, and challenges.

The study has also interrogated the input of both male and female journalists to support women journalists who want to have a space to tell stories on diverse topics using the available technologies and packaging content in formats that can be consumed online.

The study’s findings and the recommendations provide a national perspective of the female journalists’ usage of technology in content creation and what informs adoption.

The study aims to serve as an essential resource for enthusiasts of technology uptake. IAWRT Kenya in collaboration with the Association of Progressive Communication (APC) is undertaking this survey under Advocacy and Institutional Strengthening project. The objective is to assist stakeholders with strategies to improve the technological skills of women in the media and contribute to the larger Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on gender equality and enhanced partnerships.

IAWRT through addressing the challenges and leveraging the opportunities presented by technology, aims to foster a more inclusive and innovative media landscape in Kenya.

Summary of Findings

Percentage of respondents

The study mainly targeted female journalists in Kenya, but also allowed responses from male journalists. This was to understand the extent to which men and women journalists have embraced technology in Kenya. A self-administered questionnaire was sent online that targeted 97 respondents and received responses from 82.5% female journalists and 16.5% male. 1% of the respondents preferred not to reveal their gender.

Technology use in the media industry helps bridge the gender gap

The use of technology has helped women and other marginalised groups build their profile and amplify their voices on platforms such as YouTube, and TikTok.

Technology has enhanced a hybrid mode of work

Literature review revealed the emergence of digital tools for sourcing information and news, editing and uploading content allow journalists in general to work from home. Female journalists like their counterparts in other professions, are primary caregivers at home.

The technological tools and gadgets allow for remote work. This provides the female journalists flexibility in executing tasks when unable to physically go to the office.

ii) Digital tools facilitate collaboration

Female journalists, like their male counterparts, utilise tools such as Slack, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams for online meetings and coordinate some journalistic roles without necessarily having to meet in person.

Technology induced stress

Discussions with the participants in the FGDs revealed that those who work from home feel overwhelmed with too many tasks, long working hours, experience information overload, and face pressure to keep up with influencers, bloggers, and citizen journalism. The pressure has forced some to quit and others contemplating to do so.

They also felt misunderstood by colleagues who deem their tasks as less intensive – a perception which makes the Online Desks in the newsroom overlooked in terms of career progression, salary, training programmes and incentives. Most lack adequate facilitation to perform roles such as data bundles, work tools (laptops, mobile phones and associated gadgets)

Demystifying the media as a male dominated field

This study established that, female journalists in Kenya have embraced use of technology. However, when it comes to decision-making roles and strategic positions, media houses prefer male journalists/editors. Most mainstream media feel digital is a soft skill that can be performed by females, which explains why majority are on the social media platforms.

ii) Female camerapersons

Female photojournalists and videographers feel discriminated and claim that their qualities and expertise are often ignored. They indicated that their media houses prefer male camera operators who are favoured in challenging assignments which attract lucrative allowances.

Creating awareness and support

Digital platforms are tools for mobilising and lobbying for public support to distressed journalists. Female journalists who have faced physical threats and mental challenges have benefited from this mobilisation. Technology has enhanced accountability from government and policy makers especially when there is a breach of fundamental media freedoms.

Resistance to change

Senior journalists in some media houses are rigid to technology use thus limiting acquisition to work tools and streamlining workflows. This not only slows down the digital transformation journey, but also impacts on those working on the digital platforms.

Training on Technology

Media houses are not offering adequate training to journalists forcing many to seek self-sponsored courses, while others look for sponsored courses through their professional associations. Media training institutions also face the challenge of keeping their curriculum in tandem with the fast-paced technology changes.



Image by freepik



1.0 Introduction

1.1 IAWRT Research on Female Journalists' Use of Technology

The media industry in Kenya, like in many other parts of the world, is undergoing a rapid transformation driven by the adoption of new technologies. Journalists are increasingly leveraging digital technologies to enrich their output, employing digital tools in storytelling, audience engagement, content distribution, monetisation and enhancing their skills to keep up with evolving trend. Media organisations are now forced to adapt to the rapidly evolving landscape, to remain competitive¹

The use of technology coupled with access to the internet has accelerated transformation to digital media. Kenya is rated among countries with the highest internet penetration in Africa.²

These technologies have not only reshaped the way content is created, distributed, and consumed, but have also influenced the roles and opportunities available to women in the media sector.

The integration of digital tools, social media platforms, artificial intelligence (AI), and data analytics has become essential in mainstream media operations. However, the extent to which women in Kenyan mainstream media have embraced and are utilising these technologies remains under-explored.

This research is significant as it will provide insights into the technological landscape within the Kenyan media industry from a gender perspective. The findings will inform policy-makers, media organisations, and educational institutions on the necessary interventions to support women in harnessing the full potential of technology

1. Lima, VA. The Future of Media: At the Intersection of Innovation and Technology. Retrieved January 18, 2025, from <https://insights.encora.com/insights/the-future-of-media-at-the-intersection-of-innovation-and-technology>

2. Kenya Media Landscape Report December 2023, Communications Authority of Kenya. See: <https://www.ca.go.ke/sites/default/files/2024-02/Audience%20Measurement%20and%20Industry%20Trends%20Report%20Q1%202023-2024.pdf>

in media. By addressing the gender gap in technology use, the study aims to contribute to the broader goal of gender equality in the media industry.

The advancement of technology and its rapid evolution has altered the media industry globally, offering unprecedented opportunities for journalists to create, distribute and engage with content. Kenya's media landscape has witnessed the rapid shift with digital tools being employed to shape the narratives of a growing dynamic media consumer.

For women journalists however, technology represents both a promise of empowerment and a challenge to overcome persistent inequalities in the newsroom. Women journalists have historically faced systemic barriers that include gender-based discrimination, limited access to decision making roles and workplace harassment.

Technology has emerged as a potential equaliser, enabling women to be assertive, build personal brands and engage with audiences beyond traditional constraints. Social media platforms, mobile journalism (MoJo) tools and online training programmes have provided women journalists with new avenues for storytelling, advocacy, and professional growth. Yet disparities in access to digital resources and skills persist, often exacerbated by socioeconomic and cultural factors.

The study aimed to:

1. Identify the types of technologies used by women in mainstream media in Kenya.
2. Assess the extent to which these technologies are integrated into the media practices.
3. Evaluate the impact of technology on the professional roles and performance of women in the media sector.
4. Explore any barriers or challenges faced by women in adopting and utilising these technologies.
5. Provide recommendations for enhancing the use of technology by women in mainstream media.

These objectives guided the research in understanding how women journalists in Kenya, use technology to enhance their professional practice, including the use

of digital tools for content creation, distribution, and audience engagement and how this has impacted on their careers.

It explores the challenges, if any, that women journalists in Kenya encounter in their use of technology tools. It further seeks to find out if there are support mechanisms to assist bridge the gender gap in the digital media landscape.

The study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding on the intersection between gender, media, and technology in the Kenyan context.

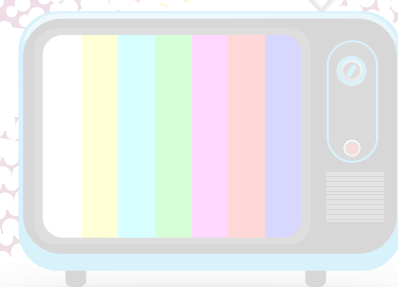
It is envisaged that this research will contribute to the broader discourse on gender and technology, in bringing to the fore the need for inclusive strategies to ensure women journalists in Kenya keep abreast with the dynamic digital age.

Since the extent to which women in Kenyan mainstream media have embraced technology remains under-explored, the study sought to provide insights into how technological

advancements can be leveraged to promote gender equity within the media industry, support the growth and empowerment of women in journalism.

This research is significant as it will provide insights into the technological landscape within the Kenyan media industry from a gender perspective. The findings shall inform policy makers, media organisations and educational institutions on the necessary interventions to support women in harnessing the full potential of technology in the media.

To achieve overall and specific objectives, this research employs different methods namely, survey questionnaires, focus group discussions, and key informants' interviews (KIs). It employed a triangulation approach in gathering data using both qualitative and quantitative methods. The study explores the role of media organisations, training programmes and policy initiatives in facilitating or hindering the adoption of technology by women journalists.



2.0 Design & Methodology

2.1 The design

The study primarily sought to understand how journalists, and particularly female journalists are navigating the technological changes in the media landscape in Kenya.

2.2 The Methodology

A mixed method approach was used in collecting, analysing, and interpreting data during the study. This approach provided a wider spectrum in understanding complex aspects in technology use among female journalists within the Kenyan media landscape.

Quantitative tools, questionnaires, focus groups and key informants formed the basis of data collection on female journalists' adoption of digital technologies and perceptions of the utilisation of such tools in their work. The qualitative data was collected using Key Informant Interviews (KII), Document Analysis and Focus group discussions (FGDs).

Key informant guides and semi-structured questionnaires were administered to the respondents. The KIIs sought to get information from top leadership of the Communication Authority, KICTANet, the Media Council of Kenya (MCK), and top management of mainstream media.

Observation guide was utilised to establish the causal relationship among a group of variables under study. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for transcription and analysis of the responses.

