



# Interactive Features in Online Journalism: A Look at Online Editions of Ethiopian Newspapers

Tsgabu Motbinor

A Thesis Submitted to the School of Journalism and Communication

Presented in partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the degree of  
Master Arts in Journalism and Communication

Addis Ababa University

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

December, 2015



# **Interactive Features in Online Journalism: A Look at Online Editions of Ethiopian Newspapers**

**By  
Tsgabu Motbinor**

**A Thesis Submitted to the School of Journalism and Communication**

**Presented in partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the degree of  
Master Arts in Journalism and Communication**

**Advisor: Gebremedhin Simon (PhD)**

**Addis Ababa University**

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

**December, 2015**

# Addis Ababa University

## School of Graduate studies

This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Tsgabu Motbinor, entitled *Interactive Features in Online Journalism: A Look at Online Editions of Ethiopian Newspapers* and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Journalism and Communication complies with the regulation of the university and notes the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

Signed by the Examining Committee:

<u>Agaredeth Tarnach (PhD)</u>	<u>[Signature]</u>	<u>Dec. 2015</u>
Examiner	Signature	Date
<u>Zenebe Beyene (PhD)</u>	<u>[Signature]</u>	<u>Dec. 2015</u>
Examiner	Signature	Date
<u>Ghevedhin Motbinor (PhD)</u>	<u>[Signature]</u>	<u>December 2015</u>
Advisor	Signature	Date

Wesir Lemcho (PhD) [Signature]

Chair of Department or Graduate program Coordinator

## ABSTRACT

Interactive Features in Online Journalism: A Look at Online Editions of Ethiopian Newspapers

Tsgabu Motbinor

Addis Ababa University, 2015

*Interactivity is an integral part of online journalism. It allows active participation of users/readers and demands a two-way (or multi-directional) model of communication. With the interactive features of new media, the receiver is recognized as an active participant. According to Shultz, (2000) the internet provides a potential for more interactive communication, but most of the traditional mass media industries do not seem to use online interactive features. This study aims at exploring online interactive features that are available in online editions of seven Ethiopian newspapers. The newspapers were Addis Zemen, Reporter and Addis Admass Amharic newspapers as well as Ethiopian Herald, The Reporter, Addis Fortune and Capital English newspapers. The study employed both quantitative content analysis and qualitative semi-structured interviews to collect the data. And, in order to construct measurable categories of analysis, the concept of interactivity was broken down using Heeter's (1989) six specific and measurable dimensions of interactivity. Each online edition of the newspapers was coded for the presence or absence of 46 specific interactive elements. Findings revealed that the online editions of the newspapers have attempted to incorporate interactive features, but not effectively utilized to the extent that relevant literature indicates. In addition to this, interviews with online newspaper editors explored their knowledge of interactivity and reasons for adopting or not adopting interactive features. The newspapers' editors are aware of the interactive features but were experiencing problems with incorporating such interactive features online. They claim that budget constraints, internet connection failures and shortage of skilled man power were the factors that hinder them in developing their online editions. Generally, this study found out a very low level of interactivity in the online editions of Ethiopian newspapers. It is essential that online editions of Ethiopian newspapers cultivate a culture of thought that have a practical bearing on the offering of active and effective interactive features on their sites. It is also especially imperative that their offering of interactive tools highlights an understanding of the significance of such interactive features and develops beyond a mere availability in to an extensive and effective utilization of such tools.*

## **Acknowledgements**

First of all, I am grateful to **The Almighty God** for helping me to complete this thesis work.

I would like to express deepest gratitude to my advisor, Dr. Gebremedhin Simon, for his full support, expert guidance and encouragement throughout my study and research. Without his incredible patience and timely wisdom and counsel, my thesis work would have been a frustrating and overwhelming pursuit. In addition, I would like also to thank Dr. Abdissa Zerai for giving me valuable advice during the study.

I am also deeply grateful to the editors and journalists of Addis Zemen, Reporter, Addis Admass Amharic newspapers and the editors and journalists of The Reporter, Ethiopian Herald, Addis Fortune and Capital English newspapers, for their cooperation and participation in the interview part of the study.

My gratitude goes to my friends Kidanemariam Girmay, Abel Wondimu, Filimon Rezene and Haftamu Wende. I cannot forget their support and encouragement during the stressful and difficult moments.

Finally, I should express my very profound gratitude to my parents for their unconditional love and unfailing support throughout my years of study; I would not have been able to complete this thesis without their continuous love and encouragement. Thank you all.

## Table of Contents

	page
Contents	
Abstract.....	i
Acknowledgements.....	ii
List of Tables and Figures.....	vi
List of Acronyms.....	vii
Chapter One .....	1
1. Introduction .....	1
1.1 Background of the study .....	1
1.2. Statement of the Problem .....	3
1.3. The objectives of the study .....	4
1.3.1. General Objective .....	4
1.3.2. Specific Objectives.....	4
1.4. Research questions.....	5
1.5. Delimitation of the study.....	5
1.6. Significance of the Study .....	6
1.7. Organization of the study .....	6
Chapter Two .....	7
2. Review of Related Literature.....	7
2.1. Introduction.....	7
2.2. Conceptual Framework .....	10
2.2.1. Online Journalism as a New Medium .....	10
2.2.2. Concepts of Interactivity .....	12
2.2.3. Interactive Features and Types .....	14
2.2.4. Dimensions of Interactivity .....	16

2.3. Theoretical Framework .....	22
Chapter Three.....	27
3. Research Methodology .....	27
3.1. Research design.....	27
3.2. Sampling .....	28
3.3. Quantitative Content Analysis.....	29
3.3.1. Constructing Measureable Categories of Analysis.....	29
3.3.2. Coding Procedure .....	30
3.3.3. Inter-Coder Reliability.....	31
3.4. Qualitative Procedures .....	32
3.4.1. Semi-structured interviews.....	32
3.5. Analytical Procedure .....	33
Chapter Four .....	34
4. Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion.....	34
4.1. Introduction.....	34
4.2. Quantitative Content Analysis.....	35
4.2.1. Complexity of Choice Available.....	35
4.2.2. Effort Users Must Exert.....	38
4.2.3. Responsiveness to the User .....	40
4.2.4. Facilitation of Interpersonal Communication.....	42
4.2.5. Ease of Adding Information .....	43
4.2.6. Monitor System Use .....	45
4.3. Qualitative Semi- Structured Interviews .....	48

Chapter Five.....	57
5. Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations.....	57
5.1. Summary .....	57
5.2. Conclusions.....	58
5.3. Recommendations.....	60
References.....	61

Appendices:

Appendix A: Content analysis coding sheet

Appendix B: Coding Book

Appendix C: Interview Guide

Appendix D: Interviewees' profile

Appendix E: Amharic Version of the Interview part

Appendix F: Social media platforms of the newspapers

## List of Tables and Figures

### Tables

Table 2.1: The most important dimensions of interactivity .....	16
Table 2.2: A Model of Rafaeli's explication of interactivity .....	19
Table 2.3: Bordewijk and Kaam's Matrix for the Four Communication Patterns .....	19
Table 2.5: Interactive multimedia information flows. ....	20
Table 3.1: Sample of Ethiopian online newspapers with print counterparts .....	28
Table 4.1: Complexity of choice available result .....	36
Table 4.2: Effort users must exert result.....	39
Table 4.3: Responsiveness to the user result .....	41
Table 4.4: Facilitation of interpersonal communication result .....	42
Table 4.5: Ease of adding information result.....	43
Table 4.6: Monitor system use result.....	45
Table 4.7: Total result of the websites in terms of the six dimensions of interactivity .....	46

### Figures

Figure 2.1. E.M. Rogers' One -Dimensional Interactivity Continuum .....	18
Figure 2.2: Suggested theoretical framework based on Heeter's (1989) six dimensions of interactivity. ....	26
Figure 4.7: Total scoring of websites of the newspapers (points). ....	47
Figure 4.8: Interactivity achieved per dimension .....	48
Figure 4.9: Reporter Amharic newspaper's discussion room (comment section).....	54

## **List of Acronyms**

**MICT-** Ministry of Information and Communication Technology

**INSA-** Information Network and Security Agency

**WWW-** World Wide Web

**ETC-** Ethiopian Telecommunication Corporation

**ERTA-** Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency

**EBC-** Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation

# Chapter One

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background of the study

Today there are thousands of newspapers, television and radio stations, magazines, and other publications that have a presence on the World Wide Web and every day, millions of web users read the news, view it, or listen to it on demand (Salwen et al, 2005). More and more people are getting their news from online news sources, and as a result, the print industry has begun to decline around the world. There is a shift in the way that journalism is being practiced, and one aspect of this is how interactivity has become an integral part of online journalism.

According to Ahu cited in Rahman, (2008) during the short span of its history, online journalism has already proven itself to be a powerful force to be reckoned with. Rahman adds that due to the advent of the internet technology and its sharp expansion and use, online journalism has already been successful to attract a significant number of audiences and it has been an important tool for retrieving news and information through the World Wide Web.

It is also important to know the difference between the online media from the traditional media. Traditional media mostly treats users as passive whereas, online media allows interactive communication with users and treats them as active participants. Heeter cited in Kenny et al, (2000) discusses the difference between traditional media and online media as follows:

Mass communication or traditional media was originally modeled as the one-way transmission of a message from source to receiver. From Shannon and Weaver's model of communication, to the "magic bullet" theory, to the "two-step flow" model of media effects, to the principal of selective attention and perception, and finally the Westley and MacLean model, with its concepts of gatekeepers and feedback all of these perspectives basically maintain a view of mass media as a one-way flow. Online media, on the other hand, demands a two-way (or multi-directional) model of communication. With the interactive features of new media, the receiver is recognized as an active participant. People seek information or select information more than they "receive" information sent by journalists (2000).

On the other hand, a literature of media history shows that there is a tradition of criticism and dissatisfaction for not involving readers or audiences in the process of communication (Schultz, 1999). Shultz supports the above mentioned idea that traditionally mass media have been said to

be the provider of limited one-way flow of information and media critics have always pointed to the lack of interactivity in the media that usually lead readers to be passive recipients of media contents. Usually professional journalism has offered the audience few direct opportunities for interactive communication. In print journalism, 'Letter to the editor' section is a well-known means for feedback. However, the communication remains reactive unless journalists or other letter respond to the initial communication (Schultz, 1999).

Chung, (2008) states that, the potential of interactivity has fueled extraordinary anticipation over the adoption of a two-way communication model in the news industry. Chung adds that interactivity fundamentally challenges the traditional one-way directional flow of news by providing news audiences with increased choice options and even allowing them to participate in the production of information. According to Chung interactivity, thus, has the potential to transform the nature of traditional journalism practice through online news. Journalism is at a crossroads with its content and form evolving daily through multimedia platforms and numerous hyperlinks that easily allow readers to select stories. Most importantly, online newspapers are encouraged to share their control of news presentation with the audience by allowing increased communication among readers, promoting back-and forth conversations between newsroom personnel and the audience, and providing opportunities for personalized journalism.

In this case, the potential of the internet these days are allowing media organizations to represent themselves online in order to create an interaction atmosphere with users. There are many advanced interactive features which can help online newspapers get in touch with their readers. Currently, in the Ethiopian web landscape there are few online editions of print newspapers and purely web based newspapers. But, not all newspapers are easy to access. Especially, most of the purely web based newspapers are published online from America and Europe. One cannot easily access them easily because they are blocked and difficult to access easily.

Seven online editions of Ethiopian newspapers which maintained online editions were selected for the study. The newspapers were *Addis Zemen*, *Addis Admass* and *Reporter* Amharic newspapers as well as *the Reporter*, *Ethiopian Herald*, *Addis Fortune* and *Capital* English newspapers. The focus of this study is, therefore, to explore online interactive features that are available in online editions of Ethiopian newspapers.

## 1.2. Statement of the Problem

According to Schultz, (2000) lack of interaction between the mass media and their audiences has always been a target for media criticism. Schultz adds that while the internet provides a potential for more interactive communication, one wonders how much this opportunity is taken up and most of the traditional mass media industries do not seem to use online interactive features.

Furthermore, Rahman, (2008) explains that the internet technology has brought forth a set of opportunities for making the communication between a medium and its audience more meaningful and interactive. Online news sites can utilize the opportunities to get closer to the audience. But, studies (Shultz, 1999, ; Kenny et al., 2000; Spyridou and Veglis, 2008) on interactivity reveal that online news sites are yet to materialize the options of interactivity or they offer few and token interactive features.

The situation of internet communication and online interactivity is believed to be less common in countries like Ethiopia where millions are illiterate with minimal internet services. But, these days one cannot deny the fact that internet access and people who spend much more time online are growing from time to time. According to marketing communication division of Ethiopian Telecommunication corporation data and internet users are reached 8,790,302 as of January 2015.

Currently, there are few newspapers and broadcast media institutions in Ethiopia that maintain an online edition in the World Wide Web. Newspapers in Ethiopia are also having their own online edition of their print version in the web. They are on the way of taking advantage of the potential of the internet to post media contents to their users. But, little attention has been paid to the existing potential of internet to adopt online interactive features in their websites.

There is a significant paucity of research concerning Ethiopian online journalism. There were some studies conducted related to online journalism in the Ethiopian media institutions. One study conducted by Kibnesh Chala, (2006) focuses on the use of internet as a medium of disseminating information by Ethiopian online newspapers. Her study finding shows that Ethiopian newspapers are represented online and most of the newspapers do not give adequate attention to the online edition, nor do they allocate sufficient budgets and human resources. She adds that the newspapers publish online just to maintain a website.

Other studies carried out in this area were that of Gebeyehu Bekele's (2011) and Mulugeta Kussa's (2014) studies. Gebeyehu, (2011) conducts a study on Media and New Technology in Ethiopia: a case study of the Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency's newsroom. His study findings show that ERTA was found to own a combination of different media technology experts and journalism practitioners. However, the extent and coordination of the infrastructure, the available new media technology devices and the number of computers to staff ratio were far behind the demand. On the other hand, Mulugeta Kussa's (2014) study also focuses on the practice of online journalism in Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation (EBC). His finding shows that EBC's website does not seem to have recognized the significance of properly utilizing interactivity, hypertext and multimedia as key features of the online news. He adds that EBC is not even attempting to use interactivity and hypertext on its current website.

This study is different from (Kibnesh Chala, 2006, Gebeyehu Bekele, 2011, and Mulugeta Kussa, 2014) studies. Kibnesh 's study did not focus on the interactive features of the newspapers during her study. So that, this study is different from Kibnesh's study in a way that it gives an in-depth look in to how online editions of Ethiopian print newspapers incorporated online interactive features these days. And Gebeyehu's and Mulugeta's studies focus on the broadcast media while this study focuses on the print media. Finally, the dimension of interactivity and theoretical framework that was employed in this study is different from the above mentioned researchers.

Based on this, the focus of this study is to explore online interactive features that are available in online editions of Ethiopian newspapers.

### **1.3. The objectives of the study**

The general objective and specific objectives of the study are presented as follows:

#### **1.3.1. General Objective**

The study aims at exploring online interactive features that are available in online editions of Ethiopian newspapers.

#### **1.3.2. Specific Objectives**

The specific objectives of this study are the following:

- To find out online interactive features that are available in online editions of Ethiopian newspapers;
- To identify the extent of use of interactive features in the online editions of Ethiopian newspapers;
- To find out the knowledge of the newspapers' editors/journalists about online interactive features.

#### **1.4. Research questions**

The research questions that guided the study were the following:

- What are the types of interactive features that online editions of Ethiopian newspapers offer?
- To what extent do online editions of Ethiopian newspapers use online interactive features?
- What seems the knowledge of the newspapers' editors/journalists about interactive features?

#### **1.5. Delimitation of the study**

The sample for this study was limited to online editions of Ethiopian newspapers with print counterparts. Purely web newspapers were not included in the study. And, the languages of the selected newspapers were limited to only Amharic and English language newspapers. Other Ethiopian language newspapers were not included in the study. On the other hand, the study explored the perceptions of online newspapers editors/journalists about interactive features in online journalism. But, the study did not examine the view of readers towards online interactive features.

This study encountered the following limitations; there were no enough other local research papers which focus on the subject of Ethiopian online interactive features and due to the newness of the title shortage of time was a challenging task during the study.

## **1.6. Significance of the Study**

The main objective of this study is to explore interactive features in online editions of Ethiopian newspapers and to find out the perceptions of the newspapers editors/journalists towards providing interactive features in their newspapers' websites. Online interactivity is becoming an important concept in today's journalism. Journalism practice is making shift in to an online atmosphere. And, interactivity is also becoming an integral part of it. In this case, this study is expected to be significant in signaling the importance of online interactivity for online newspapers and other media organizations of Ethiopia.

It also helps media practitioners and gives them insight on how Ethiopian media industries and newspapers in particular should take advantage of the potentials of the internet to provide online interactive features. The researcher believed that providing interactive features helps strengthen media institutions' relationship with their readers and audiences. On the other hand, the finding of the research might serve as a stepping stone for further research in the area.

## **1.7. Organization of the study**

The research paper is presented in five chapters. Chapter one presents a general background of the study. It includes problem statement, objectives, research questions, scope and limitation as well as significance of the study.

The second chapter discusses information about online journalism and interactivity. It presents conceptual and theoretical frame works which are in one way or the other pertinent to the study.

The third chapter discusses the methods, procedures, and techniques employed in the study. This chapter justifies and explains the rationale for employing qualitative and quantitative research designs. It also explains how content analysis and semi-structured interviews are employed in this study. It also briefly explains about the data management, analysis techniques and procedures employed in the study.

The fourth chapter dwells on the presentation and discussion of the data, and analysis of the data. And the fifth chapter presents summary, conclusions as well as recommendations.

## Chapter Two

### 2. Review of Related Literature

#### 2.1. Introduction

As mentioned in the introductory part, the main objective of this study is to explore interactive features that are available in online editions of Ethiopian newspapers. This chapter undertakes a discussion of two key areas central to the study: online journalism and interactivity. It then goes to provide brief background information about studies conducted in the area of online journalism locally and internationally. It also discusses conceptual framework related to the study. In addition to this, the study provides a theoretical framework for the study.

Mahmoud and Auter (2009) stated that new media have many advantages that distinguish them from traditional mass media such as: interactivity, demassification, selectivity, synchronization, immediacy, inexpensiveness, pro-democracy forums, marketing tool, speed....etc. However, interactivity is generally considered to be the central characteristic of new media. As such, many researchers in communication technology have attempted to not only explore the level of interactivity that new media involve but also define the dimensions, features, and characteristics of interactive communication within the realm of new media.

There are various researches that have been conducted on the subject of online journalism and interactivity internationally. For instance, among the studies which were conducted in the area of online interactive features and options are those of (McMillan, 1998; Shultz, 1999; Kenny et al., 2000; Spyridou and Veglis, 2008; Rahman, 2008). The studies were studied based on the Heeter (1989) six dimensions of interactivity. These scholars agree that the new media offers various advantages to media institutions but interactive features are not exploited to the expected level.

