

# STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF BLOGOSPHERE AS CREDIBLE NEWS SOURCE (A STUDY OF DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY ABRAKA AND DELTA STATE POLYTECHNIC OGWASH-UKWU)

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## Abstract

In recent years, the growth of the blogosphere has revolutionized the way people consume and share information. Blogs are online platforms that enable individuals to publish and share their views, opinions, and news stories. Despite their popularity, the credibility of blogs as a news source has been a subject of debate. It is in the light of this that this study examines students' perception of blogosphere as a credible news source. The researcher embarked on this study with the intent of achieving four objectives; and based on the objectives of the study, four research questions were formulated to serve as a guide for this study. This study is hinged on the alternative media theory and the source credibility theory. The survey research design was adopted as the most suitable research design for this study and data were collected through the use of well-structured questionnaire. Findings show that the perception of students towards blogosphere as news sources is that it is not credible and do not satisfy their quest for news. The study also found out that students utilize blogosphere as news sources to a very large extent as majority of them contribute to various blog sites which in turn enhances their level of news consumption. Based on the findings, the study recommends among others that bloggers should be encouraged to adhere to ethical standards when publishing news and information on their blogs.

**Keywords:** Blogosphere, Credibility, News Source, Perception,

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## Introduction

The credibility of the blogosphere as a news source in Nigeria is a topic of debate. On one hand, some blogs have a reputation for providing accurate and reliable information, and are considered credible sources of the news by their readers. On the other hand, many blogs in Nigeria are not held to the same standards of fact-checking and accuracy as traditional news outlets, and some have been known to spread false and misleading information (Adeoye, 2018). Therefore, it is important for readers to be critical and evaluate the credibility of a blog before accepting its information as true, and to cross-check information from multiple sources. By definition, Hassan (2017) opined that blogosphere is the collective community of blogs and their interconnections. It is the internet space in which all blogs, bloggers, citizen journalists exist and

communicate with one another. The term is often used to refer to the global network of blogs and the discussions and interactions that take place within it. It should be noted here that the blogosphere is characterized by its decentralized, participatory nature and its ability to facilitate the rapid dissemination of information and ideas. It is also considered as a source of alternative news and opinion that challenges the traditional gatekeepers of information, and as a form of citizen journalism. The blogosphere is considered as a dynamic and constantly evolving space shaped by the actions and interactions of its participants.

According to Nuhu (2018), the practice of journalism has exclusively been reserved for experts in the discipline over time. The experts in this situation are individuals who have learned the specifics of the

profession. However, as society developed and contemporary technology advanced, people started doing the duties of journalists through the use of social media platforms and blogs. As a result of this development, news began to be reported by the public directly rather than following the standard journalistic workflow. Adelabu (2008) painted a clear picture of this development when he observed that many mass media organizations are busy repackaging and becoming more interested in satisfying advertisers' needs rather than readers'/audiences' needs, and that many people are redefining the rules and roles of the game with the aid of information technology, most especially the internet.

Given the aforementioned requirements, it is necessary to learn what people believe about the validity of blogs and citizen journalism materials because many people rely on them for delivering and receiving messages or information. Meanwhile, many people occasionally complain that the information that the blog's readers learned about them was either entirely inaccurate or a fabricated account of an incident or problem. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to ascertain how students of Delta State University Abraka and Delta State Polytechnic Ogwash-ukwu perceive the blogosphere as a credible news sources.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The widespread use of blogs has generated mix reactions. Some see it as positive development while others express strong reservation and fear. The fear is justified because technology has liberalized news gathering and dissemination business and has turned every user of mobile phone with internet access into a potential mass communicator. As a result, individuals these days give breaking news through social media which spreads like wild fire. If the report is a negative one capable of causing break down of law and order, as soon as it is released, it goes viral. One of the main problems in the blogosphere is the issue of information credibility and reliability. Since anyone can start a blog and post information, it can be difficult for readers to differentiate between credible sources and misinformation. This can therefore; lead to the spread of false and misleading information, and can also make it harder for people to find credible information on a particular topic.