2.3 Research Approach

The survey employed a mixed qualitative and quantitative approach in the collection, analysis and interpretation of data. The quantitative method was used to collect data on the gender of respondents, their age brackets, their educational levels, their preferred methods of training on use of technology tools, their levels of satisfaction in the use of the tools, and specific purposes of the technology tools in their work.

The qualitative method was deployed in key informant interviews and focus group discussions.

2.4 Overall Objectives of the Study

To provide insights into the technological landscape within the Kenyan media industry from a gender perspective.

2.5 Specific Objectives of the Evaluation

1. To identify the types of technologies used by women in mainstream media in Kenya.
2. To assess the extent to which these technologies are integrated into their media practices.
3. To evaluate the impact of technology on the professional roles and performance of women in the media sector.
4. To explore any barriers or challenges faced by women in adopting and utilising these technologies.
5. Provide recommendations for enhancing the use of technology by women in mainstream media.

2.6 Target Population and Area

According to the Media Council of Kenya (MCK) database in November 2024 when researchers embarked on the data collection, the total number of accredited female journalists stood at 1,227 while male journalists were 1,667.

Even though our request to media houses to share their specific lists of journalists was unsuccessful, we proceeded with the MCK list – an umbrella body that accredits journalists from all the media houses in Kenya, including freelance journalists.

Therefore, the total number of accredited journalists is 2,894. The sample size of those who responded to the questionnaire stood at 97. While some were freelance journalists, majority were from media organisations in Kenya.

They came from Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC), Kenya News Agency (KNA), Standard Group PLC, Nation Media Group (NMG), MediaMax Networks Limited, Royal Media Services, West Media Services,

MBCI Media, Tembea Radio, Capital Group, Vision Group, Impact Media Group, Technical University of Mombasa, Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology Radio, Kibabii University, Pamoja FM, Radio Lake Victoria, Radio Amani, Talk Africa, Tuko, Willow Health Media and Coast Digital Media. A few were also from corporate communications organisations, and media team for some county governments in Kenya.

Interviews and focus group discussions were mainly conducted in Nairobi, Kenya's capital city, as it is the home to most regulatory bodies of the media in Kenya. Also, most media houses and online publishers have their head offices in Nairobi. However, the questionnaires were completed by respondents drawn from across the country as the findings and recommendations seek to influence holistic policies on technological issues affecting journalists and female ones in particular.

The key informants are Tuko Media Managing Director Julia Majale, CEO KICTANet Dr Grace Githaiga, former Nation Media Group (NMG) Audience Engagements Editor Oliver Mathenge, Radio Amani Manager Madelena Mkirema, Anthony Makokha of Standard Group, and MCK CEO David Omwoyo, KBC Deputy Digital Manager Charles Mungai. From the academia there was the Associate Dean, School of Communications at Daystar University Dr Lydia Radoli.

From the Ministry of Information, Communication and Digital Economy, the key informants comprised the team led by the Director - Directorate of Information Joseph Kipkoech.

The respondents cut across key media institutions and organisations whose mandate extends to the topic under survey. Focus group discussions were done on November 25, 2024, in Nairobi. There were two sessions of FGDs – in the morning and in the evening.

We had a great team of respondents. The discussions moderators during FGDs had great experiences from respondents from KBC, K24 owned by MediaMax Networks Limited, Standard Group, Online-specific platforms, community radio stations, and Media Central among others. Their experiences as discussed in this report reveal

how technology/digital journalism is regarded across the media sector.

2.7 Sample Size

The research targeted 97 respondents with the help of Glenn 1992 table which puts emphasis on precision level and margin of error. Researchers relied on published tables, which provide the sample size for a given set of criteria.

It takes into account sample sizes that would be necessary for given combinations of precision, confidence level and variability. The margin of error was $\pm 10\%$.³ -The study had initially targeted to have female respondents at 60% and male ones at 40%.

Journalists were qualified as:

- Reporters simply stated as journalist in this study
- Editors
- Producers
- News casters
- Social Media Managers
- Media Management Personnel such as Chief Operations
- Officer among other key positions

There were also key informants who were drawn from KICTANet - a multi-stakeholder Think Tank for ICT policy and regulation, Media Council of Kenya (MCK), Standard Group, Amani Radio, Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC), and Daystar University scholars.

2.8 Limitations

1. Reluctance of media houses to avail segregated data of male and female journalists for comparison.
2. Government bureaucracy, limited availability of key informants for interviews, and participants in the FGD due to their unpredictable work schedules and frequent changes in government appointments led

3 Singh, A. S., & Masuku, M. B. (2014). Sampling techniques & determination of sample size in applied statistics research: An overview. *International Journal of economics, commerce and management*, 2(11), 1-22. See: <https://ijecm.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/21131.pdf>

to rescheduling of appointments and caused delays in conducting the Key Informant Interviews.

The mixed method approach however enhanced the reliability and validity of the findings providing alternative avenues to collect data.

2.9 Research Instruments

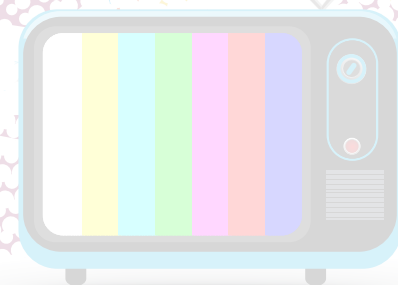
A self-administered questionnaire distributed online was the primary data collection tool for the study. Both female and male journalists – majority being female - were asked to provide general demographic information, accessibility to technology tools, access to training on the use of technologies, organisational and government support, if any, on the use of technologies, policies on utilisation of the technologies, challenges or barriers, and recommendations on adoption and adaptation of the technologies within the Kenyan media landscape.

Key Informants were queried on how they started working in the digital field, necessary training background for placement in the digital department, what working in the digital department entails, their views on how new technologies have influenced media work, and how men and women compare in terms of numbers and placement in the digital departments.

They were also to comment on policies in their respective media organisations that guide the use of new technologies in media and the challenges, if any, they face using new technologies to do their work. Additionally, they were asked to give recommendations to overcome some or all the challenges they mentioned. It is imperative to note other key informants were drawn from academia and regulatory bodies.

2.10 Data Analysis

SPSS was used in the transcription and analysis of the responses.





3.0 The Legal Framework

The Kenya Information and Communications Act (Cap. 411A) is an Act of Parliament that establishes the Communications Commissions of Kenya (CK) now the Communications Authority of Kenya (CA).⁴

The act was amended by the Kenya Communications (Amendment) Act, 2009, and the Kenya Information and Communications (Amendment) Act, 2013. The Act facilitates the development of the information and communications sector, promote electronic commerce, and other functions.

It covers a range of topics, including Communications Authority of Kenya (CA), telecommunication services, radio communication, broadcasting services and cyber security, postal services, licensing, fair competition and equal treatment.

Communications Authority of Kenya (CA) and the Kenya Film Classification Board (KFCB) play key roles in regulating the content and technical standards of media technologies. The Computer Misuse and Cybercrimes Act No. 5 of 2018 is an important legislation that guides the use of digital tools in Kenya.

This legislation was enacted to address offences relating to computer systems, timely and effective detection, prevention, responsive investigation and prohibition of computer and cybercrime. It also allows for cross border co-operation in dealing with computer and cybercrime.

Crimes covered under this Act include but not limited to are cyber espionage, computer forgery, computer fraud, false publication, child pornography, cybersquatting, phishing, identify theft, and cyber terrorism.

Chapter Four of the 2010 Constitution of Kenya provides a normative framework for the recognition, protection, and promotion of fundamental rights. Article 19 (1) reaffirms the importance of this Chapter and consigns

the Bill of Rights as an integral part of Kenya's democratic state and a framework for all its social, economic, and cultural practices.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 9 "Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure" focuses on technology in the media industry and other areas. UNESCO recognizes Media Information Literacy (MIL) as an important component of media training.

The Access to Information Act 2016 is applicable to the use of technology in the media sector. The right to information must be enjoyed without discrimination on any grounds. In Kenya, Access to Information is guaranteed by the 2010 Constitution. It is expected that the use of technology accelerates access to information by journalists.

The Media Council of Kenya Act 2013 establishes the Media Council of Kenya whose functions include training, accreditation of journalists and to ensure they uphold media ethics. In 2023, MCK formed a technical committee to develop media guidelines on the use of AI, Data, and social media to ensure appropriate and ethical integration for their use in professional journalism in Kenya. The Council invited public and stakeholder input to inform the final review of a media handbook.