Shultz (1999) in his study entitled 'interactive options in online journalism: A content analysis of 100 US newspapers' notes that the internet has the potential to increase interactive attempts in journalism. However, media organizations do not necessarily exploit this opportunity effectively. He adds that not every communication mediated by the internet is interactive. Kenny et al, (2000) on his part argue that interactivity involves a two-way or multi-directional flow of information and this information flows amongst members of a community or amongst distinct

individuals rather than to a mass audience. The traditional model of communication, with its one-way transmission of a message from a source to a receiver does not fit interactive system.

When it comes to Ethiopian context, there are no written literatures when and how online journalism and its development in Ethiopia began. But, the broadcast and print media in Ethiopia have represented themselves in the World Wide Web.

Online journalism in Ethiopia is dependent on the internet connection provided by Ethiopian telecommunication and it has shown little improvement since the mid-2000s. The immediacy of the internet is poorly exploited, with news sites appearing mostly as replicas of their parent print or broadcasting outlet. Even though there has been some improvement in technological features, the sites only to a very limited extent incorporate interactivity. In terms of total volume, most media content in Ethiopia is still produced for traditional radio, television and newspapers. The number of local news blogs has actually decreased since 2007 this is despite the fact that more and more citizens are regular internet users (Skjerdal, 2013).

Skjerdal, (2013) further states that the overall development of Ethiopian online reporting is in many ways contrary to expectations of steady growth in the new media sector in developing societies. He mentions that there are three combined reasons for this situation as follows:

The first one is limitations in technological infrastructure, leaving Ethiopia as one of the most poorly connected countries in the world. Another is lack of profit related to the online media. A third reason for the missing progress in online journalism, perhaps more pervasive than the other two is government policy and strategy. He adds that in recent years the authorities have instituted numerous measures that serve to restrict rather than encourage a vibrant online sphere. This has in turn had an impact on the private media houses, which only exhibit modest interest in the online media as an opportunity for journalistic achievements.

Tesfaye (2013) has confirmed the blocking of one hundred twenty three tubes, websites and blogs in his study. According to Tesfaye these websites, blogs and tubes (for audio and video) have released news and articles about Ethiopia and face book pages that are politically oriented and that convey political messages are blocked.

As mentioned above online journalism in Ethiopia is at its infancy with many challenges. And, the existed potential of the internet and online technology in the country is not managed and handled well. There are few web-only newspapers and online editions of print newspapers in

Ethiopia. But, their development is not to the expected level. On the other hand, in terms of research conducted about the practice of online journalism are also very few in number. There have been previous studies which were conducted in the area of new media technology and online journalism in Ethiopia. For instance, (Kibnesh Chala, 2006; Gebeyehu Bekele, 2011, Feyisa Girma, 2011 and Mulugeta Kussa, 2014) studies are among the previous studies which were conducted previously.

Media and technology in Ethiopia is not yet adequately used for various reasons. The level of employment of media technologies differs from organization to organization and from institution to institution, which could be due to the lack of competence or other related factors. Sometimes it is related to lack of awareness of the importance and immediacy attained in using the technology Gebeyehu (2011).

Feyisa, (2011) also states that language barrier is also found to be another aspect that contributes to the low level of awareness of new media by journalists. But, it cannot be said that the majority of the journalists are not aware of the potential of new media. He added that the problem of poor access to internet is attributed mainly to the poor infrastructure of media houses. The basic reason is lack of financial resource. Lack of giving attention to new media sector is also one challenging factors.

Kibnesh Chala, (2006) in her study titled 'the use of internet as a medium of disseminating by Ethiopian online newspapers' shows that Ethiopian online newspapers are represented online just to maintain a website. And, the newspapers are barely interactive. She adds that online newspapers are reluctant to create discussion forums or utilize the tools they already have. The newspapers claim that they are hindered by the reader's interest and capacity. However, they confirmed that readers show interest to participate in discussions and debate. The media's interest to involve readers is related to the gate-keeping role. The lack of interactive elements in the Ethiopian online newspapers might have resulted from the newspaper's interest to maintain the role of an information provider.

On the other hand, according to Mulugeta, (2014) radio and television have their own unique features that the media operators need to stick to in order to be effective. The same holds true for newspaper and online media as well –both have their own unique features. So, it is one thing to go online in a bid to address the online audience in the era of the internet; but it is entirely a

different thing to know the behavior of the online audience and the unique nature of the online operation and approach accordingly. That is why scholars suggest some features of online news such as interactivity, hypertext and proper multimedia usage as a key to remain relevant to the online audience.

Based on the above discussions and explanations, this study explores the current status of online interactive features that are available in online editions of Ethiopian newspapers. And, in the following topics, this study provides conceptual framework of online journalism and interactivity which includes online journalism as a new medium, concepts of interactivity, interactive features and types, as well as dimensions of interactivity. And then the theoretical framework which was employed in this study is presented based on the Heeter's (1989) six dimensions of interactivity. Heeter's six dimensions of interactivity includes: complexity of choice available, efforts users must exert responsiveness to the user, facilitation of interpersonal communication, ease of adding information and monitor system use dimensions of interactivity. These dimensions are discussed in the theoretical framework section.

## **2.2. Conceptual Framework**

### **2.2.1. Online Journalism as a New Medium**

Journalism on digital networks and specifically on internet is a relatively recent phenomenon, whose spread began in approximately 1994, in parallel to that of the World Wide Web (Palacios and Noci, 2009). In addition, the traditional mass media were confronted by a new technology that would dramatically change how people use media: the World Wide Web and due to the technological advance, people could surf the web to find the entertainment and information they wanted when they wanted it (Quinn and Filak 2005).

According to Deuze (2001) the development of new media, specifically in terms of the internet and the World Wide Web has led to the creation of a form of journalism that is referred to as 'online journalism', a kind of journalism that is characterized by three dimensions: interactivity, personalization and convergence.

The internet is only the latest to challenge traditional news delivery methods. However, the implications of its influences are profound. While traditional news media have delivered information through a top-down, centralized model with journalists functioning as gatekeepers of

information, online news media present greater opportunities for control and ownership as users assume more active roles in their news consumption experiences (Chung, 2008).

According to Spyridou and Veglis (2008) the basic reason to launch an online edition is an attempt to reverse declining circulation by building a new base of readers, and especially young and computer-savvy users. Secondly, it had to do with developing a new source of advertising revenue by basically offering the same product in differing formats. Furthermore, the internet seemed as a smart move to protect the advertising base of online newspapers, and particularly classified ads. Finally, following the global trend of going online, publishers felt that an internet service would elevate a given newspaper's prestige.

The shift from traditional media to online journalism is challenging. The challenges is not only a shift to online journalism but also a shift towards viewing readers more as collaborators than consumers and once this is achieved, the undertakings of reporting and writing must also shift from content delivery to information development and design; news reporting and editing from within this perspective must be centered on creating narrative structure that facilitate user navigation through a variety of information resources. Journalists will also need to enlarge their professional role from arbiters of reality and truth to include being facilitators of social dialogue (Huesca and Dervin 1999).

As developments in media advance, existing media theory is proving increasingly less able to explain and clarify current media phenomena (Jensen 1998). New media represent a mounting challenge to traditional media and communication research, a challenge that demands a through rethinking of all central models and concepts (Jensen 1998). Interactive systems are a new hybrid of interpersonal and mass communication found in new media and the traditional model of communication just does not correspond with these interactive systems (Kenny et al. 2000).

This study relies heavily on Jensen's (1998) and Mahmoud and Auter's (2009) discussion of interactivity because they are one of the explications of interactivity that provides an in-depth analysis of various theories surrounding the concept. Jensen's (1998) discussion evaluates the various theories surrounding the concept. His discussion evaluates the various theories of interactivity, incorporating theories of mass communication and audience to arrive at a model of interactivity that provides practical definitions of the concept within the area of communication

studies. And, Mahmoud and Auter (2009) in their interactive nature of computer-mediated communication study they provide definition and concepts of interactivity, dimensions of interactivity, types of interactivity and computer mediated- communication.

### **2.2.2. Concepts of Interactivity**

Interactivity is one of the most frequently used concepts in new media theory and it often invoked as a benchmark for differentiating 'new' digital media from 'older' analogue form and for this reason it is not unusual to find new media referred to as interactive media (Gane and Beer, 2008).

The term interactivity remains an under-defined concept and although it is highly valid and carries weight as a way of thinking about communication, it has narrowly based explication, little consensus on meaning and only recently is empirical verification of its actual role emerging and interactivity has remained a buzzword that many people use, yet few define the concept (Kenny et al. 2000).

The term 'buzzwords' refers to words which, within a particular area or subject matter, appear to refer to something of extreme and popular importance, and which for a given time are heard constantly but are often difficult to comprehend since in reality nobody can pin down their meaning. According to Jensen (1998), 'Interactivity' is such a word and is currently one of the most utilized buzzwords within the media community. Interactivity has almost turned in to a dull buzzword. The term is so inflated now that one begins to suspect there is much less to it than some people want to make it appear (Schultz, 2000).

The situation that has been described above should not be surprising. The meaning of the term and concept of interactivity has, just like a lot of other specialist terms, been watered down after its popular acceptance in daily usage. And in recent years, the explosive development and decided commercial success of interactive technologies and the interactive approach that has taken place in the form of most importantly, computers and multimedia, Internet, intranets, the Word Wide Web and networked computers, leaves no doubt that interactivity has indeed unsurprisingly entered common usage (Jensen, 1998).

Interactivity has been rapidly conscripted into the discourses of a new media age and it is central to a cluster of terms that preoccupy the study of cyber culture. Around it assembled so many of

the binary terms of new media theorizing active/passive, one-way/two way, linear/nonlinear, synchronous/asynchronous, mediated/face-to-face, etc (Holmes, 2007).

The concept of interactivity has its roots in the late 1920s, when Bertolt Brecht and Walter Benjamin criticized the limited one-way direction of the mass media. (Schultz cited in Mahmoud and Auter, 2009). It takes on numerous and various meanings within diverse individual fields of scholarship. In the book '*Key Concepts in Communication and Cultural Studies*', Such a concept is called 'multi-discursive' and this refers to concepts whose meanings or connotations differ significantly according to their use within different discourses. As a result, such concepts depend to a very large extent on their context for their meaning to be clear (O'Sullivan et al, 1994).

The concept of interactivity and interactive media is mostly used to characterize a feature or features of new media that differs from the more traditional media. From among all the existing definitions of interactivity that exist within media studies and even in computer science, it seems evident that there are three fundamental ways of defining the concept: as prototype, as criterion and as a continuum. A discussion of these will crystallize what particular trait of new media differs from traditional media and is characteristic of the concept of interactivity and interactive media (Jensen, 1998).

Generally, Interactivity increases as:

The goal of communication is more to exchange information than to persuade participants have greater control of the communication environment, participants take an active role to fully benefit from the communication, participants act and react to messages via two-way communication, timing of communication is flexible and responsive to demands of participants, and communication environment creates a sense of place (McMillan and Downes in Kenny et al. 2000).

In defining and measuring interactivity, it is essential to distinguish between the structural and experiential aspects of the construct. The structural aspect refers to the hardwired opportunity of interactivity provided during an interaction, whereas the experiential aspect is the interactivity of the communication process as perceived by the communication parties (Liu and Shrum 2002).

According to Heeter cited in Mahmoud and Auter (2009) interactivity is a multi-dimensional concept that includes: the complexity of available choices, the amount of effort users expend, user responsiveness, information monitoring, the ease with which information can be added, and the

facilitation of interpersonal communication. Heeter combine the three aforementioned terms – medium (complexity of choice available, and ease of adding information), perception (effort users must exert, and monitoring information use) and/or process (responsiveness to the user, and facilitation of interpersonal communication) – in her definition of interactivity.

### **2.2.3 Interactive Features and Types**

There are a number of interactive features available that online news editions can utilize to enhance their products on a story-by-story basis as well as on a general basis. These include links to other stories, links to some source material, email to reporters and editors, chat rooms, forums, animations, photographs and biographical information about reporters and columnists, related coverage and searchable databases and multimedia such as audio and video (Dibean and Garrison 2000).

According to Schultz, (2000) however, most online newspapers are not achieving their potential in terms of their offerings of interactive options and still have to improve in offering real participation to their audiences. Rafaeli's model of interactivity also conjure up such a picture of unfulfilled potential in terms of the interactive nature of the use of the new technologies but he does maintain that along the continuum of interactivity, there are setting that make it more likely that full interactivity will occur (Schultz 2000).

The mere availability of interactive tools and options that allow for interactive communication does not say much about the way in which they are utilized by journalists and their audience; nevertheless, it is a necessary condition for the interactive discourse (Schultz 1999).

Dueze, (2001) subdivides interactive features into three types: navigational interactivity which includes scrolling menu bars and buttons that enable the reader to navigate on the page and to and from pages; functional interactivity which includes Bulletin Board System (BBS), moderated discussion lists and direct 'mail-to' links; and adaptive interactivity which includes chat rooms and personal customization thorough 'smart web design.

For Millison (1999), hyperlinks embody the main instrument for the interactivity of online journalism; they link the various elements of a lengthy and complex work, introducing multiple view points and adding depth and detail. A typical work of online journalism can be made up of a hyperlinked set of web pages; pages that can themselves include hyperlinks to other websites.

Email functions as one of the tools that can be used for increasing interactivity; it is a fast and direct channel between readers and editors/reporters. There are, however, some obstacles to its use within the context of online journalism and one of these is that newsrooms schedules do not usually regard discussions with the audience as an essential or integral part of the job and would have to make the extra time to deal with requests of their readers, not to mention make considerable time for interactive discussions (Schultz, 2000).

Online forums can also be considered interactive options or tools within online journalism and are arenas of discourse where readers have the opportunity to comment on articles and discuss new topics. The obstacle to this is that although staff/journalists to issues of technicality and content control. However, in spite of this, there is no doubt that online forums do increase interactivity of the mass media in general by broadening opportunities for reader-to reader communication. Forums that are surrounded by the online environment of a mass medium have an added advantage because the discussions are related to the content of the mass medium and this in turn ensures that people share some basic knowledge and background and that the discussions have more of a chance of achieving certain coherence (Schultz, 2000).

Synchronous live chats are another interactive option that can lead to interactive threads, especially in journalistic chat rooms where the discussions can be guided by moderators and defined topics (Schultz, 1999).

Online polls and surveys offered on journalistic sites could also be considered interactive options although they generally remain reactive. Their failure to be representative and the fact that it is possible for readers to cast multiple votes are associated problems. In spite of these shortcomings, however, there is the potential for them to be used as a means of generating issues for discussion and providing direction for these directions. If riddled in areas of background information and discussion, they can also become part of a communicative effort that may reach an interactive level (Schultz, 1999).

Bucy (2004) identified two types of interactivity as follows:

The first is content (or user-to-system) interactivity, which involves the control that news consumers exercise over the selection and presentation of editorial content. Unlike traditional media platforms, the online environment allows users to more fully interact with the medium itself by clicking on

hyperlinks, taking part in polls, downloading information, calling up streaming media, searching archives and customizing information delivery. The second, less common type of interactivity that may occur online is interpersonal (or user-to-user) interactivity, involving person-to-person conversations mediated by the network. Such computer-mediated communication includes both synchronous (real-time) and asynchronous (delayed) exchanges, whether in the form of e-mail or its various permutations such as instant messages, chat room discussions and blogs. Both types of interactivity may be facilitated by the same Web site depending on the features offered (Bucy in Spyridou and Veglis 2008).

#### 2.2.4. Dimensions of Interactivity

Jensen in Mahmoud and Auter (2009) classified the dimensions of interactivity according to the numbers of dimensions present for the definition of this term. The following table contains classifications of the most important dimensions of interactivity.

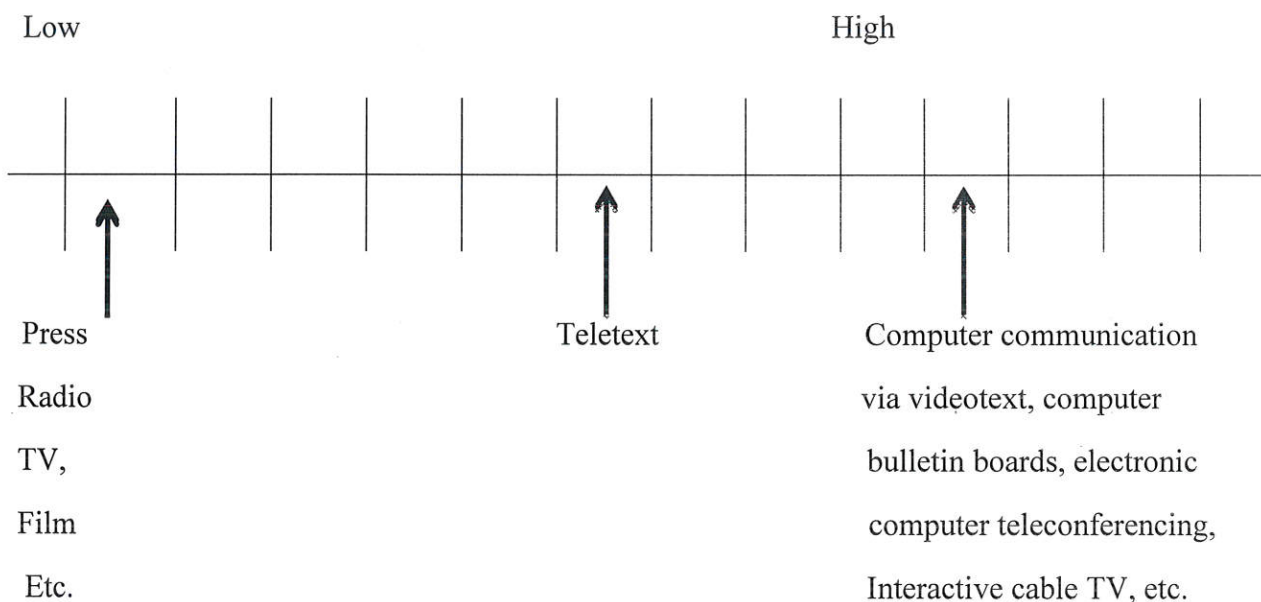
**Table 2.1: The most important dimensions of interactivity**

Numbers of Dimensions	Authors	The Dimensions
1	Rogress (1986)	Selected communication technologies
	Rafaeli (1988)	Responsiveness
2	Brodewijk and Kaam (1986)	1. Control of Information Source 2. Control of Time and Subject
	Szuprowicz (1995)	1. Information flow 2. Interactive multimedia
3	Kiousis (1999)	1. The Structure of the medium 2. The Context of communication setting 3. The Perception of users
	Steuer (1992)	1. Speed: speed of responsiveness 2. Range: range of choice available 3. Mapping: Mapping capabilities of medium
	McMillan and Hawang (2002)	1. Direction of communication 2. User control 3. Time
	Colye and Thorson (2001)	1. Mapping 2. Speed 3. user control
4	Zack (1993)	1. The simultaneous and continuous exchange of information 2. The use of multiple nonverbal cues; 3. The potentially spontaneous, unpredictable, and emergent progression of remarks 4. The ability to interrupt or Preempt; mutuality;

		patterns of turn taking; and the use of adjacency pairs.
	Jensen (2000)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Transmissional interactivity</li> <li>2. Consultational interactivity</li> <li>3. Conversational interactivity</li> <li>4. Registrational interactivity</li> </ol>
	Goertz, (1994)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Degree of choice available</li> <li>2. The Degree of modifiability</li> <li>3. Available selections and modifications</li> <li>4. The Degree of linearity &amp; non linearity</li> </ol>
5	Ha and James (1998)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Playfulness</li> <li>2. Choice</li> <li>3. Connectedness</li> <li>4. Information collection</li> <li>5. Reciprocal communication</li> </ol>
	Downes and McMillan (2000)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Direction of communication</li> <li>2. Timing flexibility</li> <li>3. Sense of place</li> <li>4. Level of control</li> <li>5. Responsiveness and the perceived purpose</li> </ol>
6	Carrie Heeter (1989)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Complexity of choice available</li> <li>2. Efforts users must exert</li> <li>3. Responsiveness to the user</li> <li>4. Facilitation of interpersonal communication</li> <li>5. Ease of adding information</li> <li>6. Monitor system use</li> </ol>

Rogers (1986) in Mahmoud and Auter (2009) provides one dimensional interactivity. And, He defined 'interactivity' as "the capability of new communication systems (usually containing a computer as one component) to 'talk back' to the user, almost like an individual participating in a conversation". And he confirmed that interactivity is a variable; the mass media (newspapers, radio, television and film) are relatively low in their degree of interactivity. Based on this definition, Rogers has created a scale in which he lists the 'degrees of interactivity' for a number of selected communication technologies on a continuum from 'low' to 'high'.