### **Objectives of the Study**

- i. determine the extent to which students of Delta State University Abraka and Delta State Polytechnic Ogwash-ukwu perceive blogosphere as news sources;
- ii. assess the extent to which Delta State University Abraka and Delta State Polytechnic Ogwash-ukwu students utilize blogosphere;

- iii. determine whether the students of Delta State University Abraka and Delta State Polytechnic Ogwash-ukwu share contents on blog sites;

### **Research Questions**

- i. What is the extent to which Delta State University Abraka and Delta State Polytechnic Ogwash-ukwu students perceive blogosphere as news sources?
- ii. What is the extent to which Delta State University Abraka and Delta State Polytechnic Ogwash-ukwu students utilize blogosphere as news sources?
- iii. How do the Students of Delta State University Abraka and Delta State Polytechnic Ogwash-ukwu share contents on blog sites?

### **Review of Literature**

#### **Definition of Blog**

A lot of definitions have been offered to blogs. Starting with the blog hosting sites, Blogger, they defined blogs as a publishing tool in October 1999. In 2000, they described their product as a website that gives immediate communication strength by giving authors the opportunity to post ideas on the web whenever they feel like. Live journal, another hosting website describes its product in 2000, as a user friendly yet powerful publishing tool enabled by open source software. In 2004, Typepad described blogs as an influential website that allows users to share travel logs, digital scrapbooks and journals on the internet. Xanga described its product in 2004 as an online based community that allows users to share journals and diaries. Blog companies most described blogs by the content i.e. journals, publications, logs and diaries (Boyd, 2006).

Danesi (2009) defined blog as web site with a regularly updated list of commentary and links to information on the Internet. A blog often serves as a publicly accessible journal for an individual or community of individuals and tends to reflect the distinct character and personality of the site's users. Blogs are set up with easy-to-use authoring tools. Scholarly contributors like Nardi, Schiano and Gumbrecht (2004) defined them as modified webpages that gets updated from time to time and, they mostly contain many filed posts. Schmidt (2007) states that "Weblogs, or "blogs," are frequently updated websites where content (text, pictures, sound files, etc.) is posted on a regular basis and displayed in reverse chronological order. In addition, Godwin-Jones (2006) also states that the blog is 'one, large, loosely interwoven net of information, as blog entries are linked, referenced, and debated.

Blogger and seasoned journalist Jeff Jarvis submits that 'blogs are whatever we make them'

(Conniff, 2005). They are a recent addition to the repertoire of computer-mediated communication (CMC) technologies through which people can socialize online.

### **Blogs as News Outlets**

Internet has brought about wide range of opportunities to every facet of human life. From the perspective of news, blogs have emerged to challenge the dominance of mainstream media (i.e. newspaper, magazine, radio and television) as news sources to the public. A blog is described as a web journal that comments on the news, frequently by criticizing the media and usually in crudely humorous tones, and includes links to articles that provide evidence to support the viewpoint (Baran, 2010). According to Branston and Stafford (2006), a web-blog (sometimes abbreviated as a blog) is an online publication made up mostly of periodic pieces (normally in reverse chronological order). They are simple to set up and maintain, frequently operate in very private ways similar to diaries, and frequently rely on the news agenda and articles already in circulation but are organized with a personal campaign focus. Kang (2010) made the observation that participants in any event are potentially incontrovertible witnesses to what actually occurred, citing the digital torture photographs from Abu Ghraib created by participants. These "citizen reporters" now pose a serious threat to the corrupt corporate journalism intermediaries. In essence, this new technology may make it more impossible to censor information by state oppression.

A blog is a website that houses an online personal journal with reflections, comments, and frequently hyperlinks provided by the writer, according to Dominick (2009). The blogosphere is a region of cyberspace where blogs are present. According to Dominick, the majority of blogs are only read by the authors and (their) friends. He points out that detractors refer to blogs as "electronic vanity presses," "soap boxes for the self-absorbed," or "a self-aggrandizing trend." Despite these drawbacks, blogs have a considerable impact on journalism and could grow even more prominent in the future, according to Dominick (ibid).

The power of the blogs was demonstrated in 2003 when the then US Senate Majority Leader, Trent Lott made a racially insensitive remark. The mainstream media reported the statement but most decided to let the story die down. However, bloggers kept the story alive, and eventually the mainstream media followed the bloggers lead. Consequently, the news agenda set by the bloggers made the racial prejudice attributed to the Senate Leader regain national prominence and Lott was consequently forced to step down.

### **Concept of Citizen Journalism**

Citizens participate actively in the gathering, reporting, analyzing, and dissemination of news and information in citizen journalism, which is sometimes referred to as public, participatory, democratic, guerilla, or street journalism. This involvement aims to deliver the unbiased, trustworthy, accurate, comprehensive, and pertinent information that a democracy demands.