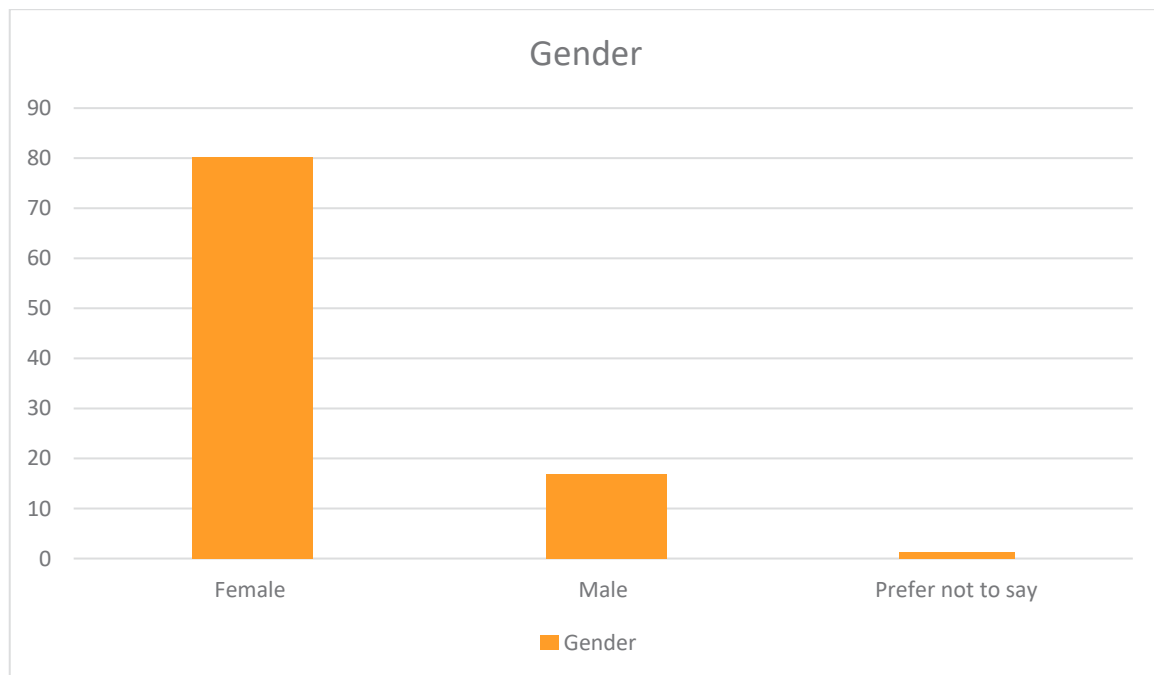
The right to privacy is enshrined in the constitution under Article 31. Through the Data Protection Act, 2019 it governs the protection of personal data requiring media organisations to obtain consent, and process personal data for journalistic purposes only if it is in public interest.

⁴ Sector Legislation, Communications Authority of Kenya. See: <https://www.ca.go.ke/sector-legislation>

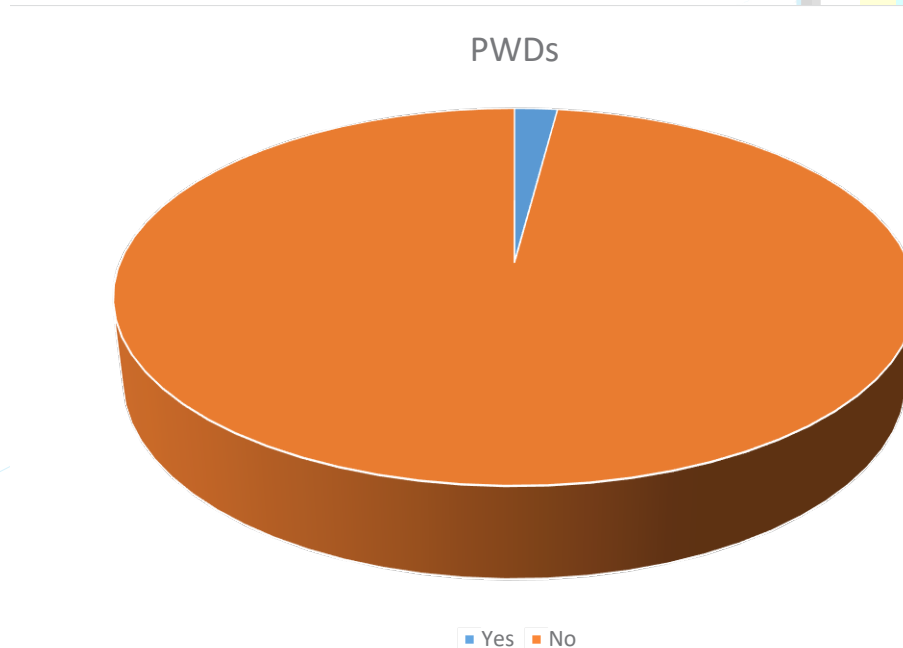
4.0 Findings

4.1 Representation of respondents

A total of 97 journalists including academia and other officials in statutory bodies dealing with the regulation of the media industry participated in the study. 80 were female, 16 were male while 1 did not reveal the gender. The chart graph below shows distribution of respondents according to gender.

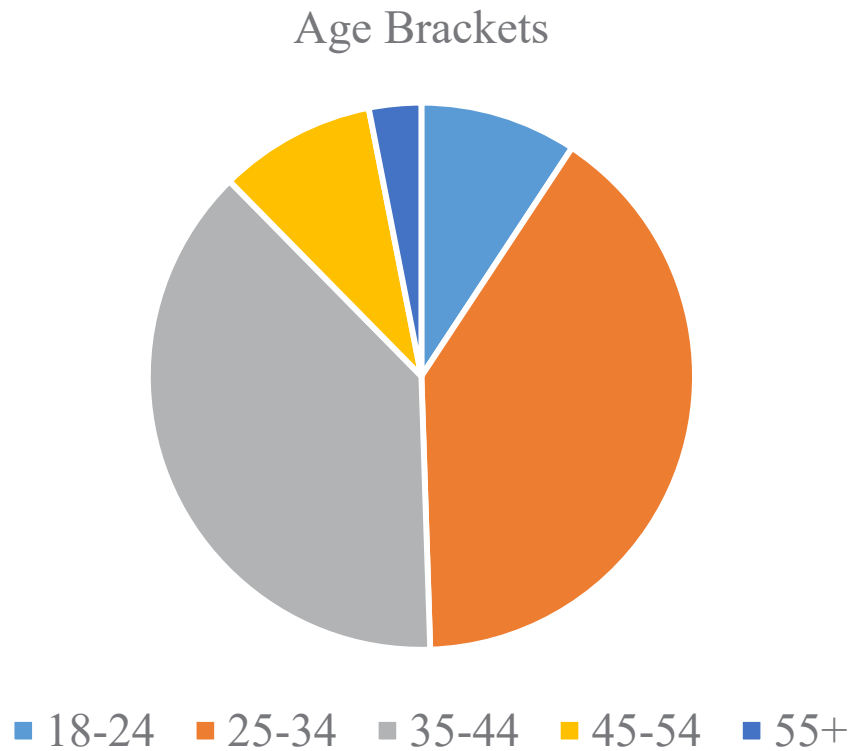


Only 2% were from the category of People With Disabilities (PWDs) as shown in the pie-chart below.



4.1.1 Representation of respondents by age

The data shows that most of the respondents (40.2%) were aged between 25-34 followed by 35-44 years at 38.1%. The distribution of respondents by age bracket is summarised in the pie-chart below.



4.1.2 How men and women compare in terms of numbers and placement in the digital sections

While for a long time, the society has been conditioned to assume that men rule the digital world, the findings of this study reveal how female journalists are scaling success in the digital world. At Standard Group, in the Digital Section there are 11 women journalists, with three in senior supervisory roles.

Ms Betty Njeru is the Head of Radar Desk, Ms Joan Mwai is the Head of Social Media (News) while Ms Asha Ali is the Head of Social Media (Radio). At the same media house, men representation in the same department are six, including Anthony Makokha as the Digital Editor and Patrick Vidija as the Deputy Digital Editor.

Female journalists are at 64.7% while men represent 35.3%. Those statistics at Standard Group reflect a positive trend toward gender equity in leadership, although there's room for further improvement.

It is a 5.3 percentage decline, looking at Article 19 research study titled 'Women Journalists' Digital Security' of 2016 which found that Digital Department at Standard Group had 27 personnel where women constituted around 70%. Nation Media Digital department had over 200 journalists with about 30% being women.⁵

⁵ Women Journalists' Digital Security', Article 19 Eastern Africa. See: <https://amwik.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Women-Journalists-Digital-Security.pdf>