## Degree of interactivity



**Figure 2.1. E.M. Rogers' One -Dimensional Interactivity Continuum**

In addition to the above, Sheizaf Rafaeli in Mahmoud and Auter (2009) has also presented a one dimensional concept of interactivity, but with a different accent. Rafaeli's (1988) definition centers on the concept of 'responsiveness', as a measure of a medium's ability to be receptive and react in response to a given user, or more precisely, a measure of how much one message in an exchange is based on previous messages. This model uses three progressive levels in its continuum. First, two way communications takes place when messages are delivered both ways. Second, reactive communication also requires that a latter message reacts to a previous message. Third, full interactivity requires that a latter message responds to a sequence of previous messages.

Rafaeli's explication of interactivity is hailed as one of the most productive definitions of interactivity; one that can be applied to empirical research but that does not view interactivity solely in technological terms (Schultz 2000). The following table shows Rafaeli's explication of interactivity.

**Table 2.2: A Model of Rafaeli's explication of interactivity in Schultz (2000)**

	<b>Journalist-Reader</b>	<b>Reader-Reader (Journalism as forum)</b>
<b>One-way communication</b>	Journalistic messages	Published letter/email to the editor Reader sites Citizens quoted/portrayed
<b>Two-way/reactive communication</b>	Letter (mail, email, fax) Polls Question and answer sections Call-ins	Letters and calls referring to other letters or calls Online forum postings
<b>Interactive communication</b>	Town meetings Online discussion boards/chats with journalists participating In general: communicative threads via (e) mail, phone, face-to-face, video-conferencing	Town meetings Online discussion boards Chat rooms Email threads initiated by forums

Bordewijk and van Kaam (1986) provide two-dimensional interactivity. One dimension of the model is defined by control of information source, and the other by control of time and choice of subject. For both of these variables, Bordewijk and Kaam (1986) suggested that control may reside either in a central source or with the individual (Bordewijk and van Kaam in Mahmoud and Auter, 2009). The resulting four-part typology is illustrated in the table below.

**Table 2.3: Bordewijk and Kaam's Matrix for the Four Communication Patterns**

	<i>Information produced by a central provider</i>	<i>Information produced by the consumer</i>
<i>Distribution controlled by a central provider</i>	<b>Transmission</b>	<b>Registration</b>
<i>Distribution controlled by the consumer</i>	<b>Consultation</b>	<b>Conversation</b>

‘Transmission’ refers to situations in which information is simultaneously distributed from a center to many peripheral receivers. ‘Consultation’ occurs when an individual looks for information at a central information store. ‘Registration’ is, in essence, the reverse of consultation. ‘Conversation’ occurs when individuals interact directly with each other, bypassing central controls or intermediaries.

Szuprowicz (1995) in Mahmoud and Auter (2009) also presented a two-dimensional concept of interactivity, saying that: ‘in order to understand all issues and problems associated with interactive multimedia networking and communications it is necessary to define and classify the various levels and categories of interactivity that come into play. Interactivity is best defined by the type of multimedia information flows’. Information flow is one of the two dimensions and he divided the information flows into three main categories. The first one is user-to-documents interactivity and it is a traditional transaction between a user and specific documents. The second one is user-to-computer interactivity and it is explained as more exploratory interactions between a user and various delivery platforms. And, the third one is user-to-user interactivity and it is explained as collaborative transactions between two or more users. Szuprowicz’s interactive multimedia information flows are presented in the table below.

**Table 2.5: Interactive multimedia information flows.**

<b>Object oriented manipulation</b>	Mail	Database	Groupware
	Newsletter	Information Kiosk	Presentation
<b>Broadcast</b>			
<b>Interactive access</b>	Hypermedia	Graphical	Conferencing
	User-to-documents	User-to-computers	User-to-user

Kiousis, (1999) in Mahmoud and Auter (2009) focuses on the elements of communication to explore the dimensions of interactivity. Kiousis pointed to three factors as being the main dimensions of interactivity. These factors are the technological structure of the medium used (objective speed, range, and sensory complexity), the characteristics of the communication settings (third-order dependency and social presence), and individuals' perceptions (proximity,

perceived speed, sensory activation and telepresence). Steuer (1992) in Mahmoud and Auter (2009) also conceptualizes interactivity based on three elements which aid in facilitating users' manipulation of contents based on the functional approach. They are speed of responsiveness, range of choice available and mapping capabilities of medium.

Coyle and Thorson also identified mapping, speed, and user control as three important dimensions of website interactivity; emphasizing the perceptual rather than functional aspect of interactivity. Coyle and Thorson manipulate interactivity on the basis of Steuer's (1992) definition. The presence of a clickable image map, the number of clickable areas and the features of feedback mechanisms in the communications dimension (e.g., e-mail links, chat rooms) are derived from the interactivity theory (Coyle and Thorson in Mahmoud and Auter, 2009). McMillan and Hwang also identified the most frequently mentioned elements of perceived interactivity: direction of communication, user control, and time. (McMillan and Hwang cited in Mahmoud and Auter 2009).

According to Mahmoud and Auter (2009), an example of a four-dimensional concept of interactivity, where four dimensions of meaning constitute interactivity, can be found in the writing of Zack (1993), Goertz (1995), and Jensen (1998).

Zack (1993) in Mohammed and Auter (2009) identified four types interactivity dimensions. The first one is simultaneous and continuous exchange of information. The Second is use of multiple non-verbal cues. The third is potentially spontaneous, unpredictable and emergent progression of remark. Fourth, ability to interrupt or preempt mutuality patterns of turn-taking and the use of adjacency pairs. He explicated the importance of managers' use of electronic messaging for ongoing management groups performing a cooperative task.

Goertz (1995) in Mahmoud and Auter, (2009) also isolates four dimensions, which are said to be meaningful for interactivity. First, degree of choice available that refers to the degree of interactivity concerns the choices offered by the media being used. Second, degree of modifiability refers to the user's own ability to modify existing messages or add new content where these modifications and additions. Third, quantitative size of the available selections and modifications refers to the quantitative number of selections possible within each of the previous two dimensions. The Fourth is the degree of linearity/non-linearity which is functions as a

measure of the user's control over the time, tempo and progression of the reception or communication.

In addition to the above, Jensen (1998) also provides four-dimensional interactivity. The first one is transmissional interactivity which refers to a measure of a media's potential ability to let the user choose from a continuous stream of information. The second one is consultational interactivity which refers to a measure of a media's potential ability to let the user choose, by request. The third one is conversational interactivity that refers to a measure of a media's potential ability to let the user produce and input his/her own information in a two way media system. The fourth one is registrational interactivity that refers to a measure of a media's potential ability to register information from and thereby also adapt and/or respond to a given user's needs and actions.

Ha and James in Mahmoud and Auter, (2009) suggests five-dimensional concepts of interactivity i.e. playfulness, choice, connectedness, information collection and reciprocal communication as the five dimensions of interactivity in CMC. Downes and McMillan in Mahmoud and Auter (2009) also provided a five-dimensional definition of interactivity comprised of, direction of communication, timing flexibility, sense of place, and level of control, responsiveness and the perceived purpose of communication.

Finally, Heeter (1989) in Mahmoud and Auter (2009) present six dimensional interactivity that includes the complexity of available choices, the amount of effort users expend, user responsiveness, information monitoring, the ease with which information can be added, and the facilitation of interpersonal communication. Heeter combine the three aforementioned terms medium (complexity of choice available, and ease of adding information), perception (effort users must exert, and monitoring information use) and/or process (responsiveness to the user, and facilitation of interpersonal communication) in her definition of interactivity.

### **2.3. Theoretical Framework**

Using theoretical framework is an essential road map for research. While the discussions that have taken place are relevant to the study as whole, it is important to provide practical models that will directly contribute to constructing a set of measurement constructs for use within this study.

This study adopted Heeter's (1989) six dimensions of interactivity for constructing the categories of analysis required for conducting the research. These dimensions of interactivity are specific and measurable and have been acknowledged as such by scholars including McMillan (1998), Kenny et al. (2000) and Spyridou and Veglis (2008) who also adopted them in their studies and operationalized them to render them measurable and so construct categories of analysis for their research.

Spyridou and Veglis (2008) used content analysis to examine six Greek online newspapers and two foreign online newspapers (The New York Times and The Guardian). They adopted Heeter's (1989) definition of interactivity and analyzed the entire website of the newspapers by the dimensions of interactivity Heeter offered.

In addition to the above, in an empirical study of 100 online newspapers, Kenny et al. (2000) developed and applied an operational definition of interactivity that included 18 measures. They adopted Heeter's (1989) definition of interactivity because it offered them specific measurable dimensions that matched the concept of interactivity found in the professional literature.

McMillan (1998) used content analysis to examine 395 sites on the World Wide Web and used this analysis to present four models of funding for content in computer-mediated communication (CMC). The key factors underlying the models were interactivity, ideologies related to intellectual property, and audience size. The level of interactivity was operationalized using the dimensions of interactivity defined by Heeter (1989).

This study also breaks down interactivity into measurable dimensions in order to construct categories of analysis. Heeter's (1989) dimensions of interactivity and the operationalization of these categories by Spyridou and Veglis (2008) provide the basis for this. The justification for this lies simply in the fact that although there are many definitions and explications of interactivity, there are not as many practical ways of applying these theories to research. Heeter's (1989) dimensions of interactivity addresses this because they are measurable.

Spyridou and Veglis (2008) developed 48 measures to study structural interactivity of Greek online newspapers based on Heeter's six-dimensions of interactivity. This study will follow the

same measures which were used by them. Below are discussions of each category of analysis and how each dimension of interactivity will be measured within this study.

**Complexity of choice available** dimension of interactivity is defined as the range of content topics online journalists make available to readers. An online newspaper's interactivity depends on the diversity of material it contains. Users are empowered with many choices so that they can customize content in accordance to their needs and interests. And, complexity of choice available is measured by classification of thematic categories and subcategories, main news menu, latest news section, picks of the day, picks of the week, special reports on important issues, archives, links to other relevant articles, links to sources outside web site, internal search engine, external search engine, time of updating, inclusion of multimedia features: photos, sound, video, Facebook and Twitter pages, choice of language, interaction guides, special services providing specialized and extensive news coverage (Spyridou and Veglis, 2008).

**Effort users must exert** dimension of interactivity is associated with how user friendly a site is in terms of design, so that users can find information and exercise control over content with the least possible effort. It refers to those features or mechanisms which allow a user to navigate through a site and choose content as well as the sequence and timing of communication. In this case, effort users must exert is measured by customization possibilities of a web site via e-mail, advanced search tools, direct printing option, Pdf format download option, headline and lead drop-down menu within each category, breaking news service, mobile SMS services, internal RSS feeds, external RSS feeds (Spyridou and Veglis, 2008).

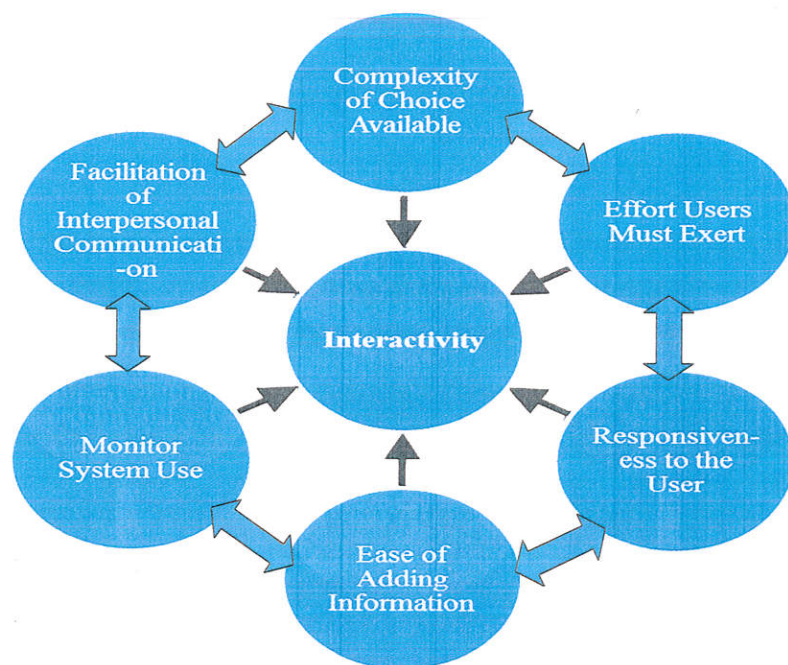
**Responsiveness to the user** dimension of interactivity can be defined as 'potential for responsiveness. It refers to those features which allow the user to interact with the journalists of a given Web site. Users can contact reporters/editor to express public concerns, pose questions, requests and opinions and expect feedback. Therefore, responsiveness to the user dimension is measured by direct e-mail link to the article's author, e-mail contacts to the editor/journalists, publish letters of readers, provide answers from journalists about their articles, provide answers to readers' questions on any topic, service featuring the most read stories and blogs (Spyridou and Veglis, 2008).

**Facilitation of interpersonal communication** dimension of interactivity refers to a web newspaper's potential to offer itself as a digital conduit through which a reader can carry on a synchronous, one-to-one interaction with another reader; it has to do with those features which allow users to communicate with each other and exchange arguments, points of view and material. And, facilitation of interpersonal communication is measured by discussion rooms, polls and surveys, news blogs and classification of news blogs (Spyridou and Veglis, 2008).

**Ease of adding information** dimension of interactivity refers to the ability given to a user to contribute to content by adding information on a given web site. It permits readers to express themselves on an asynchronous basis and connotes the interchange of roles between producers and consumers of news. And, ease of adding information is measured by hyperlinks that add information to the site, mechanisms that allow users to make contributions to stories, option of directly e-mailing an article, publication of opinion articles or stories written by readers (Spyridou and Veglis, 2008).

**Monitor system use** dimension of interactivity refers to those monitoring devices which permit a site operator to track visitors, which part of a given site they have visited and for how long in order to document surfing habits of a variety users over time. And, monitor system is measured by cookies, visitors counter and request registration (Spyridou and Veglis, 2008).

In this study, the researcher tried to present a suggested graph that shows the theoretical framework. The graph is presented based on the six dimensions mentioned above.



**Figure 2.2: Suggested theoretical framework based on Heeter’s (1989) six dimensions of interactivity.**

The model of Heeter (1989) has been extended to include certain variables. Each one of the six dimensions was measured through variables, which in accordance to the literature, can be described as critical to the construct of interactivity in news sites. The model can be characterized as ‘inclusive’ because it contains an extensive variety of features. Furthermore, assuming that not all interactive features have equal interactive functionality, the variables used were further distinguished, to apply to Mark Deuze’s (2002) types of interactivity (navigational, functional and adaptive), in order to define the *level* of interactivity (Spyridou and Veglis 2008:12).

Finally, having discussed various issues and theories surrounding the concept of interactivity and online journalism by giving a context in which this study can be located, the following chapter looks at research methods and procedures that were applied in this study.

## Chapter Three

### 3. Research Methodology

#### 3.1. Research design

The main objective of this study is to explore online interactive features that are available in online editions of Ethiopian newspapers. In this case, this chapter aims to discuss the methodologies of research that were employed in this study. It provides a theoretical basis and structure for the quantitative and qualitative methodologies that were used. This chapter also gives a detailed step-by step analysis of how these methodologies and procedures were applied to the questions raised in this study. The result is further analyzed and discussed in the next chapter.

As mentioned earlier, this study employed both quantitative and qualitative methodologies of research to address the research problem of exploring interactive feature types and to what extent and in what ways the online editions of Ethiopian newspapers have incorporated interactive features of the online environment.

According to Wimmer and Dominick, (2011:49) for the past several years, some friction has existed in the mass media field and in other disciplines between those who favor quantitative methods and those who prefer qualitative methods and most researchers have now come to realize that both methods are important in understanding any phenomenon. In this case, this study uses a quantitative content analysis and a qualitative semi-structured interview to study online interactive features.

Content analysis is a research technique that is apparently simple to carry out the degree of specificity or complexity sought in each specific research study and following a process of categorization and subsequent codification of the data, including statistical treatment, content analysis makes it possible to draw conclusions supported by measurement of the frequency with which certain elements of interest to the researcher (Palacios and Noci 2009).

In addition to the content analysis, this study will, therefore, include semi-structured interview as well. Schultz (1999) noted that this makes it possible for the researcher to obtain more specific information on interactive features encountered in the quantitative process.

### 3.2. Sampling

In this study the researcher selected Ethiopian online newspapers using a list with the URLs of online newspapers of different countries around the globe is available in the website <http://www.onlinenewspapers.com/>. The researcher accessed the homepage of the site first and then clicked Africa and then eastern Africa, a list of Ethiopian newspapers appeared where from Ethiopia was chosen. The URL of Ethiopian newspapers in the site is <http://www.onlinenewspapers.com/ethiopia.htm>. The site compiles different types (online editions of newspapers with print counterparts, web-only newspapers, daily, weekly, local and abroad published) of online news sites of Ethiopia. Some of the newspapers listed in this website were not easily accessible.

So, seven online editions of Ethiopian newspapers with print counterparts were chosen for the purpose of this study. The newspapers were purposely chosen in order to find key informants easily for the interview part of this study. The sample did not include any web-only newspapers and blogs. The study chose online newspapers that maintain print editions in order to achieve the objectives of the study. The newspapers include both Amharic and English language published newspapers. Two of the newspapers are dailies and the other five are weekly published newspapers. Therefore, the selected seven Ethiopian online newspapers with print counterparts are presented in the following table below.