The phrase "citizen journalism" is an attempt to describe the freedom that network technology gives to regular people to make and disseminate news. The act of a person or group of people participating actively in the process of gathering, reporting, analyzing, and disseminating news and information is described by Bowman and Willis (2003) as this type of journalism. The concept of citizen journalism has highlighted how ICTs have provided considerable opportunities for media production and information transmission outside the parameters of conventional journalism, and therefore for avoiding the gatekeepers of the traditional news business (Nwofe 2012). In his description of citizen journalism as an alternative and activist form of news gathering and reporting that operates outside the mainstream media institutions frequently as a remedy to the shortcomings in the professional journalistic field, Radsch (2013) captures the essence of citizen journalism.

### **The Use of Blogs by Citizen Journalists**

The development of the citizen journalism movement was facilitated by the existence of blogs. Igwe (2025), notes that citizen journalism practice however, is a situation where ordinary people get involved in the production of news item for general or particular consumption. Hence, Bowman Willis (2003, p.9) see citizen journalism as "the act of a citizen or group of citizens, playing an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analyzing and disseminating news and information". With the use of user-friendly digital and cell phone video cameras, as well as fast internet connectivity, regular people can turn into amateur reporters. Images of the Asian Tsunami and the London Underground train bombings were heavily shown on television and in newspapers, showcasing the possibilities of citizen journalism. The popularity of citizen journalism in Nigeria is no longer a breaking news story. This development can be attributed to how widely blogs are used in the nation. With the introduction of blogs, people may now actively participate in the processes of news collection and dissemination.

Educause Learning Initiative (2007) asserts that modern journalism gives a more intimate, nuanced view of events and has the potential to foster communities of individuals who share a shared interest by allowing anybody access to cover the news. Citizen journalists have reported on government corruption,

police brutality, and other topics of interest to local and national communities through a variety of websites.

**Theoretical Framework**

The source credibility theory served as the study's foundations.

**Source Credibility Theory**

To frame this investigation, the source credibility theory was applied. Hovland, Janis, and Kelley presented this notion in 1953. It claims that when an information source is reliable, people are more likely to be persuaded by a communication message. The recipient's ability to believe the communicator is what is meant by source credibility hypothesis. The theory is a method that enables people to view challenges from their own point of view. The source credibility theory approaches communication as value-laden in this way, taking individual variances in viewpoints into account.

Initially, the source credibility model created by Hovland, Janis, and Kelley in 1953 underlined the importance of the source's knowledge and dependability in the transmission of messages. With his source attractiveness model, Loossen (2012) improved on it, allowing for the perception of source attractiveness based on the source's physical appearance, lifestyle, personality, and how comparable, familiar, and appealing the consumer finds the source to be. Credibility of the source is thought to mediate influence and have an effect on the attitudes, intentions, and behavior of message recipients (Eisend, 2006). Since the model's introduction, multiple research have revealed evidence that suggests perceived attractiveness can influence how people feel about the information's source.

**Methodology**

The survey research design was used for this study. The population for this study comprised students of Delta State Polytechnic Ogwash-ukwu who are in the regular programmes and Delta State University Abraka. The population is 22,870 and 32,146 respectively. Therefore the total population is 55,016. Using Krejcie and Morgan Table, a sample size of 382 respondents from the population being surveyed was chosen as respondents due to the nature and size of the population.

**Data Presentation and Analysis**

**Table 1: Gender of the Respondents**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Male	193	50.7
Female	187	49.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>99.9</b>

(Source: Field Survey, 2025)

The data on Table 1 show that 193 respondents (51%) are male while 187 respondents (49%) are female. Based on this, it can be deduced that the male respondents are more exposed to the use of blogosphere than their female counterparts.

**Table 2: Age Range**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
18-24	202	53.1
25 and above	178	46.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>99.9</b>

(Source: Field Survey, 2025)

The data on Table 2 show that 202 respondents (53%) are between the ages of 18-24 while 178 respondents (47%) are between the ages of 25 and above. The implication of this on this study is that respondents between the ages of 18-24 are more exposed to the use of blogs than those within other age range.

**Table 3: Institution of Respondents**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
DELSU	220	57.8
DSPG	160	42.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>99.9</b>

(Source: Field Survey, 2025)

Based on this table, 220 respondents (58%) are students of Delta State University Abraka while 160 respondents (42%) are students of Delta State Polytechnic Ogwash-ukwu.