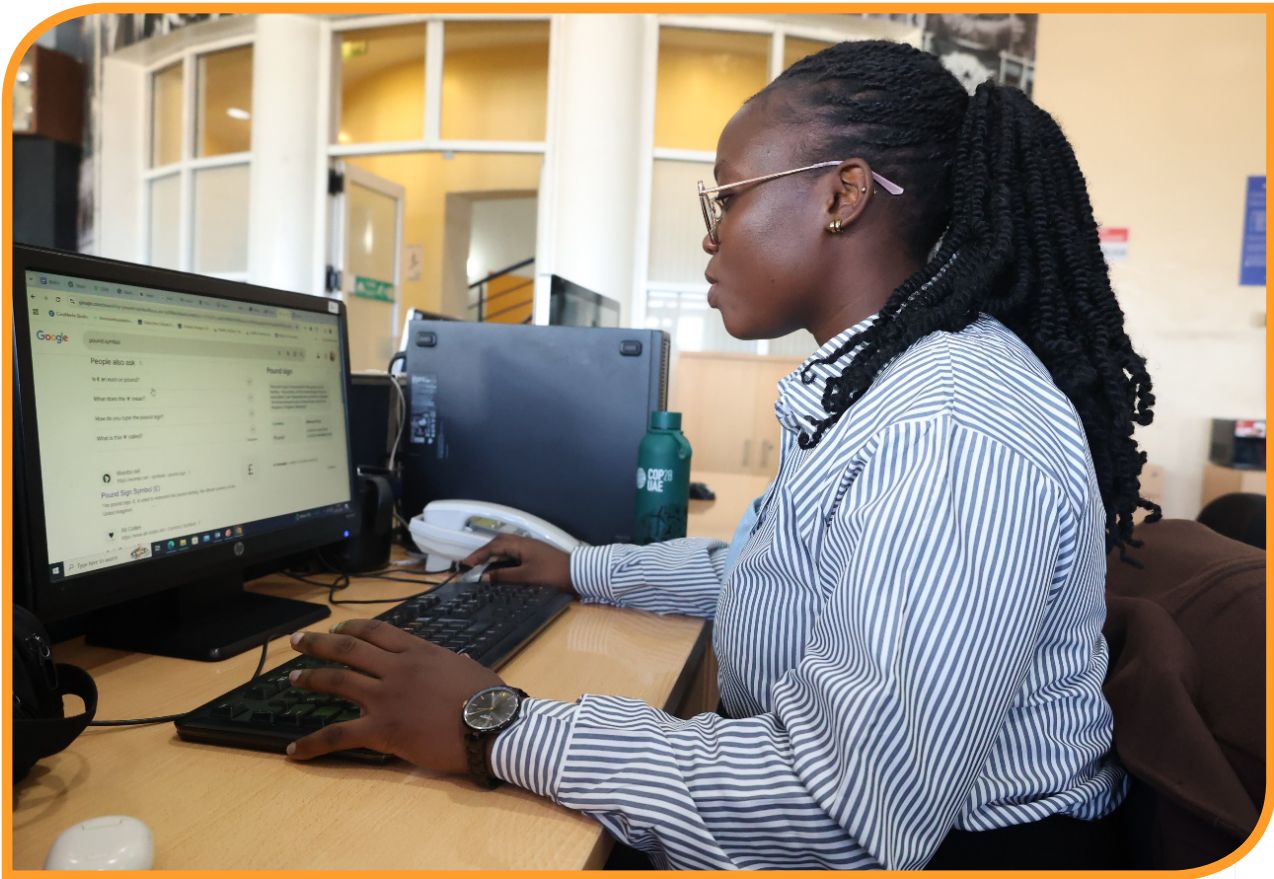


Figure 1: Ms Marion Sitawa at her work station on 29th January 2025. She is a Business and Lifestyle Reporter at Nation Media Group. Photo by IAWRT

At Tuko Media, this research found that it is mainly owned by Ukrainians. Currently at the headquarters in Ukraine, they have an all-ladies team. However, in Kenya, individuals in the senior roles are a mixture of male and female. The Managing Director (MD) is female.

I became Managing Director in 2023. Before that, I was the Managing Editor, I was like the Chief Editor. My entire team of Heads of Departments, like six or seven, were all men. I was the only female. I think I managed to promote one lady to come in, but she left again. By the time I was becoming MD, I was just working with all men in terms of Heads of Departments. For sure, there are more men in the media role, on our sales team, we had an all-ladies team.

We just hired one man recently. Video team... It is a mix, half, half. I can't say we are at 50-50, in terms of male-female, but more male to female. Although, now the interesting part is, our team in HQ are all ladies.⁶

⁶ An interview with Julia Majale, the Managing Editor, Tuko Media

Kenya News Agency (KNA), which is government-owned, has a staff of 200 and out of that labour force, 80 are women. Percentage of female journalists stands at 40%. Here at KNA's National Desk, social media section is mainly handled by young ladies who post content via X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, and YouTube. They also edit and publish content on the website.⁷

At the national broadcaster, Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC), there are many factors at play to determine the person who gets employment. The management there is alive to things like gender balance and regional balance among others.

You could do an interview for a role. You find that maybe you have three candidates who may be qualified, but the best candidate comes from a region that is predominant in the corporation. You have to do a regional balance. Even if the most qualified was a lady and the second

⁷ Response from the office of Director, Directorate of Information, Ministry of Information, Communications, and Digital Economy

was a man, then the lady because of regional balance aspect will lose. It becomes tricky. In some departments you can find there are so many men, but the regional balance factor still ties the hands of panelists who may have wanted to get, say a female employee in the next recruitment.⁸



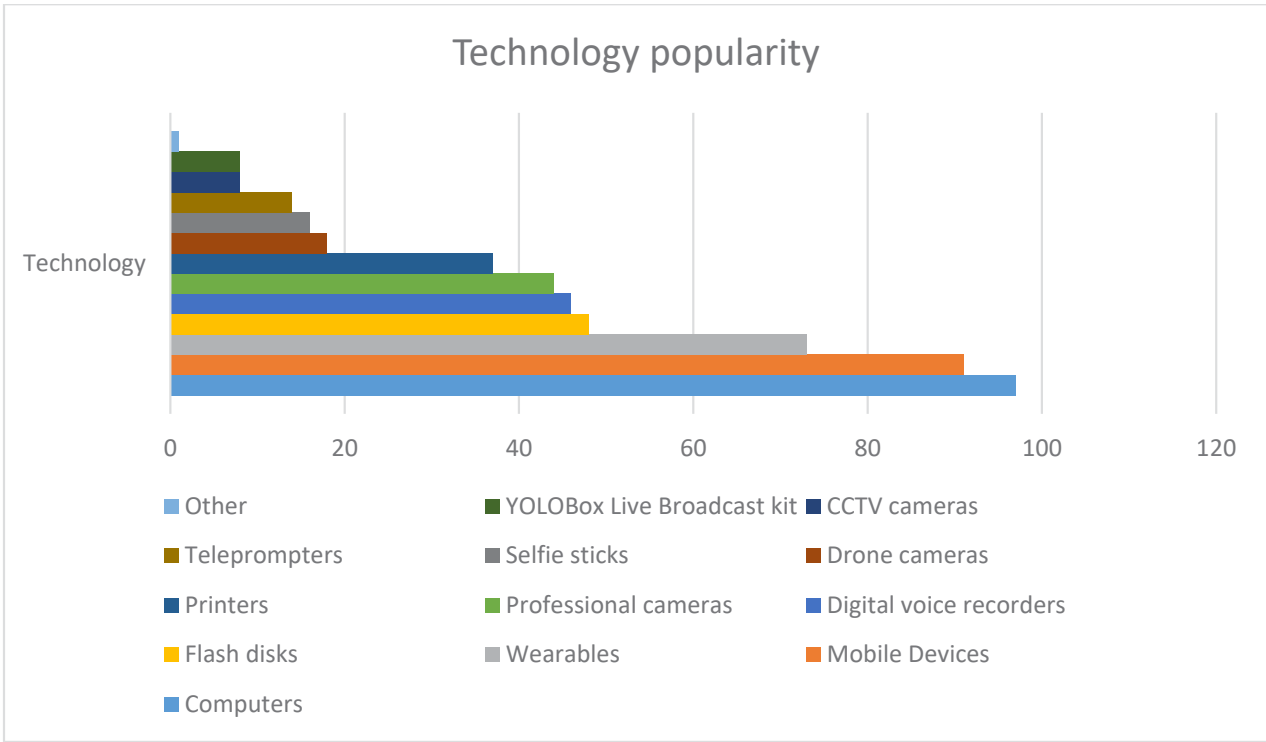
Figure 2: KBC Deputy Digital Manager Mr Charles Mungai. Photo by IAWRT

4.2 How technology is redefining journalism

Technology is a game changer in the media industry. Technology can be hardware or software. The hardware components are computers, mobile devices, wearables such as earphones and lapel mics, professional cameras, YOLOBox Live broadcast kits, selfie sticks, digital voice recorders, flash disks/memory cards, printers, teleprompters, CCTV cameras, and drone cameras among others.

The bar graph below shows the technologies respondents cited that they use in their work. It gives a picture on the most popular and less popular technologies. Computers are the most common followed by mobile devices, mainly Smartphones.

8. An interview with Mr Charles Mungai, Deputy Digital Director, Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) on 6th December 2024



Software technologies include tools such as editing software, collaboration tools, social media platforms, language tools, and generative. Some newsrooms are using artificial intelligence (AI) in coming up with some of their social media posts.

pie below shows distribution of software technologies.

Things keep changing. At Tuko Media where they have employed the use of AI they have had to review their editorial policy, to guide the use AI, in line with ethical requirements.

Software technologies



At Tuko the journalists are also guided by Facebook Community Standards and Google policies. In essence, Alphabet which owns Google and Meta which owns Facebook, both have a very comprehensive policy on how to use AI and even how to generate content. They regulate monetisation of content.

Software tools common in newsrooms include content editing, language check, mobility tools, collaboration and communication and analytics tools. The doughnut-shaped

Technology protects data through cloud computing and cloud storage software.

With the technology world, you can also save your work. Previously if a computer in which you had saved your recorded content crashed, you had no backup. But nowadays you can have a backup of whatever information that you had. For example, if it was played on air and was stored on cloud servers, you have a reference of it.⁹

4.3 Skills required for one to work as digital journalist

There are sets of skills required for one to fit in the digital sections of the newsrooms in Kenya.