**Table 3.1: Sample of Ethiopian online newspapers with print counterparts**

No.	Name of Newspaper	Language	Address
1.	Addis Zemen	Amharic daily	<a href="http://www.ethpress.gov.et/addiszemen/">http://www.ethpress.gov.et/addiszemen/</a>
2.	The Ethiopian Herald	English daily	<a href="http://www.ethpress.gov.et/herald/">http://www.ethpress.gov.et/herald/</a>
3.	Reporter	Amharic weekly	<a href="http://www.ethiopianreporter.com">http://www.ethiopianreporter.com</a>
4.	The Reporter	English weekly	<a href="http://www.thereporterethiopia.com/">http://www.thereporterethiopia.com/</a>
5.	Addis Fortune	English weekly	<a href="http://addisfortune.net/">http://addisfortune.net/</a>
6.	Addis Admass	Amharic weekly	<a href="http://www.addisadmassnews.com/">http://www.addisadmassnews.com/</a>
7.	Capital	English weekly	<a href="http://www.capitalethiopia.com/">http://www.capitalethiopia.com/</a>

### 3.3. Quantitative Content Analysis

This study uses quantitative content analysis in order to measure the interactive features of online editions of Ethiopian newspapers. The research was conducted based on Heeter's (1989) theoretical model. Heeter's model produces criteria which determine whether or not a web site is interactive. The underlying logic of Heeter's model is that the sheer presence of functional features in an interface is sufficient evidence of interactivity. The higher the number of such manifestations included on a Web site, the higher its interactivity.

Kerlinger cited in Wimmer and Dominick (2011) defined quantitative content analysis as a method of studying and analyzing communication in a systematic, objective, and quantitative manner for the purpose of measuring variables.

#### 3.3.1. Constructing Measureable Categories of Analysis

Constructing measurable categories of analysis is essential in quantitative content analysis study. In this case, Heeter's (1989) dimensions of interactivity are specific and measurable and will therefore be adopted for constructing the categories of analysis in this study. Spyridou and Veglis (2008) adopted Heeter's dimensions of interactivity in their studies and operationalized them to render measurable and so construct categories of analysis for their research. Similarly, this study breaks down interactivity into measurable dimensions in order to construct categories of analysis. The previous chapter discussed each category of analysis and how each dimension of interactivity measured within this study.

**Complexity of Choice Available** includes 20 interactive features. And, they are classification of thematic categories and subcategories, main news menu, latest news section, picks of the day, picks of the week, special reports on important issues, archives, links to other relevant articles, links to sources outside web site, internal search engine, external search engine, time of updating, inclusion of multimedia features: photos, sound and video as well as Face book and Twitter pages, interaction guides, choice of languages, special services providing specialized and extensive news coverage.

**Efforts Users Must Exert** includes nine interactive features. And, they are customization possibilities of a web site via e-mail, advanced search tools, direct printing option, Pdf format

download, headline and lead drop-down menu within each category, direct printing option, breaking news service, mobile SMS services, internal RSS feeds and external RSS feeds.

**Responsiveness to the User** includes six interactive features. And they are direct e-mail link to the article's author, e-mail contacts to the editor/journalists, publish letters of readers, provide answers from journalists about their articles, and provide answers to readers' questions on any topic, service featuring the most read stories.

**Facilitation of Interpersonal Communication** includes four interactive features. And, they are discussion room, polls and surveys, news blogs and classification of news blogs.

**Ease of Adding Information** includes four interactive features. And, they are hyperlinks that add information to the site, mechanisms that allow users to make contributions to stories, option of directly e-mailing an article, publication of opinion articles or stories written by readers.

**Monitor System Use** includes three interactive features. And, they are cookies, visitors counter and request registration.

### 3.3.2. Coding Procedure

When it comes to the coding procedure Spyridou and Veglis (2008) developed and used a coding system to examine the structural interactive features of selected Greek online newspapers by identifying 46 specific interactive features based on Heeter (1989) theoretical model. This study followed the same coding procedure used by Spyridou and veglis and contextualized them in to the study of online editions of Ethiopian newspapers.

Therefore, content analysis was used to examine the entire web site of a given newspaper. The unit of analysis was the entire newspaper site. Each site was entered through its homepage, and then navigates its various sections. Repetitive visits were made to sites in order to observe extensively features under investigation. First, each site was coded for the presence or absence of 46 specific interactive elements. Second, a scored rating emerged from recording and calculating the 'value' (points) of each variable. Using this scoring method, the maximum score was defined to be 100 points, while the minimum was zero. Each feature received a rating from 1 to 3 based on their value in interactivity. A rating of 1 indicates a low level of interactive functionality. A

rating of 2 indicates a moderate level, whilst a rating of 3 shows a high level of interactive functionality (Spyridou and Veglis, 2008).

### 3.3.3. Inter-Coder Reliability

The concept of reliability is crucial to content analysis. If a content analysis is to be objective, its measures and procedures must be reliable. A study is reliable when repeated measurement of the same material results in similar decisions or conclusions. Inter coder reliability refers to levels of agreement among independent coders who code the same content using the same coding instrument. If the results fail to achieve reliability, something is amiss with the coders, the coding instructions, the category definitions, the unit of analysis, or some combination of these Wimmer and Dominick (2011).

Since the reliability of data is an important aspect of research, the researcher gave the responsibility of coding for two MA holder coders who had better understanding of the issue. The coders carried out the coding independently using the coding sheet (appendix A). In addition to this, the coders were trained and provided with a coding book (appendix B). The coding was carried out for one month (from July 3, 2015 to August, 2015). The researcher, then, checked the inter coder reliability by using Holsti's (1969) formula where:

$$\text{Reliability} = \frac{2M}{N1 + N2}$$

$M$  is the number of coding decisions with which the two coders agreed up on, while  $N1$  and  $N2$  are the total number of coding decisions by the first and the second coder respectively (Wimmer and Dominick, 2011). By doing this, the researcher proved that the two coders agreed in their coding decisions.

Based on the above mentioned Holesti's formula, this study checked the reliability of the coders as follows. The two coders coded the online editions of the following seven newspapers in order to find out 46 interactive features.

$$\text{Reliability} = \frac{2M}{N1 + N2}$$

- Addis Zemen  $\frac{44+44}{46+46} = \frac{88}{92} = 0.95$

- Addis Fortune  $\frac{36+36}{46+46} = \frac{72}{92} = 0.78$
- Reporter (Amharic)  $\frac{35+35}{46+46} = \frac{80}{92} = 0.76$
- Reporter(English)  $\frac{40+40}{46+46} = \frac{80}{92} = 0.87$
- Ethiopian Herald  $\frac{39+39}{46+46} = \frac{78}{92} = 0.85$
- Addis Admass  $\frac{39+39}{46+46} = \frac{78}{92} = 0.85$
- Capital  $\frac{37+37}{46+46} = \frac{74}{92} = 0.80$

Based on Holsti's (1969) formula, best achieved inter-coder reliability is between **0.60** to **1.00**. If the result of the inter coder reliability **0.50** and less than that there is a problem in the coding result between the two coders. In this study, the total average of the inter-coder reliability between the two coders is **0.84**. In this case, this study is reliable because it is found between the acceptable ranges of reliability.

### 3.4. Qualitative Procedures

#### 3.4.1. Semi-structured interviews

As mentioned earlier, this study includes semi structured interviews. Semi-structured interview is a qualitative data collection strategy in which the researcher asks informants a series of predetermined but open-ended questions and the researcher has more control over the topics of the interview than in unstructured interviews (Given, 2008).

The interview finds out both the attitudes and practices of editors and journalists regarding interactivity in online journalism, interactive features and activities on their sites, the utilization of these features by both readers and journalists and the level of commitment as regards the role of journalists/editors in the effort and practice of interactive journalism in the online environment.

The interviews were conducted with editorial staff and personnel responsible for the website of the newspapers. The researcher selects key informants based on their experiences. The main purpose was to get detailed data from key informants of the media practitioners. The interviews were conducted after the content analysis was completed.

The researcher used purposive sampling to select key informants. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling, which includes respondents, subjects, or elements selected for specific characteristics or qualities (Wimmer and Dominick, 2011).

In this case, seven informants were interviewed from August 31 to September 4, 2015. Accordingly individuals who had experiences in online journalism were selected. The working experience of these informants ranges from 2 to 15 years in the media industry. Respondents from Addis Zemen, Ethiopian Herald, Addis Admass, Reporter (Amharic) and the Reporter (English) newspapers were interviewed in Amharic. The results were later translated in to English. On the other hand, respondents from Addis Fortune and Capital newspapers were interviewed in English based on their interest.

### **3.5. Analytical Procedure**

As mentioned earlier above the study employed triangulation methods i.e. quantitative and qualitative methodologies of research. In other words, quantitative content analysis and qualitative semi-structured interviews were used to gather the data. Data gathered through quantitative content analysis were presented using descriptive statistics and explanations. And, the responses from the interviews were qualitatively analyzed in line with the data accumulated in the content analysis. Finally, summary, conclusions and recommendations were presented.

## Chapter Four

### 4. Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion

#### 4.1. Introduction

As indicated in the previous chapters, the main objective of this study is to explore online interactive features in online editions of Ethiopian newspapers.

The significant objectives of the study also include the following three points. The first one is to find out types of online interactive features that are available in online editions of Ethiopian newspapers. And the second one is to identify the extent of use of online interactive features in online editions of Ethiopian newspapers. The third one is to find out the knowledge of the newspapers' editors/journalists towards providing interactive features in their newspapers' websites.

Therefore, this chapter is devoted to the data presentation, analysis and discussion of the data obtained using quantitative content analysis and semi structured interviews. Accordingly the data is analyzed based on Heeter's (1989) six dimensions of interactivity (theoretical framework) as indicated in chapter two. In this case, the study attempts to address the following issues in this chapter. Firstly, on the basis of content analysis of seven online editions of Ethiopian newspapers, the study try to uncover what types of interactive features as well as the extent to which the sites incorporated interactive features. Secondly, using semi-structured interviews the study tries to uncover the knowledge of the newspapers' editors/journalists towards providing interactive features in their newspapers' websites. Findings from quantitative content analysis and semi structured interviews were presented and discussed respectively in this chapter per the objectives of the study.

## **4.2. Quantitative Content Analysis**

The content analysis is examined based on the Heeter's six dimensions of interactivity. The study explores the presence or absence of 46 interactive features available in the selected seven online editions of Ethiopian newspapers. The first dimension is complexity of choice available which includes 20 interactive features. The second dimension is efforts users must exert which includes nine interactive features. The third dimension is responsiveness to the user which includes six interactive features. The fourth dimension is facilitation of interpersonal communication which includes four interactive features. The fifth dimension is ease of adding information which includes four interactive features. Finally, the sixth dimension is monitor system use which includes three interactive features. The interactive features evaluated based on a rating given to the features. For instance, each feature received a rating from 1 to 3 based on their value in interactivity. A rating of 1 indicates a low level of interactive functionality. A rating of 2 indicates a moderate level, whilst a rating of 3 shows a high level of interactive functionality. The results of the six dimensions are presented as follows respectively.

### **4.2.1. Complexity of Choice Available**

Complexity of choice available dimension of interactivity is defined as the range of content topics online newspapers make available to readers. An online newspaper's interactivity depends on the diversity of material it contains. Users are empowered with many choices so that they can customize content in accordance to their needs and interests.

The entire contents of the newspapers are examined to find out the identified interactive features. As mentioned above, this dimension includes 20 interactive features. The sums of the total ratings under this dimension include 40 points based on the rating system indicated above. In this case, Reporter (Amharic) newspaper scored 31 points, Addis Fortune scored 25 points, the Reporter (English) and Capital newspapers scored 22 points each, Addis Admass scored 19 points, Addis Zemen and Ethiopian Herald scored 15 points each. The results of the scored points of the newspapers are presented in the following table below.

**Table 4.1: Complexity of choice available result**

No.	Interactive Features	Rating	Addis Zemen	Ethiopian Herald	Reporter	The Reporter	Addis Admass	Addis Fortune	Capital
1	Classification of thematic categories	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2	Classification of thematic subcategories	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
3	Main news menu	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
4	Latest news section	2			2	2			2
5	Picks of the day	1							
6	Picks of the week	2						2	
7	Special reports on important issues	3			3			3	
8	Archives	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
9	Links to other relevant articles	2			2	2	2	2	2
10	Links to sources outside Web site	2							
11	Internal search engine	1	1	1	1	1		1	1
12	External search engine	2							
13	Time of updating	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
14	Inclusion of multimedia features: Photos	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
15	Inclusion of multimedia features: Sound	2							
16	Inclusion of multimedia features: Video	3			3				
17	Facebook and Twitter or Google plus pages	3			3	3	3	3	3
18	Choice of languages	3			3	3			
19	Interaction guides	3	3	3	3		3	3	3
20	Special services providing specialized and extensive news coverage	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>22</b>

The above table shows that regarding complexity of choice available dimension of interactivity all the websites under investigation incorporated classification of thematic categories and

subcategories which is conceptualized as the presence of variety in news (hard, soft, national, international, business, sports, entertainment and culture etc.). And, in terms of main news menu, a menu that provides main news was also incorporated by all the websites. In terms of providing latest news section also Reporter (Amharic), The Reporter (English) and Capital newspapers were the only newspapers that incorporated latest news section in their websites.

None of the websites under investigation provide picks of the day, a selection of highlights of the day. But, Addis Fortune newspaper provides picks of the week: a selection of highlights of the week under the title Editors pick in its website. And, all the websites provide archives which store previous date's articles in their websites. Reporter (Amharic) The Reporter (English), Addis Admass, Addis Fortune and Capital newspapers provide links to other relevant articles that provide readers to read on more related news stories and articles. But, Addis Zemen and Ethiopian Herald newspapers did not provide links to other relevant articles in their websites. On the other hand, no new site provides links to sources outside the web site.

Except Addis Admass newspaper all the newspapers have internal search engine that allows readers to find content they want inside the site. But, none of the sites provide external search engine that allows readers to search content they want outside the site. All the websites provide the time an article or news posted or updated online. On the other hand, in terms of including multimedia features like photos, sound and video the newspapers are far behind. All the websites provide photos. But, none of the websites under investigation provide sound and video in their websites. Reporter Amharic newspaper is the only newspaper that provides video through its reporter Web TV for its readers.

In terms of utilizing social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter pages, except Addis Zemen and Ethiopian Herald all the websites uses Facebook and Twitter pages as an additional medium. Addis Zemen and Ethiopian Herald newspapers have symbols of Facebook and Twitter pages in their websites, but the pages did not work during the study. For instance, Addis Zemen newspaper has Twitter account which was established in October 2008, but the newspaper still did not tweet any single news story or article since its inception.

But, the other newspapers have Facebook, Twitter pages and Google plus accounts. The following pictures below show Capital newspaper's Facebook page, Addis Admass's Twitter

page and Fortune newspaper's Google plus account. The newspapers post contents in these social media platforms. They have many followers who look for latest news.

On the other hand, in terms of incorporating choices of language, a choice that lets readers to switch into different language in the site, Reporter newspaper was better than the other websites. It has both Amharic and English language choices. One can switch easily from the Amharic version to the English version vice versa. Except the Reporter English newspaper the rest of the other newspapers provide interaction guides that give information on how readers contact the site. Finally, all the websites have special services providing specialized extensive news coverage in their websites.

#### **4.2.2. Effort Users Must Exert**

Effort users must exert dimension of interactivity is associated with how user friendly a site is in terms of design, so that users can find information and exercise control over content with the least possible effort. It refers to those features or mechanisms which allow a user to navigate through a site and choose content as well as the sequence and timing of communication. The results of the newspapers regarding this dimension are presented in the following table below.

**Table 4.2: Effort users must exert result**

No.	Interactive Features	Rating	Addis Zemen	Ethiopian Herald	Reporter	The Reporter	Addis Admass	Addis Fortune	Capital
1	Customization possibilities of a Web site via email	3	3	3	3	3		3	3
2	Advanced search tools	2							
3	Direct printing option	1	1	1		1	1		1
4	Pdf format download option	2			2	2	2	2	2
5	Headline and lead drop down menu within each category	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
6	Breaking news service	3				3			
7	Mobile SMS services	2							
8	Internal RSS feeds	2				2		2	2
9	External RSS feeds	3							
	<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>

The above table shows that except Addis Admass newspaper all the websites under investigation provides customization possibilities of a web site via e-mail that allows readers to get information through their e-mails. And, none of the websites incorporate advanced search tools available in the site. Except Reporter (Amharic) and Addis Fortune newspapers all the websites provide direct printing option, a link that allows readers to print news or articles. And, except Addis Zemen and Ethiopian Herald newspapers all the other websites provide Pdf format option that allows readers to download the newspapers for free.

On the other hand, all the websites provide headline and lead drop-down menu within each category in their websites. And, the Reporter (English), Addis Fortune and Capital were the only newspapers which provide internal RSS feeds that allows readers to stay up to date with the latest news and documents published on a website by subscribing to the RSS feed. But none of the websites have an external RSS feeds which other international newspapers use these days. Finally, the Reporter English newspaper was the only newspapers that provide breaking news

service. However, none of the websites provide mobile SMS services that help them receive messages from readers.

Generally, the total sums of the rating in the effort readers must exert dimension of interactivity were 20 points. And, from this the Reporter (English) newspaper scored 13 points, Capital scored 10 points, Addis Fortune scored 9 points, Reporter (Amharic) scored 7 points, Addis Zemen scored 6 points, Ethiopian Herald scored 6 points and Addis Admass scored 5 points out of 20 points.

From the above result we can understand that the newspapers are incorporating interactive features in the efforts users must exert dimension of interactivity. But there were remaining interactive features which were not incorporated by the newspapers. These are just like advanced search tools, mobile SMS service and external RSS feed. When these interactive features are incorporated by the newspapers, they increase the user friendliness of the newspapers and readers also can get contents with at least possible efforts.

#### **4.2.3. Responsiveness to the User**

This dimension of interactivity can be defined as ‘potential for responsiveness. It refers to those features which allow the user to interact with the journalists of a given website. Users can contact reporters/editor to express public concerns, pose questions, requests and opinions and expect feedback. The results of the responsiveness to the user dimension of the seven online editions of Ethiopian newspapers are presented in the table below.

**Table 4.3: Responsiveness to the user result**

No.	Interactive Features	Rating	Addis Zemen	Ethiopian Herald	Reporter	The Reporter	Addis Admass	Addis Fortune	Capital
1	Direct e-mail link to the article's author	3			3	3			
2	E-mail contacts to the editor/journalists	1				1z		1	
3	Publish letters of readers	1	1		1	1		1	
4	Provide answers from journalists about their articles	3							
5	Provide answers to readers' questions on any topic	3							
6	Service featuring the most read stories	1	1	1	1	1		1	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>

The above table shows that the Reporter (Amharic) and the Reporter (English) newspapers were the only newspapers which provide direct e-mail link to the article's author. This helps readers to send comments and suggestions to the article's author. It also helps journalists and contributors of articles to maintain relationship with readers. But this can be applied if the writers respond to readers' comments. On the other part, the Reporter (English) and Addis Fortune were also the only newspapers that provide E-mail contacts to the editor/journalists.