**Table 4: Level of Respondents**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
100L/ND 1	77	20.2
200L/ND 2	61	16.0
300L/HND 1	109	28.6
400L/HND 2	133	35.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>99.6</b>

(Source: Field Survey, 2025)

The data on Table 4 show that 77 respondents (20%) are in 100L/ND 1; 61 respondents (16%) are in 200L/ND 2 while 109 respondents (29%) are in 300L/HND 1 and 133 respondents (35%) are in 400L/HND 2. The implication of this data on the study is that the respondents in 400L/HND 2 are more exposed to the blogosphere than others.

**Table 5:** Do you agree that blogosphere provides up-to-date and timely news compared to traditional news sources?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	121	31.8
Agree	188	49.4
Disagree	64	16.8
Strongly disagree	7	1.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>99.8</b>

(Source: Field Survey, 2025)

The data on Table 5 show that majority of the respondents (49%) agree that blogosphere provides up-to-date and timely news compared to traditional news sources. This could be because of their usage and dependence on blogosphere for their information needs.

**Table 6:** How often do you visit blogosphere?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Daily	174	45.7
Weekly	91	23.9
Rarely	55	14.4
Monthly	60	15.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>99.7</b>

(Source: Field Survey, 2025)

The data on Table 6 show that majority of the respondents (46%) often visit blogosphere on daily basis.

**Table 7:** Blogosphere as a news source is not credible;

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	97	25.5
Agree	111	29.2
Disagree	103	27.1
Strongly disagree	69	18.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>99.9</b>

(Source: Field Survey, 2025)

The data on Table 7 show that majority of the respondents (29%) agree that blogosphere as a news source is not credible. The reason for this could possibly be because most blogs sites contain false and misleading news.

**Table 8:** Blogosphere do not satisfy my quest for news;

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	87	22.8
Agree	144	37.8
Disagree	102	26.8
Strongly disagree	47	12.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>99.7</b>

(Source: Field Survey, 2025)

The data on Table 8 show that majority of the respondents (38%) agree that blogosphere do not satisfy their quest for news. This could be due to the fact that most news on various blog sites in Nigeria are not well-detailed.

**Table 9:** How often do you get news and other information from blogs?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Daily	177	46.5
Weekly	109	28.6
Rarely	81	21.3
Monthly	13	3.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>99.8</b>

(Source: Field Survey, 2025)

The data on Table 9 imply that majority of the respondents (47%) often get news and other information from blogs on daily basis. This is as a result of their level of exposure to various blog sites.

**Table 10:** How often do you contribute to blogs?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Daily	165	43.4
Weekly	115	30.2
Rarely	71	18.6
Monthly	29	7.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>99.8</b>

(Source: Field Survey, 2025)

The data on Table 10 reveal that majority of the respondents (43%) often contribute to blogs on daily basis. This could be due to the fact that majority of these respondents get news and other information from these blog sites on daily basis; and as a result, they have to either comment, like or share

**Table 11:** What use do you put blogosphere to?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
News source	154	40.5
Chatting	0	0
Entertainment	102	26.8
Leisure	25	6.3
Academic	81	21.3
Others	19	5.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>99.9</b>

(Source: Field Survey, 2025)

The data on Table 11 show that majority of the respondents (41%) often use blogosphere as a news source. The reason for this could be as a result of the fact that everyone has access to it.

**Table 12:** Blogosphere have enhanced my level of news consumption

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	197	51.8
Agree	143	37.6
Disagree	36	9.4
Strongly disagree	4	1.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>99.8</b>

(Source: Field Survey, 2025)

The data on Table 12 show that majority of the respondents (52%) strongly agree that blogosphere has enhanced their level of news consumption. This could be as a result of their daily and exposure to various blog sites.

**Table 13:** How much do you value the information you obtain from blogs?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Extremely valuable	201	52.8
Moderately valuable	111	29.2
Somewhat valuable	68	17.8
Not valuable	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>99.8</b>

(Source: Field Survey, 2025)

The data on Table 13 show that majority of the respondents (53%) noted that the information they obtain from blogs is extremely valuable. This could be as a result of the fact that the information met their needs.

**Table 14:** How often do you share contents on blogs?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Daily	110	28.9
Weekly	155	40.7
Rarely	68	17.8
Monthly	47	12.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>99.7</b>

(Source: Field Survey, 2023)

The data on Table 14 show that majority of the respondents (41%) share contents on various blog sites on weekly basis.