A strong background in journalism, communication, or media studies is essential for the digital department. Additionally, it is important that one undergoes technical training in areas such as social media management, basics in Content Management Systems (CMS) like WordPress, digital security, use of analytics tools such as Google Analytics and multimedia editing skills and others.

For senior roles, leadership training and expertise in audience engagement, digital marketing, and data analysis are critical.

4.3.1 Necessary skills in the use of technology

There are desirable skills in the use of technology in the newsrooms.

Journalists need key technical skills in creation, packaging, distribution, of content. At Nation Media Group (NMG), there is Newsplex and Gender desk that churns data. The desk has empowered female journalists who have honed their skills in data analysis and reporting on gender issues. Whereas both men and women journalists sit on that desk, this study established that having such a desk accords female journalists an opportunity to showcase their skills to publish content that motivates women to develop a go-getter mentality.

9. An interview with Ms Madelena Mkiema, Radio Amani Station Manager on 8th January 2025

4.3.2 General guidelines on the use of technology

- Media law and ethics guide.
- Verification of information, and fact checking.
- Content unfit for human consumption is not allowed to air/transmitted.
- Zero tolerance to plagiarism.
- A journalist is prohibited from sharing their content to be published on competing platforms.
- Content from online platforms should be verified and factual.
- Company provided technological tools and resources should be restricted for official purposes to minimise chances of cybercrimes.

4.3.3 Policies guiding the use of technology in newsrooms

The Nation Media Group has developed a framework on the use of AI, while Tuko Media, reviewed their editorial policy, to include the use of AI, and their ethics. Standard Group has also adopted several policies to ensure ethical and efficient use of technology.

The policies are:

- **Digital Ethics Policy:** Ensures responsible use of AI, data, and social media tools.
- **Cybersecurity Protocols:** Protects data integrity and confidentiality.
- **Content Guidelines:** Outlines quality and verification standards for digital content.
- **Training Initiatives:** Refresher courses to keep staff updated on new technological trends.

4.4 Female journalists' experience in digital journalism

The use of technology has seen a paradigm shift in content creation and distribution. Female journalists in Kenya shared their experiences on how they have adapted to the use of technology in storytelling.

Our organisation Willow Health Media is 100% digital. It relies heavily on tech to tell stories. We have websites, we have social media platforms, and we have a podcast. So basically, all the work that we do is for consumption on

the digital platform. So, I could say 100%. The fact that I had just come from Tuko, which was again 100% digital, it was easy for me to transition. Because before that, I was a newspaper journalist. So, that was a big jump for me to switch. Not so easily. It wasn't that easy. I had to be trained.

There are so many things I had to unlearn. From doing the day-two journalism, to reporting the here and now. A challenge to compressing a story that you could tell in 1,500 or 2,000 words to 50 words and tell the whole story. Because nobody has the time to read all that. So for me, it was difficult to compress all that. And also, I felt we were losing out on a lot of voices.

You know the things we were used to for the newspaper storytelling. But you know, when change comes you embrace it, you learn, and you grow with it. Otherwise, it will render you jobless.¹⁰

Some media organisations 'micromanage' journalists while others allow journalists to exercise their professional discretion. At Willow Health Media, journalists, irrespective of their gender, are at liberty to make rational decisions. Female journalists face online harassment that sometimes may shift to physical violence.

A respondent shared her experience about a story she published in connection with the death of a prominent preacher which then went viral. This angered the family and some members of the church, who singled her during the burial ceremony. She said this experience while it was risky, helped her develop a thick skin for her to continue her online duties.

Female journalists, especially those managing social media pages work long hours. Even when working from home, they are forced to update their websites from early morning when discussion shows are aired at the stations. They are still expected to stay alert throughout the day to receive and repackage content for the different online platforms. Some respondents said that such hectic work

10. An excerpt of interview with Yvonne Kawira, a producer, researcher and digital journalist for health content at Willow Health Media, during focus group discussion (FGD) in Nairobi on 25th November 2024

schedule has affected their family life as they hardly find time to bond with their children and spouses. Some say the possibility of starting a family may not be feasible.

Female journalists are not fully facilitated to perform their social media roles. Some respondents who update social media said they are expected to buy their own mobile smart phones. Some media houses do not offer the journalists data bundles and where they do, it is insufficient.

Most media houses do not offer training and up-scaling of skills, forcing journalists to seek self-sponsored courses or seek support from professional associations. A respondent from a community radio in Nakuru said she would be glad if she got an opportunity to attend a workshop training on adoption of technology.

Attending a workshop on technology adoption training and also getting a laptop would really boost my prowess in digital-driven journalism. A29 Her appeal points to a need for some media houses to emulate practices of giant media companies in Kenya whereby reporters are slotted in cohorts to attend training workshops on adoption of technology as well as given opportunity to own MoJo tools through gradual repayment process.

4.5 Influence of technology on gender parity and overall development

According to the majority of the respondents, technology is the best thing that ever happened to journalism with regard to gender equity.

4.5.1 Positive Influence

- **Online learning platforms:** Technology has expanded access to education for women and girls worldwide. Platforms like Coursera, edX, and Khan Academy allow women in regions where traditional education is limited to gain skills, empowering them to participate more fully in the media and other industries. A13
- **Technology demystifies technical journalism roles as male oriented.** Technology has increased participation of women to take up previously male

dominated roles in the media industry. A33 Technology has bridged the gender gap. A43 Assignments are based on one's ability to apply the technology and not on gender. A7 It has brought equality provided one is confident, they can deliver the assignment. A40 It has influenced gender equality because it offers a level playing ground. The difference is in the knowledge of application. A73

- **Amplification of women's voices:** Social media platforms like X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, and TikTok have given women direct access to large audiences, bypassing traditional gatekeepers. This has empowered women to share their stories, advocate for gender equality, and build communities. A37 Platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok have allowed women and non-binary creators to bypass traditional media gatekeepers and showcase their talent. This has led to more diverse representations of gender in entertainment, politics, and other sectors. A13
- **Access to information and opportunities:** Technology has democratised access to information and training. Online courses, webinars, and digital resources have enabled women to learn new skills and participate in industries previously dominated by men, such as film production, animation, and gaming. A37
- **Representation in media content:** Advances in digital tools have allowed diverse creators to produce and share content that reflects women's experiences. Streaming platforms like Netflix have championed stories centered on women, contributing to a shift in gender representation. A37
- **Activism and awareness campaigns:** Digital campaigns like #MeToo and #TimesUp have leveraged technology to expose gender-based discrimination and harassment, holding perpetrators to account and advocating for systemic change. A37 Another case in point is when journalists took to social media to condemn police over excessive force meted on MediaMax-owned Kameme TV journalist Catherine Wanjeri during the anti-government protests. Police shot and injured Ms Wanjeri along Kenyatta Avenue in Nakuru City during the Gen Z-led protests in June 2024.
- **Flexible work models:** Technology has enabled remote work, allowing women, especially caregivers, to balance professional and personal responsibilities more effectively. The flexible work models allow female journalists to work while at the same time fulfilling the societal gender roles. A37
- **Equal opportunities in content creation:** Technologies like affordable editing software, smartphone cameras, and online platforms have democratised content creation, allowing more women to enter and excel in media production, journalism, and storytelling. A9 Ability to use tech tools and a grasp of functionalities of platforms such as YouTube has enabled female journalists excel in their roles and helped their media houses gain popularity. Some of them who have been bold enough, after contributing to the successes of their respective employers, have quit and successfully started their own channels. For instance, Ms Lynn Ngugi who worked for Tuko Media, publishing insightful and thought-provoking interviews, left and founded her own YouTube channel. With just over 500 videos, her channel enjoys an immense following, with 1.19 million subscribers.
- **Increased employability:** Access to the internet and ownership digital devices have increased employability chances and opportunities among all genders provided that one has the qualifications. It has also brought about the power over the understanding of gender norms, roles and stereotypes. A30
- **Equal distribution of tasks:** Training is offered to both men and women on how to use technology in the media and therefore roles can be distributed equally among women and men. A59 This is good because it empowers female journalists, it brings a balance on how roles are distributed, relieving male journalists of the work burden.
- **Increased visibility of women:** Technology has opened up new avenues for women in media. Online platforms and social media have created spaces for women to share their stories, create content, and build their own audience. This has led to a wider range of female voices being heard and a greater diversity of perspectives being represented. A62
- **Breaking down barriers:** Technology can bypass traditional gatekeepers in the media industry. Women

can now self-publish, create their own podcasts, and develop web series, reducing reliance on established media institutions that may have historically been biased towards male voices. A62

- **Gender equality and inclusive media environment:** Technology has influenced gender equality in the sense that we all have access to information and services at the click of a button. A65 The advancement of technology has opened up opportunities for both men and women to find their voice and presence in the media industry, creating a more inclusive environment for all. A72 In technology, both men and women are able to learn how technology can be used to improve their skills and also report without the content consumer judging them because of gender. A32 Technology has improved gender equality as it gives women the opportunity to excel. They can work remotely allowing them a work life balance. A8
- **Foster career growth:** Emerging platforms have empowered women to amplify their voices and share their success stories, challenges, and data analytics

which have helped identify and close gaps. A81.