And, Addis Zemen, Reporter, the Reporter and Addis Fortune newspapers publish letters of readers in their letter to the editor sections. In this dimension none of the websites Provide answers from journalists about their articles and answers to readers' questions on any topic. And, except Addis Admass newspaper all the websites provide service featuring the most read stories. Generally the total sum of the rating in this dimension was 12 points. And, from this, The Reporter (English) scored 6 points, Reporter (Amharic) scored 5 points, Addis Fortune scored 3 points, Addis Zemen scored 2 points, Ethiopian Herald and Capital newspapers scored 1 point each. Finally, Addis Admass newspaper scored none in this dimension.

#### 4.2.4. Facilitation of Interpersonal Communication

Facilitation of interpersonal communication dimension of interactivity refers to a web newspaper's potential to offer itself as a digital conduit through which a reader can carry on a synchronous, one-to-one interaction with another reader; it has to do with those features which allow users to communicate with each other and exchange arguments, points of view and material. The results of the content analysis in this dimension are presented in the table below.

**Table 4.4: Facilitation of interpersonal communication result**

No.	Interactive Features	Rating	<i>Addis Zemen</i>	<i>Ethiopian Herald</i>	<i>Reporter</i>	<i>The Reporter</i>	<i>Addis Admass</i>	<i>Addis Fortune</i>	<i>Capital</i>
1	Discussion room	3			3	3		3	3
2	Polls and surveys	3							3
3	News blogs	3							
4	Classification of news blogs	3							
	<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>

When we take a look at the facilitation of interpersonal communication dimension of interactivity, the above table shows from the selected sample newspapers in the study, Reporter (Amharic), The Reporter (English), Addis Fortune and Capital newspapers provided discussion room in their online editions. Discussion room is a comment section that allows readers to communicate with journalists and other readers. Discussion room also allows readers to comment and add their own views below a written article or a news story, this can make readers active participants rather than passive recipients of contents.

On the other hand, Capital newspaper was the only newspaper that incorporated polls and surveys that allow users to vote on certain issues. But, the rest of the other websites did not provide polls and surveys in their websites. Let's see two polls which were taken from the online edition of Capital newspaper as an example below.

**POLL 1: Do you think the telecom sector should be open for foreign firms?**

(150 votes) Yes 49.3% (74) No 44.7% (67) can't say 6% (9)

**POLL 2: Do you think the banking sector should be open for foreign firms?**

(129 votes) Yes 30.2% (39) No 69% (89) can't say 0.8% (1)

On the other hand, none of the websites under investigation incorporate news blogs and classification of news blogs: a blog which is provided by the site for readers to read and post messages in order to communicate each other. Generally, in this dimension the total sums of the rating were 12 points. And, from this Capital newspaper scored 6 points, Reporter (Amharic), The Reporter (English) and Addis Fortune newspapers scored 3 points each. But, Addis Admass newspaper scored none. The newspaper shows no concern to provide any facilitation of interpersonal communication to users in its website.

**4.2.5. Ease of Adding Information**

Ease of adding information dimension of interactivity refers to the ability given to a user to contribute to content by adding information on a given web site. It permits readers to express themselves on an asynchronous basis and connotes the interchange of roles between producers and consumers of news. This dimension is more or less related to participatory journalism that treats readers as active participants rather than passive recipients of media contents. Ease of adding information results of the newspapers are presented in the following table below.

**Table 4.5: Ease of adding information result**

No	Interactive Features	Rating	Addis Zemen	Ethiopian Herald	Reporter	The Reporter	Addis Admass	Addis Fortune	Capital
1	Hyperlinks that add information to the site	3							
2	Mechanisms that allow users to make contributions to stories	3							
3	Option of directly e-mailing an article	3	3	3	3	3	3		3
4	Publication of opinion articles or stories written by readers	3	3		3	3	3	3	3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>

The above table demonstrates that all the websites under investigation did not incorporate hyperlinks that add information to the site. This is allowing the readers to post messages and articles. And, mechanisms that allow users to make contributions to stories were not also incorporated by the websites. The newspapers had no mechanism on how they let readers to give them information and write news.

On the other hand, except Addis fortune newspaper all the websites provide an option of directly e-mailing an article that allows readers to email articles to a friend. And, except Ethiopian Herald newspaper all the other newspapers allow publication of opinion articles or stories written and contributed by readers. Generally, in this dimension the total sum of the rating was 12 points. And from this, Addis Zemen, Reporter (Amharic), The Reporter (English), Addis Admass and Capital newspapers scored 6 points each. And, Ethiopian Herald and Addis Fortune newspapers scored 3 points each.

As it was mentioned earlier, regarding the ease of adding information dimension of interactivity, the newspapers did not offer hyperlinks that add information to the site and mechanisms that allow users to make contributions to stories. They suggest that taking in to consideration of the infancy stage of Ethiopian online journalism development, incorporating these interactive features are difficult in the websites.

However, all the newspapers were optimistic about allowing publication of opinion articles or stories written by readers regularly in their newspapers. Addis Zemen had an opinion page entitled *Netsa asteyayet* for its readers. Addis Admass had also a page that publishes readers contributed articles entitled *Hibrete seb*.

Reporter Amharic newspaper had *Temwaget*, *Ene yemelew*, *linager* and *yidres lereporter* pages that allow readers to contribute articles and opinions. All interviewees from the newspapers revealed that publishing readers contributed articles are important to reader's interactivity with the sites. And, empowering users to be part of the newspapers maintain the relationship between media workers and readers.

The newspapers through their above mentioned pages are willing to receive contributed stories from readers. Some of the newspapers had dedicated pages for reader contribution. They believe

that it is important to engage readers instead of doing it alone. Empowering users to contribute stories leads journalism in to participatory atmosphere.

#### 4.2.6. Monitor System Use

monitor system use dimension of interactivity refers to those monitoring devices which permit a site operator to track visitors, which part of a given site they have visited and for how long in order to document surfing habits of a variety users over time. Monitor system use results of the newspapers are presented in the following table below.

**Table 4.6: Monitor system use result**

No.	Interactive Features	Rating	Addis Zemen	Ethiopian Herald	Reporter	The Reporter	Addis Admass	Addis Fortune	Capital
1	Cookies	1							
2	Visitors counter	1	1	1	1	1			1
3	Request registration	2	2	2	2	2		2	2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>

The above table shows that in terms of monitor system use none of the websites under investigation incorporate cookies that allow websites to store things like user preferences. Except Addis admass newspaper all the newspapers incorporated visitor's counter, a counter that displays the numbers of visitors who visit a website. And, except Addis admass newspaper all the newspapers provide request registration of users in their sites. Generally, Addis Zemen, Ethiopian Herald, Reporter (Amharic), the Reporter (English) and Capital newspapers scored 3 points. Addis Fortune newspaper scored 2 points and Addis admass newspaper scored none out of 4 points.

As mentioned above, the online editions of the newspapers did not incorporate cookies that allow websites to store things like user preferences. Many newspapers around the world have cookies in their websites that helps them to know what interests readers. The newspapers showed a desire to provide cookies in the future. And, in terms of monitoring users the newspapers have a mechanism on how they track their daily visitors through their visitor counter.

Regarding the monitor system use dimension of interactivity the newspapers are working an encouraging work. It helps them to track more users in the future. Generally, the researcher tried to present the result of the newspapers in terms of the six dimensions of interactivity. The total scored points by the websites are presented in the following table below.

**Table 4.7: Total result of the websites in terms of the six dimensions of interactivity**

No.	Dimension of Interactivity	Rating per dimension	Addis Zemen	Ethiopian Herald	Reporter	The Reporter	Addis Admass	Addis Fortune	Capital
1	Complexity of choice available	40	15	15	31	22	19	25	22
2	Effort users must exert	20	6	6	7	13	5	9	10
3	Responsiveness to the user	12	2	1	5	6	0	3	1
4	Facilitation of interpersonal communication	12	0	0	3	3	0	3	6
5	Ease of adding information	12	6	3	6	6	6	3	6
6	Monitor system use	4	3	3	3	3	0	2	3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>48</b>

The above table shows the result of the newspapers scored points in terms incorporating online interactive features out of 100 points in terms of the six dimensions of interactivity. In this case, Reporter Amharic newspaper scored the highest point which is 55 points and the Reporter English newspaper scored 53 points, Capital scored 48 points, Addis Fortune scored 45 points, Addis Zemen scored 32 points, Addis Admass scored 30 points and Ethiopian Herald scored 28 points.

The total scored points by the online editions of the newspapers and the percentage of the interactivity achieved per dimension are presented in the following two graphs below.

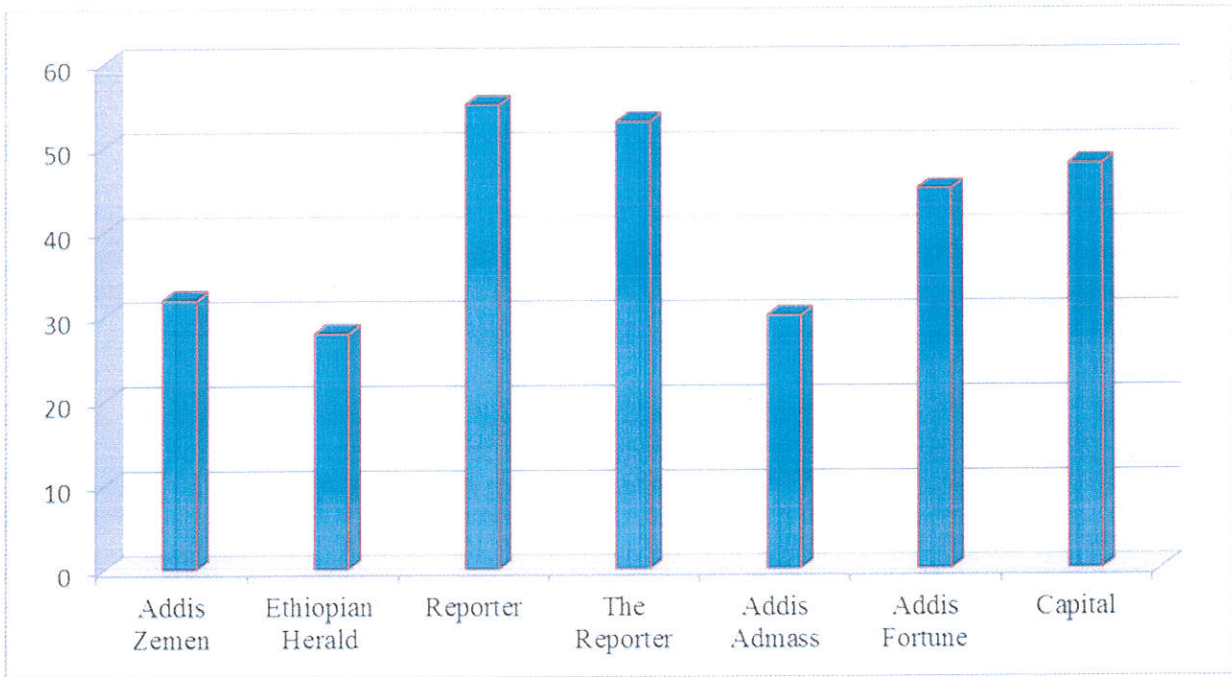


Figure 4.7: Total scoring of websites of the newspapers (points).

The above figure shows that the online editions of Ethiopian newspapers total scored points in terms of incorporating the 46 interactive features which were mentioned earlier. Based on this, online editions of Reporter.(Amharic) and Reporter (English) newspapers show the highest level in terms of providing interactive features in their websites. Addis Fortune and Capital English newspapers are almost in the same spot except difference in one interactive feature (Polls & Surveys) which is incorporated by Capital newspaper but not by Addis Fortune newspaper. On the other hand, online editions of Addis Zemen (Amharic), Ethiopian Herald (English) and Addis Admass (Amharic) newspapers scored the least in terms of incorporating the interactive features.

The result of the interactivity achieved per dimension of Heeter's six dimensions of interactivity are also presented in the following figure 4.2 below. The dimensions are complexity of choice available, effort users must exert responsiveness to the user, facilitation of interpersonal communication, ease of adding information and monitor system use respectively. The dimensions are incorporated to the lowest level.

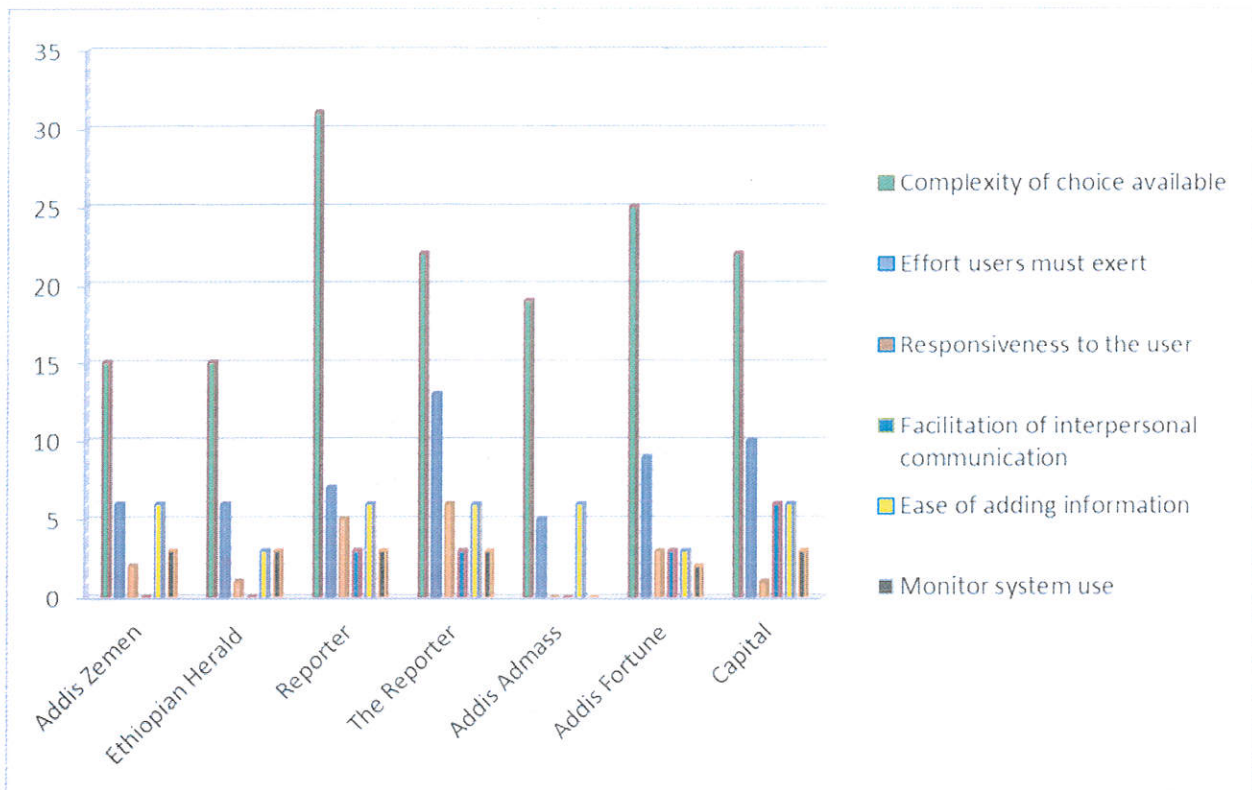


Figure 4.8: Interactivity achieved per dimension

Generally, online editions of Ethiopian newspapers attempted to incorporate online interactive features in their websites. The attempt is encouraging but it is not to the expected level of interactivity that the online environment offers.

### 4.3. Qualitative Semi- Structured Interviews

In this study, in addition to the content analysis result presented above, semi-structured interviews were conducted with editors responsible to the online editions of seven Ethiopian newspapers. The purpose of the interview is to find out the experiences of the newspapers' editors/journalists towards providing online interactive features in their newspapers' websites. As indicated in chapter three of this study, the researcher used purposive sampling to select key informants. In this case, seven informants were interviewed from August 31 to September 4, 2015. Accordingly individuals who had experiences in online journalism were selected. The working experience of these informants ranges from 2 to 15 years in the media industry.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted based on the Heeter's (1989) six dimensions of interactivity. The first dimension of interactivity is complexity of choice available. The first issue

that is related to this dimension was addressed to the informants. The issue was about what were the reasons that let the newspapers to run online editions in line with their print counterparts.

All the interviewees from the selected seven newspapers responded that the technological advancement, the rapidly growing online journalism and the issue of interactivity were the major consideration in running their online editions. Editor-in-chief of Addis Zemen discussed the reasons that forced them to run online editions for their print newspapers (Addis Zemen and Ethiopian Herald) as follows:

Many newspapers around the world are shifting from the print edition to online edition. Printing ten thousand copies of newspapers are not enough to a country with over ninety million populations. And, our capacity is limited and cannot afford the rapidly growing printing cost. The only option that we have is to go online and reach millions of people. Because, online edition newspaper helps to empower readers by giving more contents. This was the reason that led us to run Addis Zemen and Ethiopian Herald newspapers' websites three years ago. But, we are facing shortage of skilled manpower in the area of online. In this case, we are required to give attention to our online edition newspapers, because it increases our accessibility in the whole country. In addition to this, we are also working with INSA to develop the sites. (Personal interview August 31, 2015, see the Amharic version of this story in the appendix E, number 1).

On the other hand a senior editor from Reporter newspaper also reflected his idea about the reasons that push them to run online editions of their newspapers (Reporter (Amharic) and Reporter (English) as follows:

In Ethiopia circulation of newspapers are limited to some part of the country. Depending on the hard copy only is not reliable to newspapers. Maintaining online edition for newspapers also helps them to be easily accessible. Some newspapers may have a fear of running online for economic purposes. Newspaper owners think that giving away content for free is a threat to their hard copy newspaper. This is because they don't have knowledge on how to generate profit from their online edition. Because of this most newspapers want to sell their hard copy newspapers first and they post the contents in their online edition right after. But, if newspapers work hard and give more attention to the online edition, it can generate them profit and increase their readability and popularity. (Personal interview September 03, 2015, see the Amharic version of this story in the appendix E, number 2).

Generally, all the newspapers have a good understanding of the importance of running online editions for their print counterparts. Their prime interests are to grow their accessibility and readability across the country and internationally. In this case, the newspapers are planning to offer readers more choices that the technology allows them to incorporate in their websites. And, they have the desire to keep the track of the international trend. But, internet connection failures, shortage of skilled professionals and budget constraint are the factors that threatening them from developing their online editions.

The second dimension of interactivity was effort of users must exert dimension. It is generally related with user-friendliness of a website and the way the site helps to access contents without difficulty. The researcher asked whether the online editions of the newspapers are user-friendly or not. Some of the interviewees from the newspapers expressed that their online editions of the newspapers cannot be said user friendly to the fullest extent.

A software designer and developer in the Ethiopian Press Agency suggested on the user friendliness of their websites as follows:

We cannot say that our websites are user- friendly. Our readers in some places of the country previously informed us that they encounter a problem opening the online edition of Addis Zemen newspaper. Contents of the newspaper were not displayed. We found out that the problem was Amharic alphabet which cannot be opened. We then incorporated another Amharic alphabet and solved the problem. We are now planning to upgrade the websites in order to make them more attractive and user-friendly like international newspapers by adding more interactive features. (Personal interview September 02, 2015, see the Amharic version of this interview in the appendix E, number 3).

