

Niche Authorities and Social Activism: Interrogating the Activities of Selected Bloggers in Ghana

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Abstract : Social media and its networking sites have become beneficial to society. With the advent of Web 2.0, many people are becoming technologically savvy and attracted to internet-based activities. With the click of a button, users are now sharing more information on topics, events and issues than before. A new phenomenon in the Ghanaian journalism sphere is the advent of blogger and citizen journalism, some of whom have become niche authorities. Niche authorities have emerged through the habitual and persistent curation of news on specific topics, resulting in the steady growth and emergence of valuable contributions to news sharing. Minimal studies have been conducted on niche authorities and their role in social activism in Ghana. This study, anchored on Cialdini's Six Principles of Persuasion (reciprocation, consistency, social proof, liking, authority and scarcity), explores the features of niche authorities, their areas of expertise, as well as their authoritative voices in the curation of news stories. Using qualitative content analysis, cyber ethnography and thematic analysis of purposively sampled social media posts of five niche authorities, the study interrogates how these niche authorities employ the six principles of persuasion on their platforms to spark conversations on development, social inclusion and gender-based issues in the country. The study discusses how niche authorities deploy the principles in social activism and further recommends nurturing and mentoring communication strategies to progressively guide the youth to become future niche authorities in news curation and news sharing.

Keywords : social activism, cialdini's six principles of persuasion, news curation, niche authorities

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