- **Entrepreneurial opportunities:** With technology, it is now easier to commercialise content without overreliance on Geopoll and other surveys. One respondent said that technology helps media houses, content creators and other publishers to take stock or gauge their performance which in turn helps determine revenues from online streams.

Technology makes our work easier so I get to write more stories and also to analyse what our audience like because it gives us the analytics data. Unlike old school media where radio and TV we have to wait for agencies such as Geopoll and others to go do their research and then they come to us...And truth be told, there are people who compromise these particular ratings that are brought before us... But with social media and web analytics, the data captured there is the most accurate, if it is 10 million it is 10 million. So, there is no way that you're going to get information that it's not true.¹¹



Figure 3: Ms Catherine Wanjeri (centre), who is among journalists awarded by Kenya Editors Guild (KEG) at the Annual Media Convention in 2024, poses for a photo with veteran journalists during the gala dinner. Photo/KEG

11. Insights from Sarah Ibrahim of K24 during the FGDs on 25th November 2024

4.5.2 Negative Influence

The research shows that while new technologies are powerful tools for journalists, it can be a double-edged sword. Some of the disadvantages are captured hereunder.

- **Online harassment:** The offline tendencies of discrimination against female journalists have been transferred online and other technology tools. A34 Women in media and journalism face significant online abuse, which can deter participation and impact mental health. This is especially prevalent for women of color, LGBTQ+ individuals, and those addressing controversial topics. A37 Social media has resulted into online violence especially to women - body shaming, hate speech, and harassment. A12
- **Algorithmic bias:** AI algorithms often reflect societal biases, leading to under-representation or stereotypical portrayals of women in media recommendations and advertising. A37
- **Digital divide:** Not all women have equal access to the technology and internet required to participate in the digital media landscape, particularly in developing countries. A37 Under-representation in tech roles: While technology has created new opportunities, women are still underrepresented in technical roles such as software development, which influence the design and function of media platforms. A37
- **Monetisation disparities:** Women content creators often face challenges in monetising their work compared to their male counterparts, including lower advertising rates and sponsorship opportunities. A37
- **'Men are more tech-savvy' still feature:** In some quarters, men are still given more opportunities compared to their female counterparts because of the stereotype that they are more tech savvy. A3 The use of technology in media has in some instances resulted to gender inequality where high technology work operations is often offered to male journalists compared to their female counterparts despite having the qualifications required. A91 Some female respondents revealed that despite their qualifications in photography and videography, they are ignored by management when a work trip arises. Male camerapersons tend to get more work trips compared to their female colleagues.

- **Misinformation and disinformation:** The use of social media has increased instances of misinformation and disinformation. Disinformation targeting female journalists in Kenya perpetrates lies about a journalist's character or competence. The perpetrators use disinformation to undermine the credibility, cause humiliation and belittle the journalist's reporting. A12
- **Tech tools and social media platforms water down real personal relations:** Some journalists claimed that their previous work environments were such that interactions with workplace colleagues were mainly through online platforms such as Slack, Zoom and Google Meet.

About 3 years ago, I was working for an organisation called Code for Africa. I was hired and retired without ever meeting anybody from Code for Africa! I was hired after an online interview, worked for 2 and a half years and left without meeting most of my colleagues in person. I remember there was a time when I met the boss from South Africa in Nairobi in 2024 and I was telling him, "We've never met in person". He was shocked because we interacted every day... you know... and we were interacting across geographies, across languages using tech tools.¹²

4.5.3 Bridging the Gender Gap: What's the way forward?

- **Policy Interventions:** Governments and organisations should enforce policies that ensure equal opportunities for women in tech and media.
- **Digital Literacy Programmes:** Initiatives that equip women with technical skills and knowledge can help close the gender gap.
- **Safe Online Spaces:** Platforms must prioritise tackling online harassment to ensure women can participate without fear of abuse.
- **Diversity in Leadership:** Promoting women in leadership roles within the media and tech industries can foster inclusivity and representation.
- **Technology in the media industry holds immense potential to advance gender equality**, but requires deliberate actions to mitigate its challenges and biases.
- Facilitate trainings to empower female journalists to

12. Response from Ms Rose Lukalo who previously worked for Code for Africa – a training organisation

leverage on technology to report on gender issues.

4.2.5 Barriers to adoption to new technologies

This study finds that despite technology playing a crucial role in streamlining operations in newsrooms and other journalistic spheres, its adoption remains a challenge due to a number of challenges.

- Gender bias. While the study was on female journalists' adoption to the use of technology in Kenya, gender bias was not the main challenge to adoption to the new technologies, but still featured as a barrier.
- Limited access to technological resources and inadequate facilitation to journalists.
- Limited training opportunities on how technological tools can better be used by journalists.
- Organisational resistance and employees' resistance in some instances.
- Time constraints, considering journalists have tight deadlines and are always on their toes looking for compelling news and feature stories. Squeezing time to train on the use of new technologies is a challenge.
- Lack of policy and ethical guidelines on specific aspects of technology for instance the use of AI.

4.3 Supporting Digital Transformation

The support comes from many actors including media houses, journalists, training institutions, the government and tech companies.

4.3.1 Input by media houses

Media organisations play a critical role in supporting the adoption of technology among their teams. This research found that the level of support by media organisations to help their journalists adapt to the use of technology varies from one media house to another. Here below is how such support typically manifests.

- Paying for software subscriptions to help journalists and technical staff access premium services and versions of the media tools they use to source for, edit, and disseminate or broadcast content. Subscribing to essential software licenses, including Adobe Creative Suite or Canva, for creative projects is necessary.

- Training and Capacity Building: Providing regular training sessions on emerging technologies, software, and digital tools. They offer access to online learning platforms (e.g., LinkedIn Learning, Coursera) for skill development. Their respective management host workshops or webinars on integrating technology into daily workflows, such as video editing, content management systems, or analytics. Most media houses have in-house workshops to train journalists on the available technological tools – both hardware and software - for their journalistic work and content creation and dissemination.
- Acquisition of latest technologies. This includes provision of tools like desktops and high-performance laptops to access information online, and purchase of digital audio recording gadgets as well as editing software.
- Creating conducive environment to allow journalists apply the technological skills acquired.
- Fostering a culture of experimentation. For instance, allowing teams to experiment with emerging technologies such as augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), and AI-driven analytics without fear of failure.
- Creating a Digital-First Culture: Encouraging innovation by prioritising digital strategies for convergence, such as podcasts, live streams, and short-form videos. Providing platforms and incentives to explore new technologies like AI for content generation or data visualisation tools for storytelling.
- Support for Remote and Hybrid Work: Investing in cloud-based collaboration tools like Google Workspace, Slack, and Zoom to enable seamless remote work.
- Mentorship and Peer Learning: Encouraging mentorship programmes where tech-savvy team members assist others in adopting and maximising the use of technology. This is achieved through fostering an environment where knowledge sharing is part of the organisational culture.
- Feedback and Iterative Improvement: Actively seek feedback from employees on the challenges they face with technology. Improving tools, training, and processes based on this feedback to ensure user-friendly solutions.
- Policies to Bridge Digital Gaps. Such policies revolve

around addressing the digital divide by offering accessible devices and reliable internet support, especially for field teams. This can be realised through providing Wi-Fi, airtime, and data bundles where necessary so that journalists can keep in touch with newsmakers, and carry out proper research, be it online or offline, for their projects. It also includes advocating for inclusive technology adoption by considering the specific needs of diverse staff.

Offering unconditional permission to employees invited to attend workshops organised by media partners and stakeholders for technology growth.

4.3.2 Freelancers

Freelancers are normally on their own and as such, they have to be innovative to scale the technology adoption 'mountain'. Captured are some of the hacks and approaches taken by freelance journalists.

1. Sourcing for training opportunities and seizing the opportunity to learn about technology that is available for journalists.
2. Subscribe to reputable YouTube channels to learn how to do things using tech tools.
3. Subscribe to professional association to network and explore training opportunities.

4.3.3 Academic institutions

Academic institutions teaching journalism courses are very supportive by incorporating technology-based teaching methods in the syllabus. Daystar and Kibabii University, among other tertiary institutions, foster research and growth opportunities for employees and students.

At Daystar, communication courses have attracted a higher number of female students than that of male students. Female students are 70%, indication that a good number of women journalism students are eager to learn today's journalism.

That said, the management is mulling if they could start programmes where they can encourage more prospective male students to enroll at Daystar to pursue the communication courses which the institution offers.

The institution intends to redesign courses and apply a multidisciplinary approach to attract male students.



Figure 4: Associate Dean, School of Communications at Daystar University Dr Lydia Radoli. Photo by IAWRT

4.3.4 Tech companies

Big tech companies such as Meta which owns Facebook, support digital transformation in a number of ways. First, they collaborate with partners such as Thomson Reuters Foundation to equip journalists with tech skills.