On the other hand IT department head of Reporter newspapers also discussed the user friendliness of their websites as follows:

We can say that our Reporter (Amharic) Reporter (English) newspapers are user friendly but not interactive. Many people around the country can access the sites easily if they have internet connections. In addition to this, we have large number of visitors who visit the newspapers from local and abroad. Even several Ethiopian media institutions refer contents from our websites. (Personal interview September 04, 2015, see the Amharic version of this story in the appendix E, number 4).

If online editions of newspaper employ some interactive features that can make their newspapers user-friendly and if readers can access contents with at least possible effort, there is no doubt that the number of the newspapers' readers will increase through time. And, the relationship between the newspapers and their readers is going to be at the highest level.

The third dimension of interactivity is responsiveness to the user. The study addressed a question to the informants whether the online editions of the newspapers respond to readers' questions or suggestions. Some interviewees agreed that they give response to readers' questions and suggestions through phones or emails. And, other interviewees of the newspapers revealed that they do not respond to readers' comments and questions. Some of them claim that this is because shortages of manpower and budget constraints. These are the factors that hinder them from responding to readers. Interviewees from the newspapers reflected that responsiveness to the user is not given due attention in their newspapers due to shortage of online staff who can handle the job of responding to users questions. But some of the newspapers try to respond through emails.

An assignment editor of Capital newspaper reflected his idea on responding to readers as follows:

When readers send comments or ask questions we receive them through our emails and we respond by their emails. Readers can comment on stories. And, the comments will go directly to the concerned reporters and editors. Readers can write their suggestions and comments online; if we find the information they gave us viable, we posted it in the online edition of our newspaper (Personal interview September 02, 2015, see the Amharic version of this story in the appendix E, number 5).

On the other hand, an editor of Addis Admass suggested that their website do not respond to users at all.

In our online edition of Addis Admass newspaper, we have no mechanisms that allow our journalists to respond to readers' questions. Our website is basically a news provider newspaper to the public. In this case, we do not entertain users' interactions with journalists in any case. But, we have a Facebook page which provides users the opportunity to give comments and suggestions. But, we do not respond to the comments that are given to us in our online edition at all. (Personal interview September 04, 2015, see the Amharic version of this story in the appendix E, number 6).

Giving response to readers can make readers more concerned and engaged in the newspapers. And this can lift up the newspapers' reputation. But some journalists in our country are reluctant in giving response to readers because they believe that it consumes their time by leaving behind the importance of readers in their newspapers.

On the other hand, regarding the facilitation of interpersonal communication dimension of interactivity the study also addressed important points. Interviewees from the newspapers reflected on the interactive features of the dimension. As mentioned in the content analysis part earlier, Capital newspaper was the only newspaper that offers Polls and surveys. Assignment editor of Capital newspaper suggests that using polls and surveys helps to increase the engagement and concern of readers by asking them yes or no questions. It is also helps to gather information about some issues which are concerned to our country's issue.

In terms of offering news blogs, the newspapers claim that they do not allow this in any ways these days. This is because in our country's context online journalism is at its infancy stage and incorporating news blogs are difficult and impractical.

As it has been mentioned earlier, in terms of incorporating discussion rooms or comment sections, interviewees from Addis Zemen, Ethiopian Herald and Addis Admass newspapers do not allow readers to comment in their respective newspapers. They claim that offering the discussion room or comment section to readers is not proper because, readers abuse comments sections and use it unwisely.

Deputy-editor-in-chief of Addis Admass newspaper revealed the position of their newspaper towards providing discussion room or comment section to readers.

Providing discussion room or comment section to readers is none of our concern. Addis Admass newspaper is news provider. Based on this the online edition of the newspaper is designed to provide news to readers. It is not designed to let readers to give comments and suggestions. We only need to serve the society by giving more news articles. We do not worry about whether readers give comments or not. (Personal interview September 04, 2015, see the Amharic version of this story in the appendix E, number 7).

On the other hand, editor-in-chief of Addis Zemen newspaper also suggested on the issue as follows:

We had a comment section in the online editions of our newspapers in the past. But, due to readers offensive comments we deliberately suspended it. Some readers were abusing the comment section. They used it to spread hatred, defamation through the discussion room. This is not appropriate. It decreases the quality of the newspapers. But now we are receiving readers' comments through emails and phone and we respond to readers in their emails in return. (Personal interview September 02, 2015, see the Amharic version of this story in the appendix E, number 8).

On the other hand, Reporter (Amharic), the Reporter (English), Addis Fortune and Capital newspapers offer discussion room or comment section in their online editions. The newspapers value the comment section because they get essential comments and suggestions from their readers. A senior editor from Reporter newspaper suggested that facilitation of interpersonal communication through comment section important for newspapers. His idea is presented as follows:

We were providing comment section in online editions of our newspapers previously. However, readers were abusing it with offensive words. And, we were forced to suspend it. But, suspending the comment section was not a good solution. We started displaying the comment section and allow readers to comment. Now we have a mechanism on how to moderate comments and filter out offensive comments. The comment section is open for everyone who wishes to give comments and suggestions. We value readers' constructive comment, if they use it properly. But, we do not tolerate people who anonymously try to harass and insult the newspaper and readers through comments. We automatically remove their comments. (Personal interview September 03, 2015, see the Amharic version of this story in the appendix E, number 9).

The following picture was taken from Reporter Amharic newspaper online edition's comment section. It shows displayed comments written by readers in both Amharic and English languages.

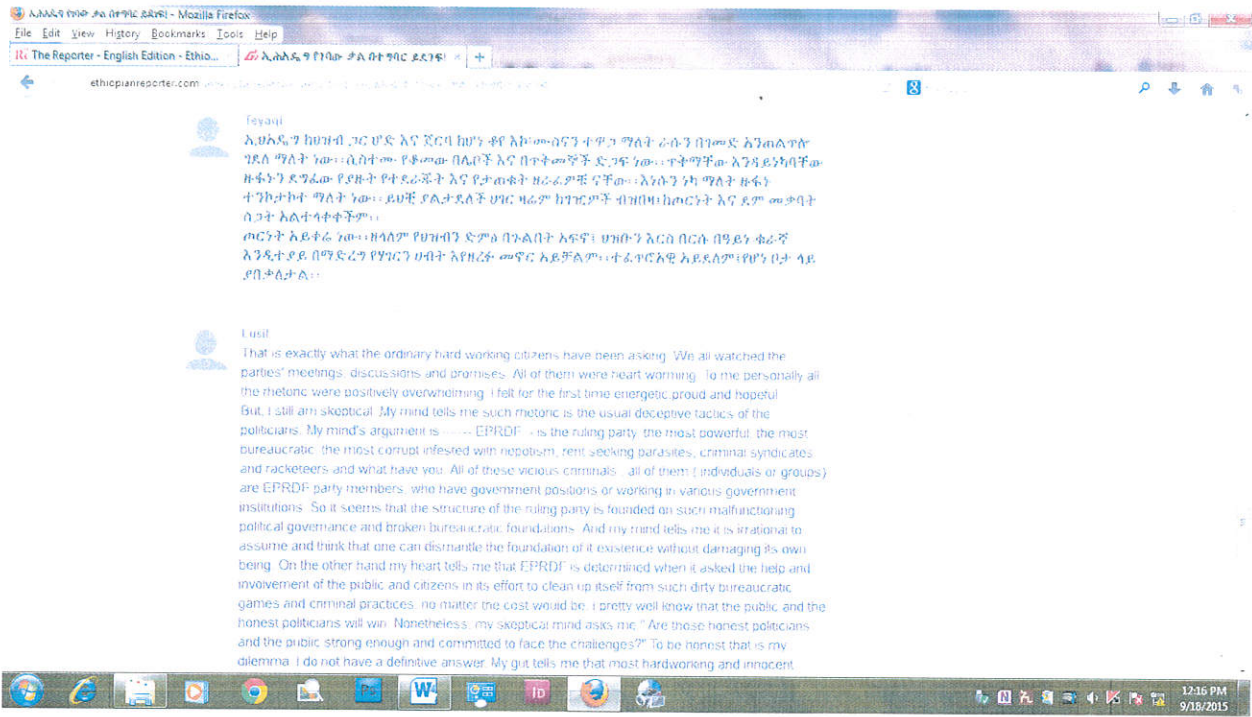


Figure 4.9: Reporter Amharic newspaper’s discussion room (comment section).

If the online editions of the newspapers are interested in providing a comment section to readers in their online editions, users’ engagement will occur. But, this can be successful if the newspapers moderate the comments and suggestion that are given by readers.

The other dimension of interactivity was monitor system use. The interviewees were asked about the importance of incorporating interactive features that help monitor readers. Deputy editor-in-chief of the digital platform of Addis Fortune newspaper suggested that monitoring users is essential to newspapers.

We have various mechanisms that help monitor users in our online edition newspaper. We monitor the number of people who visit the site regularly and the nature and duration of their engagement. We can easily know the shares, visits that we get. Monitoring users is advantageous in a sense that we know what kinds of materials are interesting to readers. So, we can generate more important materials in the future. (Personal interview September 03, 2015, see the Amharic version of this story in the appendix E, number 10).

Finally, the discussion that held between the researcher and the key informants of the newspapers were a turning point in letting grow interactivity and online journalism in to the next

level. The editors of the newspapers showed interest in developing and changing the current status of their online editions of their print editions.

Generally, the quantitative content analysis and qualitative semi-structured interviews discussions that took place above are related and connected to each other. The prime objective is to find out the status of the online editions of Ethiopian newspapers in terms of using online interactive features that the current potential of internet allow.

Carrie Heeter's six dimensions of interactivity were relatively easy to adapt them to online newspapers. One of the strengths of Heeter's theoretical definition is that it considers interactivity from both sides of a two (or more) directional flow of information. Four of the dimensions clearly emphasize the role of the user. Interactivity empowers the user and this empowerment is what makes interactive new media so different from traditional mass media. Another dimension, "facilitation of interpersonal communication," treats both parties equally. The sixth dimension, "monitor system use," empowers the sender of messages from online newspapers (Kenny et al, 2008).

As mentioned earlier, in terms of the six dimensions, online editions of the selected Ethiopian newspapers are not interactive to the expected level of interactivity. But, some of the newspapers had a good start and attempt in providing interactive features. For instance *Reporter (Amharic)* and the *Reporter (English)* newspapers were far better than the rest newspapers in this study in terms of incorporating interactive features in their online editions. But it is not to the fullest extent. In addition to this, *Addis fortune* and *Capital* newspapers were also better newspaper next to the *Reporter Amharic* and *English* editions. However, *Addis Zemen Ethiopian Herald* and *Addis Admass* newspapers are far behind in terms of incorporating interactive features in their online editions compared to the above mentioned newspapers.

The study conducted an interview with the responsible editors of the newspapers and came up with detailed discussions about interactivity and online journalism. The editors agreed on the adoption of interactive features and the importance of the features. But, the newspapers' editors have mentioned that they encounter many challenges that hinder them to incorporate interactive features and develop their online editions over all. These challenges are budget constraints, internet connection failures and shortage of skilled man power in the area of online journalism.

Despite these challenges the newspapers are trying to plan new projects in order to modernize and keep the track of international newspapers practice in to their online editions in the future. For instance, some of the newspapers are planning projects to include video and audio in to their online editions for the future.

It is clear that online editions of Ethiopian newspapers are characterized by low levels of interactivity based on the examination of the theoretical framework presented previously. The newspapers are built upon a common pattern regarding both design and content and they are greatly influenced by print versions. The absences of integrated news packages and the sporadic presence of interactive elements is serious deficit. Though there are some interactive features in the online editions of the newspapers, they are not effectively utilized by editors and journalists.

Quinn and Filak (2005) states that combination of sound, image, text, and interactivity—hereafter referred to as multimedia journalism gives media practitioners a new way to tell stories, using the strengths of each medium to produce a more compelling package. From the outset, a multimedia journalist must appreciate the potential and power of each medium and capitalize on those strengths. In doing so the multimedia reporter produces journalism that is well beyond what a single medium can do. The multimedia reporter needs to know how to use a variety of digital tools, but the essential requirement is a multimedia mind-set. Loosely articulated, this mind-set requires the ability to conceive of stories that go beyond a single medium when it is appropriate to use more than one medium. Sometimes one medium is sufficient to provide what audiences need. Implicit in this statement is an understanding of audiences (note the plural form) and an acceptance that the fundamental role of journalism remains constant, which is to inform, educate, and entertain.

## Chapter Five

### 5. Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

#### 5.1. Summary

The main objective of this study is to explore interactive features in online editions of Ethiopian newspapers. There were three subordinate aims in the study. The first one was finding out types of online interactive features that are available in online editions of Ethiopian newspapers. The second one was identifying the extent of Ethiopian online newspapers in using online interactive features and the third one was finding out the perceptions of online newspaper editors/journalists towards providing interactive features in their newspapers' websites.

This study employed both quantitative content analysis and qualitative semi-structured interviews in order to collect the data. And, in order to construct measurable categories of analysis for this study, the concept of interactivity was broken down in to measurable dimensions. It was based on the adoption of Heeter's (1989) specific and measurable dimensions of interactivity as well as the operationalization of the same categories by Spyridou and Veglis (2008). As mentioned in the previous chapter, Heeter's six dimensions of interactivity include: complexity of choice available, efforts users must exert, responsiveness to the user, facilitation of interpersonal communication, ease of adding information and monitor system use.

Based on this, quantitative content analysis of seven online editions of Ethiopian newspapers published in Amharic and English languages were carried out to determine the level of interactive features of the websites. The newspapers were *Addis Zemen*, *Reporter* and *Addis Admass Amharic* newspapers as well as *Ethiopian Herald*, *the Reporter*, *Addis Fortune* and *Capital* English newspapers. The content analyses of the newspapers were coded by two MA holders for about one month from July 3, 2015 to August 04, 2015. And, the data was analyzed based on the six dimensions of interactivity mentioned under chapter two. In addition to this, qualitative semi-structured interviews were conducted with the responsible personnel of the newspapers. The interview was conducted with seven editors from August 31 to September 4, 2015. Accordingly individuals who had experiences in online journalism were selected. The working experience of these informants ranges from 2 to 15 years in the media industry.

## 5.2. Conclusions

Journalism practice is making a paradigm shift from the traditional media to the online media approach. Quinn and Filak (2005) states that in every era, the media industry adapts to cope with changes in society as part of its role of reflecting that society and newspapers have changed their writing styles, photography has been integrated, graphics have been added, and design has become an element of storytelling. Online journalism in its nature is different from the traditional media. It has various advantages in helping newspapers to raise their accessibility. And, it let users engage with the media institutions. In the online media world the issue of interactivity is a subject for discussion and it is taken as the most buzzword concept due to its diverse topic.

According to Holmes (2007) the term ‘interactivity’ has been rapidly conscripted into the discourses of a ‘new media age’ and it is central to a cluster of terms that preoccupy the study of cyber culture. Around it is assembled so many of the binary terms of new media theorizing – active/passive, one-way/two way, linear/nonlinear, synchronous/asynchronous, mediated/face-to-face, etc. in addition to this, Shultz (1999) stated that interactivity has been discussed as a challenge for journalism that can be met, at least partly, by the thoughtful development of internet sites and the internet allows for quick movement from an asymmetrical mode of communication to a more egalitarian, interactive mode. The aim of this study was to explore the status of Ethiopian newspapers in terms of incorporating interactive features in their online editions and the study intended to explore the knowledge of newspaper journalists and editors towards online journalism and interactivity.

In the review of related literature, an attempt has been made to provide a theoretical framework for the study, looking at online journalism and interactive features in online journalism. And, relevant points about interactivity, concept of interactivity, types of interactivity and interactive features as well as dimensions of interactivity were presented by exploring the more abstract and philosophical discussions around the concept. According to Heeter cited in Mahmoud and Auter (2009) interactivity is a multi-dimensional concept that includes: the complexity of available choices, the amount of effort users expend, user responsiveness, information monitoring, the ease with which information can be added, and the facilitation of interpersonal communication.

According to Schultz, (2000) however, most online newspapers are not achieving their potential in terms of offering interactive features and still have to improve in offering real participation to

their audiences. This study found out a very low level of interactivity in the online editions of Ethiopian newspapers. In most of the newspapers interactive features existed, but not effectively utilized to the extent that relevant literature indicates out to be typical of truly interactive online newspaper. In this case, online editions of Ethiopian newspapers are far behind in developing their online editions and most of them do not give proper attention to it. But it does not mean there are no newspapers which are exerting more effort to make their online editions modern and attractive. For instance, *Reporter* newspaper in its Amharic and English version was the highest scorer in terms of incorporating interactive features in this study. In addition *Addis fortune* and *capital* newspapers are also better newspapers next to *Reporter (Amharic)* and the *Reporter (English)* newspapers. But, *Addis Zemen*, *Ethiopian Herald* and *Addis Admass* newspapers were the least scorers in terms of incorporating interactive features in this study.

And interviews with the online newspaper editors explored their experiences of using interactive features and reasons for adopting or not adopting interactive features. Findings reveal that online editors agreed on adopting interactive features but are experiencing problems with incorporating such interactive features online. According to the newspapers' editors, there are many challenges that hinder Ethiopian newspapers from developing their online editions. The challenges are low level of internet connections, budget constraints and shortage of skilled manpower in the online journalism.

Despite the challenges mentioned above, the newspapers are showing a remarkable growth in their online editions since their establishments. But they need to work hard and invest more in the online environment.

Shultz (1999) maintains that the mass media are still one of the most efficient and important factors of integration. It is imperative that online editions of Ethiopian newspapers cultivate a culture of thought that have a practical bearing on the offering of active and effective interactive features on their sites. It is especially imperative that their offering of interactive tools highlights an understanding of the significance of such interactive features and develops beyond a mere availability in to an extensive and effective utilization of such tools.

### 5.3. Recommendations

Even though, the practice online journalism and interactivity as well as adopting interactive features is at its infancy in the Ethiopian context, it is essential to newspapers in particular and Ethiopian media institutions in general . To this end, the following recommendations are suggested:

- Ethiopian newspapers owners, editors and journalists should give due attention to their online edition of their newspapers. They should adopt new interactive features in to their online editions. This helps the newspapers to increase accessibility and let their readers engage with their newspapers.
- In terms of incorporating modern interactive features there are many options that the internet offers to newspapers. In this case, the newspapers should use the existed interactive features and utilize them properly and wisely.
- The newspapers should also increase their online staff and give proper trainings to their journalists regarding online journalism in order to make their online editions popular.
- The newspapers editors/journalists should not treat the online editions as the replica of their print editions rather they can make the online edition profit generator by increasing the number of visitors, if they follow international practices.
- Finally, interactivity has a lot of possibilities. Based on this, the following future study appears appropriate. A study exploring interactivity from the perspective of users would be useful.