**Table 15:** Which of the following blog site contents do you share?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Personal opinions and experiences	103	27.1
News and current events	111	29.2
Product reviews	69	18.1
Entertainment	97	25.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>99.9</b>

(Source: Field Survey, 2025)

The data on Table 15 show that majority of the

respondents (29%) noted that they share news and current events on blog sites.

**Table 16:** Blog sites contents are very easy to share

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	315	82.8
Agree	65	17.1
Disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>99.9</b>

(Source: Field Survey, 2025)

The data on Table 16 show that majority of the respondents (83%) strongly agree that blog site contents are very easy to share. This could be as a result of the simplicity of most of these blog sites.

### Discussion of Findings

All the data collected for the purpose of this study will be discussed here and inferences will be made where necessary;

**Research Question 1:** What is the extent to which Delta State University Abraka and Delta State Polytechnic Ogwash-ukwu students perceive blogosphere as news sources?

The objective of this research question is to determine the extent to which students of Delta State University Abraka and Delta State Polytechnic Ogwash-ukwu perceive blogosphere as news sources. The data on Table 5, 6, 7 and 8 were used to answer this research question. Based on the available data, it can be deduced that the perception of students towards blogosphere as news sources is that it is not credible and do not satisfy their quest for news. This is in agreement with the view of Bankole (2019) who noted that many blog sites cannot be perceived as being a credible source of news because of the numerous inaccuracies, errors and outright falsehoods inherent in some of this news on various blog sites. He further noted that many blogs are written by individuals with a particular point of view or agenda which can color their reporting and analysis.

**Research Question 2:** What is the extent to which Delta State University Abraka and Delta State Polytechnic Ogwash-ukwu students utilize blogosphere as news sources?

The objective of this research question is to assess the extent to which Delta State University Abraka and Delta State Polytechnic Ogwash-ukwu students utilize blogosphere. The data on Table 9, 10, 11 and 12 were used to answer this research question. Based on the available data, it can be concluded that students utilize blogosphere as news sources to a very

large extent as majority of them contribute to various blog sites which in turn enhances their level of news consumption. This is in consonance with Abiara (2019) who noted that the way and manner in which people utilize blogs have been commendable as blogs have become an important source of news and analysis. He further noted that the extent to which people utilize the blogosphere varies depending on the individual's interests and needs. Some people may use it regularly as a source of entertainment, information or to connect with others who share similar interests. Other may only use it occasionally for a specific purpose such as research or to stay updated on current issues.

**Research Question 3:** How do the Students of Delta State University Abraka and Delta State Polytechnic Ogwash-ukwu share contents on blog sites?

The objective of this research question is to determine whether the students of Delta State University Abraka and Delta State Polytechnic Ogwash-ukwu share contents on blog sites. The data on Table 13, 14, 15 and 16 were used to answer this research. Based on the available data, it is shown that students of share various contents on blog sites on their social media handle, commenting on them; and that sharing of these contents are easy. This reechoes the opinion of Iroegbu (2018) who noted that people share contents on blog sites by writing and publishing blog posts. He noted that people can share blog contents on various social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn. He also explains that people can also share their thoughts and opinions on a blog by leaving a comment. This can help start discussions and encourage other readers to engage with the content.

### Conclusion

This study has shown that there is a wide range of opinions and attitudes towards the credibility of blogs as news sources. Although some students consider blogs to be reliable sources of news, others do not. The findings indicate that younger generations tend to rely more on blogs as a news source than older generations. The credibility of blogs as a news source is influenced by several factors such as the reputation of the blogger, the nature of the blog, and the level of editorial control exercised over the content. Students who trust and respect the blogger are more likely to consider the blog as credible. Similarly, blogs that are well-written, informative, and professional tend to be viewed as credible.

In conclusion, while the blogosphere has become an increasingly popular source of news, it is clear that its credibility among students is not unanimous. The factors that influence the credibility of blogs as a news source are complex and multifaceted, and it is essential that readers evaluate the source and content critically before accepting it as accurate and

credible. The findings of this study highlight the importance of media literacy education in helping students develop the skills and knowledge to critically evaluate information from various sources, including blogs.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following are recommendations that could be implemented to improve the credibility of blogs as a news source among students:

- Bloggers should be encouraged to adhere to ethical standards when publishing news and information on their blogs..
- Media literacy programs should be developed to help students develop critical thinking skills when evaluating information from the blogosphere.
- Bloggers should be provided with training on journalistic skills to enable them to produce high-quality news content.
- Collaboration between traditional media outlets and bloggers can help to improve the credibility of blogs as a news source..

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