Most respondents affirmed that in 2022, they were awarded certificates after successfully attending Reuters Online Training: Introduction to Digital Journalism Sponsored by Meta Journalism Project. Meta encourages adoption to digital technologies by allowing content published on its various platforms such as Facebook to be monetised by content creators.

4.4 Specific challenges encountered by journalists in usage of tech tools

Data was used to identify technology-induced challenges faced by journalists as they undertake their work. Here are general indicative technology challenges which journalists encounter in their usage of technology tools irrespective of gender.

1. **Technical limitations:** Software glitches or incompatibilities and insufficiently powerful hardware for tasks like video editing and graphic design. Another technical limitation is slow internet speeds affecting uploads, downloads, or live streaming of content. Limited power supply is also a challenge especially for those in remote locations.
2. **Skill gaps:** Limited training on new or complex tools and the challenge of keeping up with the rapidly evolving technology.
3. **Resource constraints:** Lack of access to high-quality cameras, editing software, and analytics tools. Budget restrictions also limit the adoption of advanced technology.
4. **Time pressure:** It is very challenging to learn how to use new tools while meeting tight deadlines. Adapting workflows to include new technology is sometime time consuming, thus slowing down processes.
5. **Collaboration issues:** Constraints in coordinating with remote teams using digital collaboration tools. File-sharing and version-control challenges are common when working on joint projects.
6. **Cybersecurity risks:** Technology attracts data security risks when handling sensitive information. Threats of hacking, phishing, or malware attacks become frequent.
7. **Audience engagement:** To satisfy complex content consumers, publishers have to keep in mind that adapting content for multiple platforms and devices is necessary even when resources are limited. Publishers need to keep up with algorithm changes that affect content reach and visibility.
8. **Accessibility and inclusivity challenges:** Sometimes it becomes a challenge for media houses trying to have content and tools accessible to diverse audiences, including those with disabilities. Addressing language barriers or regional restrictions in tech usability was also cited as a challenge.
9. **Mental health impact:** Journalists are bombarded with information overload from constant connectivity using the technological tools and gadgets. They also face online harassment or negativity, particularly for public-facing roles.

From my personal view, tech brings about fatigue. I really

get fatigued with this tech. So when I'm on breaks, my WhatsApp is usually off. I do so deliberately so that I just get to rest. With WhatsApp is, you know, things are just coming and popping up every now and then. As a user, you get a lot of fatigue when you're handling some of these tools. I don't know if it is me alone, but if you're not careful, you will spend unnecessarily long hours on your gadgets. You would have utilised wasted hours to read a book and take care of your children or perhaps cook some nice meal. So, you'll find your entire time is on gadgets. For me, I sometimes get fatigued by technology.¹³

10. **Some media houses described as rigid:** Top managers in some media houses, according to the study, are reluctant to upgrade to new technological tools and systems.
11. **Delayed subscriptions:** The delays in the event that the premium tools are not up to date, leave journalists stranded.
12. **Gender bias:** In some instances, female journalists are perceived as less technologically skilled. Some respondents revealed that male journalists are sometimes overlooked when they seek the social media management roles as such skills are looked as 'soft digital skills' that are associated with female journalists.
13. **Breakdown and incompatibility:** The machine and gadgets breakdown and software incompatibility issues affect the journalists' adoption of technology tools.
14. **Lack of policies and guidelines:** This study found that lack of specific policies and guidelines on usage of technologies remains an issue of concern that inhibits journalists' potential.
15. **Technology and misrepresentation of facts:** Just as in Computer Science there is this terminology Garbage in Garbage Out (GIGO), so is AI. Tools such as Grammarly are not 100% effective nor are the translation tools. Their output depends on the information fed and the instructions given.

On the flip side, AI has come in with challenges. You know you have to fit the machine with what you exactly want. Let me talk about Grammarly and transcribing tools. If the original text is not well composed, the tools might not really help you as such while editing. You will

13. Response from one of those who participated in the FGDs

be forced to check the entire text nicely to weed out any incoherence and ensure proper language flow. In short, I am saying if somebody is not good in writing, Grammarly may not help them that much because if a sentence is wrongly structured, AI might point a few mistakes, but it will not work on the language.¹⁴

Transcription has its challenges in using AI tools. AI may misrepresent, some words, figures and even names. A journalist ought to be keen on what they are doing especially when recording an interview. If they miss this during initial steps and they go to AI for transcribing, they will miss some words, figures, and even names. When well utilised, technology makes work easier. A poor-quality picture will not be improved by AI. The same applies to audio.

4.5 Respondents' suggestions to help in digital transformation

The study captured suggestions to help in adoption of new technologies.

There should be more budgetary support from the media houses, partners and stakeholders to help in the purchase of equipment and hiring of qualified journalists. A5

Both female and male journalists should consistently upgrade to keep abreast with new technologies. This can be through the search for training opportunities and interacting with colleagues in the media industry to find out what's trending, and also doing research to help one explore the latest tools and gadgets. A7

Social Media Journalism should be a unit taught in universities. A20

There was also a suggestion that news makers and their handlers understand that technology is dynamic, therefore there is need to accommodate journalists with compact yet sophisticated gadgets and recording tools.

Media consumers especially those in corporate world and politics should be aware of the digital shift.

A journalist can show up at a press conference with a small gadget like a phone with an intention to cover a story just like anyone with a huge camera which match a phone in terms of flexibility and service.

Those in charge of events need to know that a phone is a whole media gadget that does everything. In the next 5 years, nobody will be carrying a 15 kg camera when they can carry a small phone and deliver their work. A8

One of the respondents gave a 10-point suggestion.

- **Continuous Learning and Adaptation** where she said technology evolves rapidly, and staying updated is essential. Organisations should prioritise ongoing training and encourage employees to explore emerging tools.
- **She added that it should take a User-Centric Approach.** That, when introducing new technologies, it is important to ensure they are user-friendly and genuinely enhance productivity instead of complicating workflows.
- **Focus should be on Accessibility** by making technology more accessible to all team members, regardless of their skill levels, so as to help foster collaboration and innovation.
- **There must be Support for Experimentation** by having the freedom and resources for trials with different tools and platforms to help identify what works best for a media house's specific needs. The respondent also talked about
- **Balance between technology and creativity** – that while technology is essential, it should complement creativity, but not to overshadow it. She said journalists need tools that empower storytelling rather than prioritising analytics alone.
- **She added there should be collaboration enhancements.** This she said can be achieved through integrating better collaborative tools and encouraging cross-departmental sharing of technology knowledge so as to improve teamwork and efficiency.
- **Feedback loops,** there is urgent need for media organisations to establish feedback mechanisms to evaluate the impact of technology adoption and make necessary adjustments based on team input.

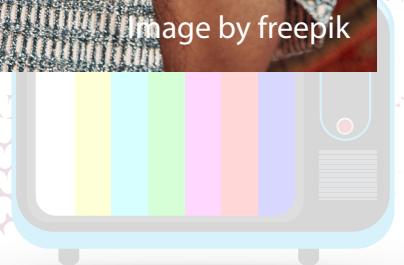
14 Interview with Ms Mary Mwendwa of Talk Africa

- **With so much reliance on digital platforms, it is important that newsrooms address digital fatigue** by setting boundaries and encouraging offline creativity among journalists to boost their wellbeing.
- **Providers of technology solutions should consider local contexts**, such as bandwidth constraints or audience preferences, to ensure relevance and effectiveness.
- **On Future Trends**, the respondent opined that keeping an eye on trends like AI, Virtual Reality (VR), and Artificial Reality (AR) is crucial, only that, journalists must approach them with strategic thinking to ensure they align with the media goals.

4.6 Unexpected outcomes

The study captured some unexpected findings. The most notable ones were that:

- In some legacy media houses, web journalists were asked to develop their job descriptions. To the journalists, this was absurd as it brought about confusion and an indication that the management and human resources (HR) of their respective media houses lacked the knowledge on new technologies and commitment to digital transformation journey.
- Despite working so hard to tell stories using technological tools, tech savvy journalists and social media managers are taken for granted, with their roles casually referred to as 'simple skills'.
- The ministry of information requested for partnership with IAWRT in training their social media teams on digital training, specifically digital security and digital storytelling techniques as well as digital media ethics.
- A respondent in the FGD realized the importance of membership of professional media organisations which offer training opportunities to members and made a decision to join IAWRT.



5.0 Government Support

5.1 Government's Preparedness to Address Rapid Changes in Technology

The government is continuously updating its ICT policies to respond to the dynamic nature of technology, particularly in the media space. The government regularly reviews the National ICT Policy with the aim to create an environment that supports the growth of ICT networks and services. Updating of the policy seeks to address emerging trends, such as AI, digital media, and cybersecurity.

MCK has published a comprehensive media guide on the use of AI in Kenya to equip media houses and journalists with the knowledge and tools to leverage its potential while managing its risks. The guidelines on AI usage play a crucial role in shaping future regulatory initiatives undertaken by regulators.

They also address the challenges and opportunities that emerge from the use of AI. For instance, on 28th January 2025, the Ministry of ICT and Digital Economy in collaboration with KICTANet and supported by the UK government, hosted a two-day workshop in Nairobi focused on the Kenya AI Statement of Principles (SoPs).¹⁵

This is to guide the balance between innovation and responsibility, ensuring the protection of human rights, privacy, and social equity while promoting sustainable development in line with Vision 2030 and the Digital Economy Blueprint. It represents a pivotal step in Kenya's pursuit of a secure, inclusive, and ethical AI future.



Figure 5: KICTANet Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Dr Grace Githaiga. Courtesy photo

The State has put in place Digital Literacy Programmes. Initiatives such as the Ajira Digital Programme aim to equip the youths, including women, with skills needed for digital media roles. The government has also embraced Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) where it is in collaboration with technology companies to create innovative solutions and improve infrastructure.

The government's National Digital Masterplan (2020-2030) is based on four pillars: Digital infrastructure, Digital services and data management, Digital skills and digital innovation and Enterprise and digital business. The masterplan aims to promote digital inclusion and harness digital technologies for national growth.

5.2 ICT Ministry's role to support female journalists

The ICT Ministry has put in place measures and initiatives to address significant gender disparities in technology use within Kenya's media, where studies highlight fewer women adopting tech roles or utilising tech for content creation. The ministry supports initiatives targeting women in tech and media, such as training programmes and mentorships. It encourages gender-balanced participation in media forums and technology-related roles. Further, it collaborates with international and local organisations to increase women's participation in digital media.

¹⁵ Shaping the Future of AI in Kenya, KICTANet. See: <https://www.kictanet.or.ke/shaping-the-future-of-ai-in-kenya/>



Figure 6: Director - Directorate of Information Joseph Kipkoech. Courtesy photo

5.3 Role of MCK in equipping female journalists

The Media Council of Kenya (MCK) in partnership with AMWIK and World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA), train and equip female journalists with necessary digital skills.

We have done that (training female journalists). The other realities are beyond skills for sure. I think the skills are the same. Apart from biological challenges here and there, the differences between men and women, which exist intrinsically from birth, the skills are the same. There are certain intrinsic challenges that women will face working late and early mornings.

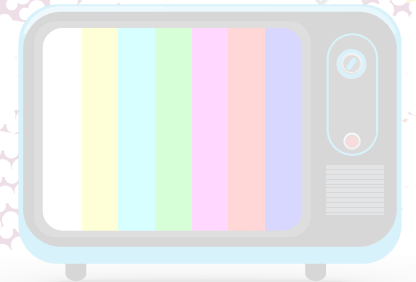
Look, you (female worker) recently got married or you have young babies and all that. That is beyond a regulatory lens. But about giving people skills and all that, we have done so. I want to stress that it isn't just for other external factors. The training field is the same.

The syllabus is the same. Colleges, universities, workshops, seminars, study tools, still the same. Just that, other factors now stop women at a certain period from accessing and utilising this. Female journalists and women in general

sometimes reach at a point where they decide 'I can't be going on maternity leave' or 'I can't be having a young child' or 'I can't be running a family' and all that. It's a challenge that is beyond media and regulatory lens. It's a challenge that is social and must be reflected deeply from another lens.¹⁶



Figure 7: Chief Executive Officer of the Media Council of Kenya (MCK) Mr David Omwoyo. Photo by MCK



16. Interview with David Omwoyo, Chief Executive Officer, Media Council of Kenya on 6th December 2024

6.0 Gaps

Female journalists still face online harassment, a phenomenon that leads to some of them shying away from the use of technology tools.

Most female journalists have not joined professional associations that could help them access digital training that includes digital security. Failure to report technology assisted gender violence targeting women and female journalists in particular, exacerbates the vice.

Some media houses in Kenya are slow in developing comprehensive policies guiding the use of technological tools and software to create content.

There are some regulatory gaps which include lack of clear guidelines on emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, data privacy, and cybersecurity.

Inadequate regulation around social media platforms, misinformation, and digital content management continues to be a threat to journalists' use of technology. Media training institutions and universities are slow in including new technologies in the curricula. However, it is a challenge to change the curriculum every so often as it is expensive.



Image by freepik

7.0 Conclusions & Recommendations

7.1 Conclusions

This section of the report highlights key conclusions as well as policy and legal implications drawn from the research. Further, it makes recommendations for better realisation of disruptive nature of digital technologies in the media industry.

This study on female journalists' use of technology in Kenya has fulfilled its objectives of establishing the extent to which women in mainstream media have embraced technology in their work. The research concludes that most female journalists are making the most out of technology albeit challenges associated with it. The study further establishes that there is need to address the existing gaps to allow women in mainstream media fully explore opportunities that technology offers.

7.2 Recommendations

We make some recommendations to media organisations, journalists, policy and legislative, law enforcement, among other key players.

7.2.1 Media Organisations

Enhance Gender Equity: Media organisations need to enhance gender parity when it comes to use of technology - not having specific jobs for each gender. Assignment of roles need to be done based on merit and one's ability to use the technology tools.

Invest in Training: Media houses in Kenya must provide regular workshops and e-learning opportunities to the journalists they have employed.

- **Adopt Scalable Tools:** There is need for media houses to adopt the use of cost-effective solutions that can grow with the organisation.
- **Encourage Collaboration:** We recommend that the media houses in collaboration with regulators such as

the Communications Authority and Media Council of Kenya collaborate and foster a culture of innovation and peer learning to reduce resistance to change. This will go a long way in fulfilling the regulators' obligations and also within newsrooms whereby journalists will see the adoption and adaptation of new technologies as a way of making their work easier in the fast-paced convergence world.

- **Enhance Cybersecurity:** Continuously update systems to protect sensitive data and maintain audience trust.
- **Tailored Support for Inclusivity:** Accessibility training to ensure tools are usable for diverse team members including men and women.
- **Clear Leadership and Vision:** There should be clear communication from management about the importance of technology adoption. Such a clear vision leaves journalists with a clear impression that ability to adapt and adopt to technology is one of the desirable abilities in the first-paced newsroom environment. Media houses' management need to include employees in decisions about which technologies to adopt and provide solutions that work across different regions and technology levels.
- **Set up Dedicated IT Support Desk:** Having a dedicated IT Support means that a responsive technical support team is available to resolve software and hardware issues quickly. Assistance in troubleshooting new tools and setting up systems is important.
- **Financial Support:** Media houses need to come up with budget allocations for purchasing advanced tools and technologies. They also need to offer subsidies to journalists who wish to undergo professional training on use of technology and get certifications from various media training institutes.
- **Commission Research on Trends:** Media houses need to hire independent research organisations to conduct research on trends in technology.

7.2.2 Journalists

Journalists need to come up with peer mentorship programmes to share knowledge and expertise. They need to be innovative and at liberty to test and adopt

new technologies without fear of failure. The female journalists are advised to enroll and be active members to associations such as Association of Media Women in Kenya (AMWIK) which works closely with tech companies and legal experts to help their members gain access to safety digital tools and legal services when they experience any form of technology-assisted gender violence.

7.2.3 Policy and Legislative

Since the Media Council of Kenya (MCK) and Communications Authority (CA) collaborate with the ICT Ministry, it is expected that the ministry will draft bills and forward to be cleared and endorsed by the Cabinet after which they will be tabled in the National Assembly by the Leader of Majority as government-sponsored bills.

The bills must aim at upgrading the legal and institutional framework of the technology and telecommunications sector and address key emerging digital issues including biometrics, big data, artificial intelligence (AI), geo-location and cloud computing.

The enacted laws on tech use must be at par with the pace of technology trends. In case of need to use any new digital software or technology, the laws in place must be revisited and where an amendment is required, then the due procedures must be followed and adhered to. There should be public participation where key players like journalists and media practitioners are allowed enough time to air their views.

7.2.4 Law Enforcement

Gender biasness should be an active case under investigation to allow law enforcers to swiftly act to protect labour force. Where it is evident, a journalist's rights have been violated, law enforcers must ensure perpetrators are brought to book.

Cases of technology-aided violence against female journalists who are cyberbullied should be put under thorough investigation. Investigators have technology and equipment that can help track and arrest offenders found to be in bridge of Section 27 of the Computer

Misuse and Cybercrime Act. Such suspects need to face cybercrime charges.

7.2.5 Others

Media support partners need to plan workshops on technology. There should be civic education on the use of the same technology. They can also offer grants on technological equipment like computers, drones, cameras, and powerful multimedia editing software to support journalists and media houses showing commitment to grow technologically.

Media training institutes and universities need to incorporate Media Information Literacy (MIL) course to equip journalism students with knowledge on current technological happenings on the media. That will enable the students and faculty members to be informed on the currency of that space. MIL thus becomes a very essential component in every course that any student taking communication will do.

The institutions also need to do frequent reviews of curriculum and these reviews have to be in adjustment with what is happening in the market, within the media industry. For instance, AI should be seen as an enabler of complex media tasks rather than being opposed.

The universities management officials need to have closer engagements with the media industry in terms of collaboration where media experts from the industry are invited to journalism classrooms not necessary to lecture, but to bring the experiences in the classroom so that trainees and students understand the real-life experiences.

Times have changed and institutions of the higher learning must move away from traditional way where lecturers wrote curriculums and they stayed for years within the universities. They need to do frequent reviews of curriculum and the reviews have to be in adjustment with what is happening in the market, that is, the media industry.



The International Association of Women in Radio & Television Kenya