## References

- Chung, S. D. (2008) *Interactive Features of Online Newspapers: Identifying Patterns and Predicting Use of Engaged Readers*. Journal of Computer Mediated Communication. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1083-6101.2008.00414.x/pdf> (Accessed: March 18, 2015)
- Deuze, M. (2001) *Online journalism: Modeling the First Generation of News Media on the World Wide Web*. <http://ojphi.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/893/802> (Accessed in May 8, 2015)
- Dibean, W, and Garrison, B. (2000) *Online Newspapers Market Size and Use of World Wide Web Technologies*. [http://web.mit.edu/commforum/papers/Dibean\\_Garrison.html](http://web.mit.edu/commforum/papers/Dibean_Garrison.html) (Accessed: May 14, 2015).
- Feyisa Girma. (2011) *New Media Technology as a Source of Foreign News in Oromiya Mass Media Organization: Challenges and Opportunities*. Unpublished MA thesis, School of Journalism and Communication, Addis Ababa University.
- Gane, N. and Beer, D. (2008) *New Media the Key Concepts*. English Eds.
- Gebeyhu Bekele (2011) *Media and New Technology in Ethiopia - a Study of an Interface: A Case Study of the ERTA/ETV Newsroom*. Unpublished MA thesis, School of Journalism and Communication, Addis Ababa University.
- Given, M.L (2008) *The Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*. Sage Publications, Inc.
- Holmes, D. (2007) *The Fallacies and Fortunes of 'Interactivity' in Communication Theory*. Communications and Media, Monash University. <http://www.razonypalabra.org.mx/anteriores/n58/dholmes.pdf>(Accessed: May 19, 2015)
- Huesca, R. and Dervin, B. (1999) *Hypertext and Journalism: Audiences Respond to Competing News Narratives*. <http://web.mit.edu/comm-forum/papers/huesca.html> (Accessed: May 19, 2015).
- Jensen, J.F. (1998). "Interactivity Tracking a New Concept in Media and Communication Studies", in U. Carlsson (ed.) *Nordicom Review*, 19(1) (June 1998): 180-204.

- [http://www.nordicom.gu.se/sites/default/files/kapitelpdf/38\\_jensen.pdf](http://www.nordicom.gu.se/sites/default/files/kapitelpdf/38_jensen.pdf) (Accessed: 11 May 2015).
- Kenny K., Gorelik A., and Mawngi, S. (2000) Interactive Features of Online Newspapers. First Monday, volume 5, number 1. University of Illinois. [http://firstmonday.org/issues/issue5\\_1/kenney/index.html](http://firstmonday.org/issues/issue5_1/kenney/index.html) (Accessed: April 15, 2015).
- Kibnesh Chala (2006) Use of Internet as a Medium of Disseminating Information by Ethiopian Newspapers. Unpublished MA thesis, School of Journalism and Communication, Addis Ababa University.
- Liu, Y and Shrum (2002) *What is Interactivity and Is it Always Such a Good Thing?* Implications of def...Journal of Advertising. [http://www.yupingliu.com/files/papers/liu\\_shrum\\_interactivity.pdf](http://www.yupingliu.com/files/papers/liu_shrum_interactivity.pdf) (Accessed: June 30, 2015).
- Mahmoud, A and Auter ,J. (2009) *The Interactive Nature of Computer-Mediated communication* American Communication Journal Vol. 11, No. 4. [http://acjournal.org/journal/2009/Winter/Articles/110401%20Interactive\\_Nature.pdf](http://acjournal.org/journal/2009/Winter/Articles/110401%20Interactive_Nature.pdf) (Accessed: May 8, 2015)
- McMillan (1998) *Who Pays for Content? Funding in Interactive Media*. Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication Volume 4, Issue 1. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1083-6101.1998.tb00090.x/full> (Accessed: May 1, 2015).
- Millison, D. (1999). "Online Journalism FAQ". <http://home.comcast.net/~dougmillison/faq.html> (Accessed: May 14, 2015).
- Mulugeta Kussa (2014) The Practice of Online Journalism: The Case of the Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation (EBC) Website News. Unpublished MA thesis, School of Journalism and Communication, Addis Ababa University.
- O'Sullivan, T., Hartley, J., Saunders, D., Montgomery, M. and Fiske, J.(1994) *Key Concepts in Communication and Cultural Studies*. London Routledge: Sage Publications. <https://ymerleksi.wikispaces.com/file/view/Key+Concepts+in+Communication+and+Cultural+Studies.pdf> (Accessed: May 15, 2015).

- Palacios, M and Noci, J. (2009) *Online Journalism Research Methods. A Multidisciplinary Approach in Comparative Perspective*.
- Quinn, S. and Filak, V. (2005) *Convergent Journalism: An Introduction*, for information on all Focal Press Publications, Printed in the United States of America.
- Rahman, M. (2008) *Interactive Options in Online Newspapers of Bangladesh*. Med well Journals. <http://docsdrive.com/pdfs/medwelljournals/pjssci/2008/620-624.pdf> (Accessed: March 18, 2015)
- Salwen, B.M., Garrison B., and Driscoll, D.P. (2005) *online news and the public*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers. Printed in the United States of America.
- Schultz, T. (1999) *Interactive Options in Online Journalism: A Content Analysis of 100 U.S. Newspapers*. Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.10836101.1999.tb00331.x/full> (Accessed: 23 February 2015).
- Schultz, T., (2000) *Mass Media and the Concept of Interactivity: an Exploratory Study of Online Forums and Reader Email*. [www.konict.nl/kass/download.php?object=213122](http://www.konict.nl/kass/download.php?object=213122) (Accessed: 12 May 2015).
- Skjerdal, T. S. (2014) *Online Journalism under Pressure an Ethiopian Account*. [https://www.academia.edu/11535917/Online\\_journalism\\_under\\_pressure\\_An\\_Ethiopian\\_account](https://www.academia.edu/11535917/Online_journalism_under_pressure_An_Ethiopian_account)(Accessed: May 8, 2015).
- Spyridou, P. and Veglis, A. (2008) *Exploring Structural Interactivity in Online Newspapers: A Look at the Greek Web Landscape*. <http://firstmonday.org/article/view/2164/1960> (Accessed: April 15, 2015).
- Tesfaye Alemayehu. (2013) *Social Media as an Alternative Political Forum in Ethiopia: the Case of Facebook*. MA thesis, Addis Ababa University. Unpublished MA thesis, School of Journalism and Communication, Addis Ababa University.
- Wimmer, D.R and Dominick, R.J (2011) *Mass Media Research: an Introduction* 9<sup>th</sup> ed. University of Georgia.

## Appendices

### Appendix A: Content analysis coding sheet

The coding sheet is designed to analyze the content of seven online editions of Ethiopian newspapers. The result will be used for the analysis of the study on interactive features in online journalism: a look at online edition of Ethiopian newspapers.

#### Instruction

The unit of analysis is the entire newspaper site. Each site is entered through its homepage, and then navigates its various sections. Repetitive visits will be made to sites in order to observe extensively features under investigation.

Date of coding-----

Name of coder-----

	Interactive features	Rating	Addis Zemen	Ethiopian Herald	Reporter	The Reporter	Addis Admass	Addis Fortune	Capital
	<b>I. Complexity of choice available</b>								
1	Classification of thematic categories	1							
2	Classification of thematic subcategories	2							
3	Main news menu	1							
4	Latest news section	2							
5	Picks of the day	1							
6	Picks of the week	2							
7	Special reports on important issues	3							
8	Archives	2							
9	Links to other relevant articles	2							
10	Links to sources outside Web site	2							
11	Internal search engine	1							
12	External search engine	2							

	<b>Interactive features</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<i>Addis Zemen</i>	<i>Ethiopian Herald</i>	<i>Reporter</i>	<i>The Reporter</i>	<i>Addis Admass</i>	<i>Addis Fortune</i>	<i>Capital</i>
13	Time of updating	1							
14	Inclusion of multimedia features: Photos	1							
15	Inclusion of multimedia features: Sound	2							
16	Inclusion of multimedia features: Video	3							
17	Facebook and Twitter or Google plus pages	3							
18	Choices of language	3							
19	Contact the site	3							
20	Special services providing specialized and extensive news coverage	3							
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>40</b>							
	<b>II. Effort users must exert</b>								
21	Customization possibilities of a Web site via email	3							
22	Advanced search tools	2							
23	Direct printing option	1							
24	Pdf format download option	2							
25	Headline and lead drop-down menu within each category	2							
26	Breaking news service	3							
27	Mobile SMS services	2							
28	Internal RSS	2							

	<b>Interactive features</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<i>Addis Zemen</i>	<i>Ethiopian Herald</i>	<i>Reporter</i>	<i>The Reporter</i>	<i>Addis Admass</i>	<i>Addis Fortune</i>	<i>Capital</i>
	feeds								
29	External RSS feeds	3							
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>20</b>							
	<b>III. Responsiveness to the user</b>								
30	Direct e-mail link to the article's author	3							
31	E-mail contacts to the editor/journalists	1							
32	Publish letters of readers	1							
33	Provide answers from journalists about their articles	3							
34	Provide answers to readers' questions on any topic	3							
35	Service featuring the most read stories	1							
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>12</b>							
	<b>IV. Facilitation of interpersonal communication</b>								
36	Discussion room	3							
37	Polls and surveys	3							
38	News blogs	3							
39	Classification of news blogs	3							
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>12</b>							

	<b>Interactive features</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<i>Addis Zemen</i>	<i>Ethiopian Herald</i>	<i>Reporter</i>	<i>The Reporter</i>	<i>Addis Admass</i>	<i>Addis Fortune</i>	<i>Capital</i>
	<b>V. Ease of adding information</b>								
40	Hyperlinks that add information to the site	3							
41	Mechanisms that allow users to make contributions to stories	3							
42	Option of directly e-mailing an article	3							
43	Publication of opinion articles or stories written by readers	3							
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>12</b>							
	<b>VI. Monitor system use</b>								
44	Cookies	1							
45	Visitors counter	1							
46	Request registration	2							
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>4</b>							
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>100</b>							

## **Appendix B: Coding Book**

This coding book is designed to give explanation on some of the terms used in the content analysis coding sheet. Reliability of the coders was checked using the Holsti's (1969) formula.

### **1. Complexity of choice available**

- 1.1. Classification of thematic categories: includes sections of news, economic and business, politics, art and culture, sport, technology fashion, opinion pages and entertainment etc.
- 1.2. Classification of thematic subcategories: includes subcategories of the above thematic categories.
- 1.3. Main news menu: a menu that provides main news.
- 1.4. Latest news section: a section that provides latest news.
- 1.5. Picks of the day: a selection of highlights of the day.
- 1.6. Picks of the week: a selection of highlights of the week.
- 1.7. Archives: storage for previous dates articles
- 1.8. Links to other relevant articles.
- 1.9. Links to sources outside web site.
- 1.10. Internal search engine: allows readers to find content they want inside the site.
- 1.11. External search engine: allows readers to find content they want outside the site.
- 1.12. Time of updating: the time an article or news posted online.
- 1.13. Inclusion of multimedia features: photos.
- 1.14. Inclusion of multimedia features: sound.
- 1.15. Inclusion of multimedia features: video.
- 1.16. Facebook and Twitter pages
- 1.17. Choices of language: letting readers by switching into different language in the site
- 1.18. Interaction guides: provide information on how readers contact the site.
- 1.19. Special services providing specialized extensive news coverage.

### **2. Efforts users must exert**

- 2.1. Customization possibilities of a web site via e-mail: when sites allow readers to customize the site.
- 2.2. Advanced search tools: search tools available in the site
- 2.3. Direct printing option: an option which allows readers to print news or article
- 2.4. Pdf format download option
- 2.5. Headline and lead drop-down menu within each category.
- 2.6. Breaking news service
- 2.7. Mobile SMS services

- 2.8. Internal RSS feeds: an RSS feed allows readers to stay up to date with the latest news and documents published on a website by subscribe to the RSS feed.
- 2.9. External RSS feeds:

### **3. Responsiveness to the user**

- 3.1 . Direct e-mail link to the article's author.
- 3.2 . E-mail contacts to the editor/journalists.
- 3.3 . Publish letters of readers: when readers send a letter to the editor
- 3.4 . Provide answers from journalists about their articles.
- 3.5 . Provide answers to readers' questions on any topic.
- 3.6 . Service featuring the most read stories.

### **4. Facilitation of interpersonal communication**

- 4.1 . Discussion room: a comment section that allows readers to communicate with journalists and other readers.
- 4.2 . Polls and surveys: platforms for users to vote on certain issues
- 4.3 . News blogs: a blog provided by the site for readers to read and post messages
- 4.4 . Classification of news blogs.

### **5. Ease of adding information**

- 5.1 . Hyperlinks that add information to the site.
- 5.2 . Mechanisms that allow users to make contributions to stories.
- 5.3 . Option of directly e-mailing an article: when the site allows readers to email articles to a friend
- 5.4 . Publication of opinion articles or stories written by readers: when the site publish an article which is contributed by readers.

### **6. Monitor system use**

- 6.1 . Cookies: allow websites to store things like user preferences. You can think of cookies as providing a 'memory' for the website, so that it can recognize you when you come back and respond appropriately.
- 6.2 . Visitors counter: a counter that displays the numbers of visitors who visit the site.
- 6.3 . Request registration: when a site requires readers to register their profile, email etc. when they request what they needed.

**Appendix C: Interview Guide**

**Addis Ababa University**

**School of Journalism and Communication**

**Graduate Program**

**Introduction**

The general objective of the study is to explore the structural interactive features in online edition of Ethiopian newspapers. This study is purely academic research. Your genuine response is highly valuable to conduct this study and then to arrive at a legitimate result.

The researcher

News organization-----

Date-----

**1) Personal profile**

- a. Name of Interviewee.....
- b. Sex.....
- c. Position.....
- d. Educational background.....
- e. Experience in the media house.....
- f. Age range    20-35        35-45        above 45

**2) General questions**

- 1. The history of the newspaper and site
- 2. Reasons for the newspaper to include or go online
- 3. The nature and situation of the online

**3) Complexity of choice available**

- 1. Is the issue of interactivity and empowering the user through more choices a major consideration in running the site? If yes why? If no why not?

2. In terms of complex choice available to users, does your site offer (or plan to offer) in the near future?

**4) Efforts users must exert**

1. How friendly is your site in terms of design?
2. How does your site allow users find information and exercise control over content with at least possible effort?

**5) Responsiveness to the user**

1. How does your site response to user questions?
2. How does your website allow users to interact with journalists?
3. What are the advantages your site gets by being responsive to readers?

**6) Facilitation of interpersonal communication**

1. Is facilitating of interpersonal communication to users concern in your site? If yes how, if no why not?
2. Does your website facilitate interpersonal communication by using discussion rooms? If yes how? If no why not?
3. What are the challenges of facilitating an interpersonal communication to users in your site?

**7) Ease of adding information**

1. Do you allow readers to add information to the site? If yes how? If no why not?
2. To what extent do you allow readers to contribute stories in your site?

**8) Monitor system use**

1. How do you monitor users when they visit your site?
2. What are the advantages of counting visitors who visit your site?
3. Does your site require visitors' request registration? If yes why? If no why not?

**9) Challenges**

1. What are the challenges of adopting interactive features to online edition of your newspaper?

**10) Prospects**

1. Do you plan any change on the online edition in the near future?

## Appendix D: Interviewees' profile

No.	Name	Sex	Educational Background	Media House	Current Position
1.	Nigus Wodajnew	Male	MA in Folklore and Literature	Addis Zemen (Amharic) and Ethiopian Herald (English)	Editor-in-chief
2.	Daniel Adinew	Male	BA in Electrical engineering	Ethiopian press Agency	ICT expert & software developer
3.	Mikiyas Sebsibe	Male	BA in law	Reporter(Amharic) and The Reporter(English)	Senior Editor
4.	Ermiyas Endiryas	Male	BA in software engineering	Reporter(Amharic) and The Reporter(English)	IITS department head
5.	Mikiyas Tesfay	Male	MA in peace and security studies	Addis Fortune	Deputy-editor-in- chief of Fortune's digital platform
6.	Groum Abate	Male	MA in Linguistics	Capital	Assignment Editor
7.	Eyob Kassa	Male	BA in foreign language and literature	Addis Admass	Deputy-editor-in- Editor



ገጽ መጠቀም በኢኮኖሚ ምክንያት ግድ ላይሰጡት ይችላሉ። ለምሳሌ ጋዜጦቹ በድረ-ገጾቻቸው ዜና በነጻ መስጠታቸው ለወረቀት ጋዜጣቸው እንደ ሰጋት ስለሚቆጥሩት ትኩረት ላይሰጡት ይችላሉ። ይህም የሆነው ጋዜጦቹ ከድረ-ገጾቻቸው ትርፍ እንዴት ማግኘት እናዳለባቸው ዕውቀቱ ስሌላቸው ነው። በዚህ ምክንያት አበዛኞቹ ጋዜጦች መጀመርያ የወረቀት ጋዜጦቻቸው ከሸጡ በኋላ ነው ዜናዎቻቸው ድረ-ገጽ ላይ የሚጭኑት። ነገር ግን እንደኔ እንደኔ ጋዜጦቹ ጠንክረው እየሰሩ ለድረ-ገጾቻቸው ቀልብ ሰጥተው ከሠሩ ትርፍ ማግኘት ይችላሉ። በተጨማሪ ተነባቢነታቸውና ታዋቂነታቸው እንዲያሳድጉ ይረዳቸዋል ብዬ አምናለሁ (እ.አ.አ መስከረም 03/2015)።

➤ ጥያቄ: የጋዜጦቻቹ ድረ-ገጾች ለተጠቃሚዎች ቀላልነታቸው እንዴት ይገለጻል? እንዲሁም አንባቢዎች በቀላል ጥረት የዜና ይዘቶች እንዴት ማግኘት ይችላሉ?

3. አቶ ዳንኤል አድነው በኢትዮጵያ ፕሬስ ድርጅት የአይሲቲና ሶፍትዌር ዲቭሎፒንግ ባለሞያ

መልስ: ጋዜጦቻችን ለተጠቃሚዎች ቀለል ያሉ ናቸው ብለን ደፍረን መናገር አንችልም። አንባቢዎቻችን ከተለያዩ የአገሪቱ ክፍል በመደወል ድረ-ገጾቻችን ለመክፈት እንደሚያስቸግራቸው ነግረውናል። ለምሳሌ የአዲስ ዘመን ጋዜጣ ድረ-ገጽ የመክፈት ችግር ነበረበት። የጋዜጣው ይዘቶች በአንዳንድ አካባቢዎች አይክፈትም ነበር። ችግሩም የአማርኛ ፊደላቶች(አልፋቤት) አለመክፈት ችግር ነበር። ከዛ በኋላ ችግሩ ሊሰተካከል ችሏል። በአሁኑ ጊዜም የጋዜጦቻችን ድረ-ገጾች ሳቢ እና ለተጠቃሚዎች ቀለል ያሉ የማድረግ ሥራዎች በመሥራት ላይ ነን። እንዲሁም የዓለምአቀፍ ጋዜጦች እድገት በመከተል ጠቃሚ የሆኑ የድረ-ገጽ መሳሪያዎች ለመጠቀም እየሰራን ነው ( እ.አ.አ መስከረም 02/2015)።

4. አቶ ኤርምያስ እንድርያስ በሪፖርተር ጋዜጣ የአይቲ ባለሞያ

መልስ: የእኛ ሪፖርተር አማርኛና እንግሊዘኛ ዕትሞች ለተጠቃሚዎች ቀለል ያሉ ናቸው ብልን ነው መግለጽ የምንችለው። ነገር ግን ከተጠቃሚ ጋር ሙሉ ለሙሉ ለመገናኘት የሚያስችሉ ናቸው ማለት ግን አንችልም። በመላ አገሪቱ የኢንተርኔት ኮኔክሽን ባለበት አካባቢ ብዙ ሰዎች በቀላሉ ድረ-ገጾቹን በቀላሉ መጎብኘት ይችላሉ። በተጨማሪ በአገር ወስጥ እና በውጭ አገራት ድረ-ገጾቻችን የሚጎበኙ አንባቢዎች ብዙ ናቸው። እንዲሁም

ብዙ የሚደያ ተቋማት ይዘቶቻችን እንደምንጭነት ከድረ-ገጻቸውን ጠቀሰው ይወስዳሉ። ከአለት እለት ዌብሳይቶቹ እድገት እያሳዩ ናቸው። አንባቢዎች የሚፈለጉትን ይዘት በቀላሉ የሚያገኙበት ሁኔታ ተፈጥሯል( እ.አ.አ መስከረም 04/2015)።

➤ ጥያቄ: አንባቢዎች ጥያቄ ሲጠይቁ ወይም አስተያየት ሲሰጡ እንዴት ነው ምላሽ የምትሰጡት ?

5. አቶ ግሩም አባተ የካፒታል ጋዜጣ አሳይሜንት ኤዲተር

መልስ: አንባቢዎች ጥያቄ ሲጠይቁ ወይም አስተያየት ሲሰጡ በኢ.መ.ይ.ሎ.ቻችን ይልኩልናል። እኛ ደግሞ በኢ.መ.ይ.ሎ. አድራሻቸው መልሱን እንልክላቸዋለን። በድረ-ገጻችን በማንኛውም ጽሁፍ ላይ አስተያየተቸውን መስጠት ይችላሉ። የተሰጡ አስተያየቶችም ለሚመለከተው ጋዜጠኛ ወይም ኤዲተር ይሰጠዋል። አንባቢዎች አስተያየት ሲሰጡ ጠቃሚ ነው ብለን ያሰብነው አስተያየት በድረ-ገጽ ላይ ፖስት እንዲደረግ እንፈቅዳለን (እ.አ.አ መስከረም 02/2015)።

6. አቶ ኢዮብ ካሳ የአዲስ አድማስ ጋዜጣ ምክትል አዘጋጅ

መልስ: የአዲስ አድማስ ድረ-ገጽ ጋዜጠኞቻችን ለአንባቢዎች ጥያቄ መልስ የሚሰጡበት አሰራር አልዘረጋንም። የኛ ጋዜጣ በመሰረቱ ዜና ለህበረተሰቡ ማቅረብ ብቻ ነው። በማንኛውም ሁኔታ ጋዜጠኞች ከተጠቃሚዎች ጋር የሚገናኙበት ሁኔታ የለም። ነገር ግን በፌስቡክ ገጻችን አንባቢዎች አስተያየት መስጠት ይችላሉ። በድረ-ገጹ ላይ ግን አንባቢዎች ማንኛውም አስተያየት መስጠት አይችሉም (እ.አ.አ መስከረም 04/2015)።

➤ ጥያቄ: በጋዜጣ ደረ-ገጻቹ ለአንባቢዎች አስተያየት መስጫ ክፍል ማቅረብ እንዴት ይቻላል ?

7. አቶ ኢዮብ ካሳ የአዲስ አድማስ ጋዜጣ ምክትል አዘጋጅ

መልስ: ለአንባቢዎች አስተያየት መስጫ ማዘጋጀት ጉዳያችን አይደለም። የአዲስ አድማስ ጋዜጣና ደረ-ገጽ ለተጠቃሚዎች ዜና ማቅረብ ብቻ ነው። ደረ-ገጹ ዲዛይን ሲደረግ ዜና ብቻ እንዲያቀርብ ተደርጎ ብቻ ነው የተቀረጸው። እኛ ብዙ ዜናዎች በማቅረብ ብቻ ነው ህብረተሰቡን ማገልገል የምንፈልገው። አንባቢዎች አስተያየት ሰጡ አልሰጡ ብዙም አያስጨንቀንም (እ.አ.አ መስከረም 04/2015)።

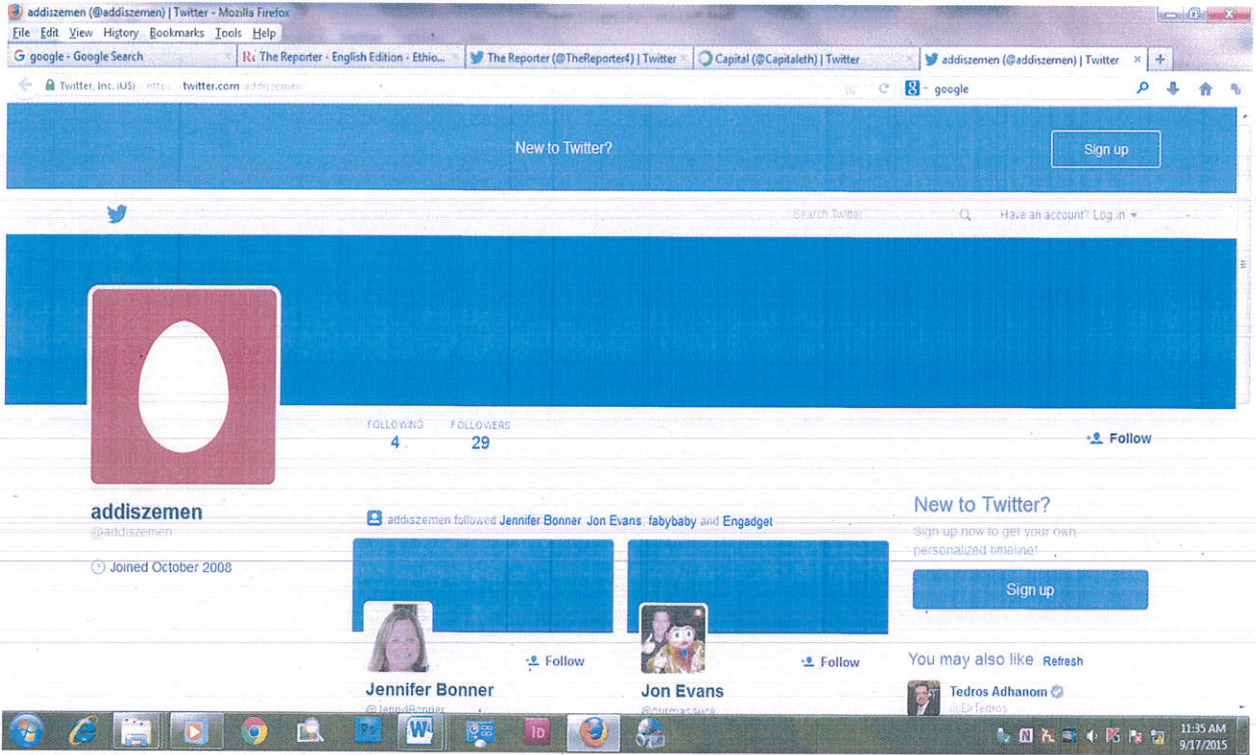
8. አቶ ንጉሰ ወዳጅነህ የአዲስ ዘመን ጋዜጣ ዋና አዘጋጅ

መልስ: በድረ-ገጾቻችን ላይ የአስተያየት መስጫ ክፍል ከዚህ በፊት ነበረን። ነገር ግን በአስጸያፊ አስተያየቶች ምክንያት ሆን ብለን እንዲቋረጥ አደርገነዋል። አንዳንድ አንባቢዎች ድረ-ገጾቹ ያለአግባብ ይጠቀሙባቸው ነበር። ለምሳሌ ጥላቻ ለማስፋፋት፣ ስም ለማጥፋት፣ ለስድብ ይጠቀሙበት ነበር። ይህ ተገቢ አይደለም። የድረ-ገጾቹ ጥራት ያጎድለዋል። በአሁኑ ጊዜ ግን የአንባቢዎች አስተያየቶችና ሃሳቦች በኢ.መ.ይ.ል አድራሻ ወይም በስልክ ብቻ ነው የምንቀበለውና የምንመልሰው (እ.አ.አ ነሃሴ 31/2015) ።

9. አቶ ሚካያስ ሰብሰቤ በሪፐብሊክ ጋዜጣ ከፍተኛ ኤዲተር

መልስ: የአስተያየት መስጫ ክፍል በድረ-ገጾቻችን ከዚህ በፊት እንጠቀምበት ነበር። ነገር ግን አንባቢዎች አሰነዋሪ አስተያየቶች ይሰጡበት ስለነበር ለመተው ተገደን ነበር። ከዛ በኋላ የአስተያየት መስጫ ክፍሉ መሉ ለመሉ መተው መፍትሄ ሊሆን እንደማይችል ተረዳን። ምክንያቱም ጥሩ ጥሩ አስተያየት ሊሰጡን የሚችሉ አንባቢዎች ከጨዋታ ውጭ ስላደረገ ነው። በኋላ እንደገና በድረ-ገጹ እንዲጀመር አደረግን። ካዛ አንባቢዎች በነጻ ሃሳባቸውና አስተያየታቸው እንዲሰጡን አደረግን። በአሁኑ ጊዜ በአንባቢዎች የሚጻፉ አስጸያፊ አስተያየቶች የምናስወግድበት አሰራር ዘርግተን እየሠራን እንገኛለን። የአስተያየት መስጫ ክፍሉ ለማንኛውም መስጠት ለሚፈልግ ሰው ክፍት ነው። አንባቢዎች ከሌሎች አንባቢዎች መወያየት ይችላሉ። ጥሩ አስተያየት ለሚሰጡን አንባቢዎች ዋጋ እንሰጣለን። ነገር ግን ሰማቸው ሳይጠቅሱ ሌሎች አንባቢዎችን ለመስደብ ወይም ለመወረፍ የሚሞክሩ ተጠቃሚዎች ግን አናስተናግድም። አስጸያፊ አስተያየት ቢሰጡ እንኳን ወዲያውኑ እናስወግደዋለን። በዚህ ሁኔታ ነው በአሁኑ ጊዜ እየሠራን የምንገኘው (እ.አ.አ መስከረም 03/2015)።

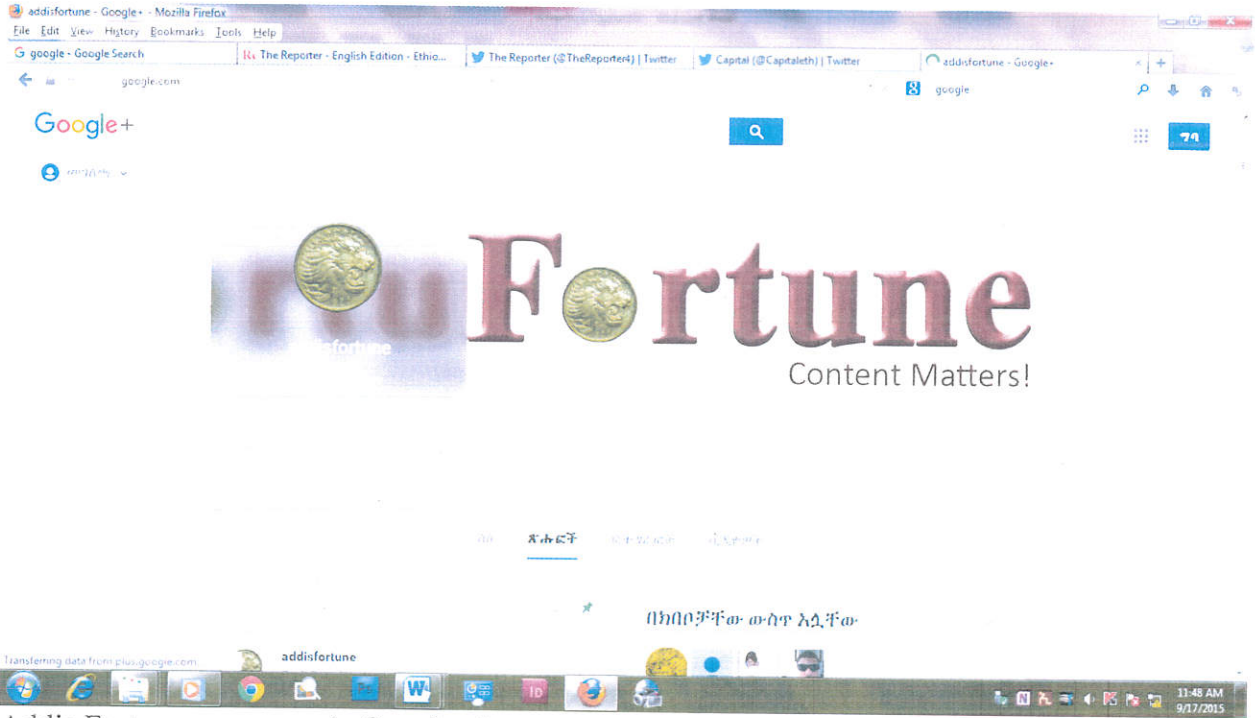
# Appendix F: Social media platforms of the newspapers



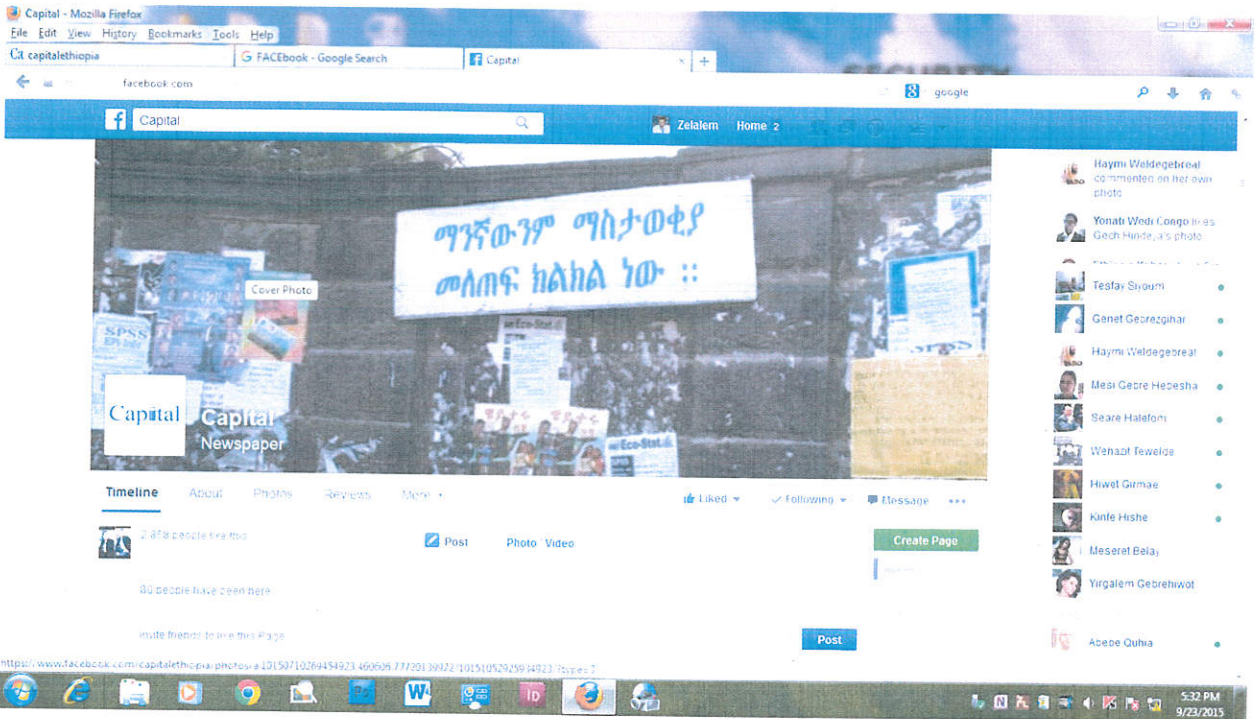
Addis Zemen's Twitter Account



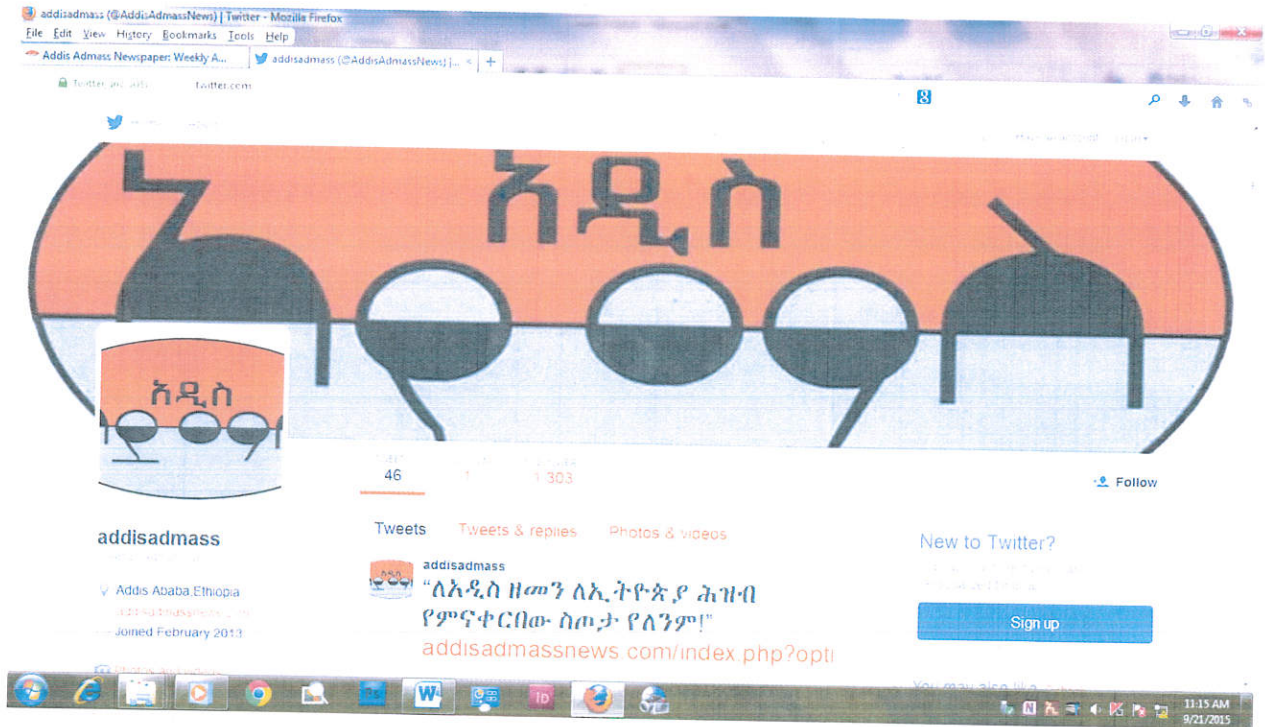
Reporter's TV streaming on you tube



Addis Fortune newspaper's Google plus account



Capital newspaper's Facebook account



Addis Admass's Twitter account

## DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that 'Interactive Features in Online Journalism: A Look at Online Editions of Ethiopian Newspapers, and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Name: Tsgabu Motbinor

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Submission: \_\_\_\_\_

Place of Submission: Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia