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Media Integration in Lesotho:

A comparative analysis of the on-line press and print press -

A case study of Mopheme (The Survivor) weekly newspaper

Thato E. Foko

Supervised by Prof. K.G. Tomaselli

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I hereby declare that this study represents original work by the author and has not been submitted to another university. Where use has been made of the work of others, this has been duly acknowledged.

Signed by:

Thato E. Foko

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LTC Lesotho Telecommunications Corporation

MON *Mopheme* On-Line Newspaper

MPN *Mopheme* Print Newspaper

PEMS Paris Evangelical Missionary Society

SOC Square One Computers

computer and telephony technologies, which are the linchpin of the Internet, have greatly influenced the way news and information are produced and disseminated. Given the increasing use of the Internet technology, the development of on-line newspapers as a new way of publishing has introduced a new, efficient and fast way of disseminating and accessing news (Khan, 1999). The Internet and related technologies offer poor countries such as Lesotho an opportunity to overcome some of its communication and economic constraints. In the late 1990s, Lesotho saw the emergence of the Internet and some newspaper institutions developed on-line versions of their print newspapers. Therefore, the aim of this research is to critically examine the impact of the Internet on the press in Lesotho. The *Mopheme* newspaper will be used as a case study for this dissertation. This study will explore reasons why newspapers are moving towards on-line publishing and how this is affecting the performance of print newspapers.

The first chapter will study the genesis and historical imperatives under which the media in Lesotho emerged and developed. This history begins with the arrival of the different missionary societies. That is important as it contributed to the development of the present forms of media.

The second chapter will develop the theoretical framework which will underpin this study. The study will be informed by the concept of spatialisation which signifies 'the process of overcoming the constraints of space and time in social life' (Lefebvre, 1979: 285). One of the main components of this study is the on-line press. Thus, the role of the Internet in overcoming the constraints of space and time, in the dissemination of information needs attention. In so doing, digitalisation and convergence as they form the basic components of the Internet will also be discussed. The policies and regulatory mechanisms controlling and guiding the Internet, as a network of networks, and its functions will form an integral component of the chapter.

In the third chapter, analysis of data collected from the interviews and surveys will be done. It is important to find out whether the Internet technology has opened up space for people to participate, especially those who did not have adequate access to information and news because of their disadvantaged positions. Chapter four will provide a conclusion and recommend the way forward.

Overview of the Media Lesotho

1.1. Press

It is difficult to map a clear picture of the media in Lesotho because of the poor archival infrastructure. There are no copyright libraries and the Lesotho Archives is an archives in name only (Switzer and Switzer, 1979: x). Consequently, there is no central place in Lesotho where one may retrieve literature. The burden of preserving Lesotho's documented past fell on the missionary societies and on the efforts of individuals both inside and outside the country (Switzer and Switzer, 1979: x). It is in this history that rich information is embedded. This history includes the arrival of the missionaries and the British colonialists in Lesotho and also the changed geographic borders – past and present – of Lesotho.

The Kingdom of Lesotho as it is known today is completely surrounded by the Republic of South Africa (Ministry of Information, 1996: 6). Its boundaries run with those of KwaZulu-Natal to the east, Eastern Cape to the south and the Free State to the north and west. While the original Lesotho consisted of the high plains of the Mohokare (Caledon) valley and adjacent areas, the modern Lesotho has lost much of the western part of the land which lies in the Free State. The encapsulation of Lesotho by South Africa has, therefore, created economic interdependence between the two countries:

The economy of Lesotho is closely tied to that of South Africa. Lesotho is dependent on South Africa for trade, finance, employment, and access to the outside world. While South Africa has, for a long time, depended on the migratory labour arrangements whereby Lesotho provided manpower for the mining industry (Bereng, 2000).

Lesotho does not produce its own daily newspapers but only produces weeklies. All the dailies read in Lesotho are owned by South African media companies (Bereng, 2000). The latest information shows that at present there are 14 newspapers published in Lesotho. These are all weeklies except for *Leselinyana La Lesotho* (Light of Lesotho) and *Leseli ka Sepolesa* (Light by the Police) which come out fortnightly (Ministry of Information, 1996: 166). *Mopheme* is one of many Lesotho owned weekly newspapers. In this study all newspapers mentioned are owned by Lesotho companies and citizens unless stated otherwise.

Printing in Lesotho started in the early 1800s, but was adversely affected when three of the mission stations where the early printing in Lesotho took place became part of the 'Conquered

1980: xii).

own as the Orange Free State. These mission stations
(Tchu), Beersheba, and Platberg (Willet & Ambrose,

For a country as isolated as Lesotho, the history of publishing is amazingly rich (Willet & Ambrose, 1980: i). As early as 1904 there was an independent, Basotho-owned printing works. For more than 140 years mission presses have served the needs of both Lesotho and surrounding countries. The Lesotho press has contributed massively to literacy development in other countries in Africa. At Morija Printing, books have been printed in more than 50 languages, spanning Central Africa to countries as distant as Cameroon and Tanzania (Willet & Ambrose, 1980: i).

For a long time, media in Lesotho meant press unless one was talking about the traditional forms of media, which were extensively used and in some cases are still used to convey news, such as the oral tradition (Bourgault, 1995:7). In the area of printing, however, the ride has not always been smooth as the problems of space and time have always been part and parcel of the development of literacy and media development in Lesotho. When the first French missionaries arrived in Lesotho they published in their own languages. Some of the first written materials about Lesotho were in French and published in France. For example, the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society (PEMS) published *Journal des Missions Evangeliques* and the Roman Catholic missionaries published a periodical called *Missions* in France (Willet & Ambrose, 1980: xiv).

The history of press in Lesotho, thus, has its roots in the institution of the church even though there were individuals who have contributed significantly to its development and growth. It is, therefore, necessary to look at the role different religious denominations and individuals played in the growth of press in Lesotho.

The study about the media in Lesotho has to be examined bearing in mind the historical background of both the press and the country as a whole. The genesis of the print media is rooted in the historic arrival and settlement in Lesotho of religious missionaries of different denominations. The purpose and the objective of different Christian denominations which were led by Frenchmen were similar: to educate and to civilise the Basotho in accordance with the Christian Western traditions (Bereng, 2000). The missionaries' efforts were carried out within the spirit of competition or struggle for the hearts and souls of the indigenous population (Bereng, 2000).

ch Press

back to 1833 when the first French missionaries of the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society (PEMS) ô now Lesotho Evangelical Church ô arrived in Lesotho (Lejakane, 1997: 114). From 1834 a lot of PEMS publications appeared in French, especially in a journal called *Journal des Missions Evangeliques* (Willet & Ambrose, 1980: xiv). In 1835 the first printing press in Lesotho was set up at a mission in Beersheba, part of Free State today, by some members of the PEMS (Willet & Ambrose, 1980: xx). However, as part of their efforts to intensify dissemination of information pertaining to their missionary activities PEMS established a Sesotho newspaper *Leselinyana la Lesotho* in 1863 in Morija, Lesotho (Lejakane, 1997: 114). This newspaper was one of the first ever to appear in an African language, and apart from short interruptions mainly due to wars, it has continued until the present day (Willet & Ambrose, 1980: xxv). *Leselinyana* is, therefore, the oldest continuously read newspapers by Sesotho speakers (Switzer and Switzer, 1979: 2). *Umshumayeli Wendaba* (Publisher of the News), a Xhosa language newspaper published between July 1837 and April 1841, is generally regarded as the first serial publication aimed at a black audience in Southern Africa (Switzer and Switzer, 1979: 2). Morija Printing, the home of the *Leselinyana La Lesotho*, was also growing and by the 1920s and 1930s, Morija began to undertake specialist printing orders for other vernacular languages. For example, many Sesotho language novels published by Afrikaans Pers Boekhandel would be printed in Morija, Lesotho (Willet & Ambrose, 1980: xxx).

1.1.2. Roman Catholic Church Press

In 1862 a group of Roman Catholic missionaries arrived in Lesotho. They immediately established their first periodical called *Missions* which was published in France. In 1870 the Catholic missionaries began their press which was doing only small jobs while the bulk of their publications were printed at the Natal Mercury in Durban, South Africa (Willet and Ambrose, 1980: xxvii). It was not until 1933, however, that they set up in Mazenod, Lesotho the second major press institution in Lesotho called the Mazenod Printing Works. In January of the same year *Moeletsi oa Basotho* (Advisor of Basotho), a weekly newspaper, was first published (Willet & Ambrose, 1980: xxxi). It started as a bilingual paper publishing in both Sesotho and English (MISER Consulting, 1995: 2). *Moeletsi oa Basotho* is still the most commonly read local newspaper in Lesotho with a print run of 20,000 copies (Ministry of Information, 1996: 165). This is also evident in the small survey carried out among the students from Lesotho studying at the University of Natal, in Durban as will be seen in chapter three.

ting enterprise was established in Mafeteng and printed its first newspaper *Naledi ea Lesotho* (The Star of Basutoland), in 1904. In 1911 and 1927 *Mochochonono* and *Basutoland News* (an English language newspaper) respectively joined *Naledi* (Willet & Ambrose, 1980: xxxi). *Mochochonono* was to be a highly individualised, non-corporate, elite press for literate blacks drawn from the rural areas of Southern Africa (Switzer and Switzer, 1979: 4). By the middle of the 1930s there was a choice in Lesotho of at least five weekly newspapers.

1.1.4. Government Press

In 1960, six years before Lesotho gained its independence from England, the Government Printers was established (Willet & Ambrose, 1980: xxxiii). Before 1960, the Lesotho official printing was done on behalf of Government by Morija, Mazenod, or most frequently by one of a number of presses in Southern Africa, but because there was no guarantee of security and delivery dates were frequently not honoured the Government decided to start its own printing press (Willet & Ambrose, 1980: xxxiii). It was only in 1963 when the Lesotho Information Service (LIS) was founded. Its aim was to provide news and information to the Lesotho public. In the early stages LIS was little more than an extension of the Central Office of Information in London. LIS established the first government owned newspaper called the *Basutoland Times* which began as a daily news sheet and after independence in 1966, it was renamed *Lesotho Times* and was published as a weekly by the new Department of Information (Ministry of Information, 1996: 163). There were no editorials in this newspaper which had quite a generous supply of foreign items such as 'Letter from Britain' and 'Around Africa' (Kasoma, 1992: 82). This newspaper was replaced in 1968 by two other publications *Koena and Molia* which were published in English and Sesotho respectively (Lejakane, 1997: 115). In 1974 the Department of Information launched a weekly newspaper called *Mochochonono* which replaced the *Lesotho Times*. *Koena* was replaced in 1977 by the *Lesotho Weekly* (Ministry of Information, 1996: 163). These newspapers, however, lasted for only a few years. It was only in 1986 and 1987 when the Department of Information re-established the government owned Sesotho and English newspapers, *Lentsoe la Basotho* and *Lesotho Today* respectively. Unlike the first few government newspapers these two are still publishing.

One of the most notable contributions of the press in Lesotho is its role in the development of the nation state and the national language. Rare among the countries of Africa, Lesotho possesses a single national language, Sesotho and although both English and Sesotho are official languages, it is in the vernacular that the writers of Lesotho have developed extensive literature (Willet & Ambrose, 1980: XI).

ly owned newspapers in Lesotho, all of them based in Maseru. Between 1990 and 1994 eight newspapers were founded (**Table 1 on page 48**). In Lesotho today, there are at least 14 newspapers, however, none of them are dailies.

A noticeable shift has taken place in the African media in the 1990s, particularly in the press. Whereas broadcasting is still largely under government control, print journalism has been able to respond rapidly to political changes in Africa (Bourgault, 1995:206). However, in Lesotho the story is different. In Lesotho, the second half of the 1990s saw a shift from state monopolisation to the opening of the airwaves. The media landscape realised an establishment of one local television station, the Multi-Choice pay-channels and four privately owned radio stations. The press in Lesotho has been mainly an arena for private institutions and individuals, while radio belonged to the government until the end of 1998. A good summary of the history of Lesotho media is tabulated by Bereng (2000) who asserts that in regard to print media, a policy of -free for allø seems to have existed, and pluralism in publishing was the order of the system, the story of the electronic media is different since they survived under stringent government controls.

1.2. The Electronic Media

1.2.1. Radio

Radio was introduced to Africa during the colonial period and served initially to provide links to expatriates to the metropolises (Bourgault 1995: 69). For example, in 1927, the British East Africa Company began a BBC relay service for settlers, broadcasting from Nairobi, Kenya. In Lesotho, the broadcasting service was only established in 1964 and was extended to include a daily news bulletin in English and Sesotho (Ministry of Information, 1996: 163). So for over 25 years the government owned the one and only radio station in the country, *Radio Lesotho*. This state of affairs was brought about by the colonial legacy (Bereng, 2000). For example, *Proclamation 5 of 1927* restrained ownership and operations of radio in Lesotho by stating that no person shall be employed as an operator at a radio transmitting station within Basutoland unless he was a British subject. Over and above this, it authorised the postmaster general of the Union of South Africa to issue broadcasting licences in the territory of Basutoland, thus, subjugating the political existence of Lesotho to that of the Union (Bereng 2000). Thus, the control was not only limited to the provision of licences but also identified persons who qualified to operate radios within the Basutoland.

Just like the press, radio broadcasting in Lesotho seems to have had humble beginnings whereby the first studio was housed in a prefabricated building of the Catholic Schools

again the Church had the resources and it put them at its disposal. In this case the Catholic Church had a 100-watt Short wave transmitter which they allowed the national radio station to use. The Lesotho government, however, completely monopolised the airwaves. By 1968 Radio Lesotho was only broadcasting for five hours a day (Kasoma, 1992: 58).

In 1968 when the Lesotho government realised the power of the radio, there arose an urgent need to increase the number of listening hours per day (Kasoma, 1992: 58). The government started making plans to start a commercial radio station. But this could only succeed if South African companies were allowed to advertise consumer products on Radio Lesotho because of the paucity of Lesotho's own consumer products. Consequently, the Lesotho government requested the South Africa government to allow South African companies to advertise in Lesotho. The offer was turned down. The South African government instead pledged technical assistance to improving and expanding the existing radio service. This offer was accepted and co-operation was established between the two governments. By 1971 the Radio Lesotho had become a full-fledged broadcasting house and in 1988 it started broadcasting for 24 hours a day (Kasoma, 1992:58-59).

Although before 1998 Lesotho had only one local radio station, listeners still had access to other foreign stations. Many people in Lesotho listened to a good number of South African Broadcasting Corporation's (SABC) radio channels such as the Radio Metro, Lesedi Stereo (originally Radio Sesotho), Radio Mmabatho and Radio Bop and also the BBC (Lejakane, 1997: 116). Lejakane indicates that some of these stations were competing highly with Radio Lesotho. The overall preference for radio stations received in Lesotho favoured Radio Lesotho with 66 percent followed by Lesedi Stereo of SABC with 31 percent (Lejakane, 1997: 116).

Since 1998, five new radio stations, including Khotso FM introduced in July 2000, were given licence to broadcast. Bereng who was writing before the establishment of Khotso FM stated that of the four, two have clear independent editorial policies and caused state authorities to question the wisdom of allowing many voices on the air (Bereng, 2000). The new stations are Moafrika Radio, The Roman Catholic Radio, Joy Radio, People's Choice Radio and Khotso FM. With the exception of the Roman Catholic Radio and Khotso FM which belong to the Catholic Church and the National University of Lesotho, respectively, the rest are privately owned.

1.2.2. Television

The history of television in Lesotho paints a different picture from that of radio. The medium of television in Sub-Saharan Africa tends to be an elite and an urban phenomenon (Bourgault,

ver, television watching in Lesotho is as old as in South
he SABC television into Lesotho since the beginnings of
the SABC television broadcasting in 1976. However, 1988 saw the emergence of the first
locally owned television station. Lesotho Television (LTV) came into operation because of a
partnership initiative between the Lesotho government and a South African commercial
television company. The Ministry of Information points out:

*The service is a joint venture between the Lesotho National Broadcasting Service
and M-Net (Electronic Media Network), a South African subscription television
service which broadcasts to several countries in Africa. The Lesotho Television
Service began transmission to most areas of the country's lowlands in 1988
(1996: 163).*

LTV broadcasts for one hour each day from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. (Lejakane, 1997: 117).
The media landscape of Lesotho saw the birth of a Christian religious *Trinity Broadcasting
Network* television station in 1999. This is a privately owned station which broadcasts for six
hours every day. Television is the least patronised communication medium in Lesotho with the
estimates from the Department of Information showing that there were about 9,000 television
sets in Lesotho in 1997. Only 16 percent of the total sample watch television compared to 71
percent who listen to radio and 32 percent who read newspapers/magazines (Lejakane, 1997:
117).

1.3. Media regulations and policies in Lesotho

In Lesotho there is no policy that regulates the media except a draft media policy which was
completed in 1997 and shelved since then. When Lesotho attained independence in 1966 the
government found in place ða system that allowed plurality of voices through the print media,
controlled primarily through registration with the Law office. This was practically a loose
restrictionö (Bereng, 2000). Therefore, ðThe freedom to publish newspapers seems to have
been won by missionaries through a long tradition of book publishing, which was neither
questioned by the colonial government nor offended local authoritiesö (Bereng, 2000).

Even though there has never been any policy regulating the media in Lesotho there has been
little interference from the government. Kasoma maintains that the press is relatively free in
Lesotho and criticism against the government is common:

*If freedom of the press means 'getting away with murder' then the press in
Lesotho can be regarded as free. The church-owned newspapers, particularly the
Catholic weekly Moeletsi oa Basotho, do 'get away with murder: in some of their
hair-raising revelations and criticisms of the administration'. But there have also
been occasions when the Government has taken exception to the reports and
cracked its whip (Kasoma, 1992: 33).*

Following in the southern African region, member countries to Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) have been attempting to develop their own media policies. Lesotho is no exception. The year 1997 saw the completion of the draft media policy for Lesotho. Although the document is not yet quotable according to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting because it is still in a draft stage, Lejakane (1997: 7) nevertheless, highlighted a few of its aspects. The document indicates that the role of media is to:

- *Contribute to the cultural development of the country;*
- *Consolidate and sustain a democratic system;*
- *Assist in the political and economic empowerment of citizens;*
- *Contribute to the development and upgrading of people's skills and knowledge in a lifelong learning process;*
- *Contribute to nation building and the country's social and economic development;*
- *Close the gap between those sectors in society who are already 'information rich' and those who are 'information poor; and*
- *Communicate Lesotho's aspirations, opinions and visions at the international level (Lesotho Media Policy 1997 in Lejakane 1997: 5).*

1.4. Conclusion

The media in Lesotho have a long history. Religious churches, together with the local people have played significant roles in the development and furtherance of the media institution and practice in Lesotho. In Lesotho, just like any where on the continent, as stated by Bourgault (1995: 42), broadcasting has always been chiefly state-controlled, heavily-subsidised, and urban-based, usually emanating from capital cities. The heavy control of the electronic media by the state will be visited in the next chapters. Having said this, the new medium of the Internet and the concept of spatialisation and their role in the dissemination of information will now be examined.

Theoretical Framework

2.0. Introduction

More than a century after the first newspaper was established in Lesotho, most papers are still concentrated in the urban areas. Both the lack of proper channels for their distribution in the rural areas and in some cases the language used hinders their access. Given the increasing use of Internet technology globally, the development of on-line newspapers as a new way of publishing has introduced a new, efficient, and fast way of disseminating and accessing news (Khan, 1999). It is, therefore, the intention of this study to establish the impact of Internet and related technologies to the print media by doing a comparative analysis of the on-line press vis-à-vis the print press in Lesotho.

In this chapter attention will be placed on the concept of spatialisation and the role it plays in the dissemination of information. The study will investigate the strengths, weaknesses and the general impact of on-line newspapers on the print newspaper in trying to overcome the spatial constraints of space and time. Here consideration will also be on how distribution and access of print newspapers have been affected by the emergence of the on-line newspapers.

2.1. Background of on-line newspapers in Lesotho

In this chapter reference will be made to some of the material and data I collected in my interviews with different people. The reason being that there is no documented record about the on-line press in Lesotho. In this paper, I will use -on-lineø when talking about newspapers and use -Internetø when talking in general terms¹.

In the year 2000 there were only two Lesotho on-line newspapers and both owned by Lesotho companies. These are *The Public Eye* and *Mopheme on-line newspaper* (MON). The *Public Eye* was established at the beginning of 2000. MON was the first newspaper to go on-line in 1995 for a short trial period (personal interview, Manager of *Mopheme*, 2000).

¹ It is worth noting that in this study the two words -on-lineø and -Internetø are sometimes used interchangeably depending on who is talking. However, I will try to stick to -on-lineø when talking about newspapers and -Internetø when talking in general terms.

half after the first newspaper was established there are participating in the press ownership and control. All 14 newspapers, 12 weeklies and 2 which come out fortnightly, are locally owned. Their total circulation is less than 50,000 copies per week (**Table 1 on page 48**). This raises serious questions of who has access to news and information, question which will be answered in the next chapter.

On the issue of regulation of the media Bereng (2000) states that press in Lesotho has been a free-for-all situation, likewise the on-line press in Lesotho is also not regulated. With this background in mind, the discussions will centre on the concept of spatialisation, technological advancements leading to the Internet and the Internet as they all form the backbone of this research.

2.2. Internet and Spatialisation

Recent trends in media and communication have included the growing concentration of media ownership, technological convergence between telecommunications and broadcasting and the elevation of information as a fundamental constituent of economic development (Baker & Minnie, 2000). The effect of the Internet on people's lives cannot properly be assessed in terms of on-line experience and content only. In a fundamental way, however, the use of the Internet is to create new forms of action and interaction, and to reorder the way in which individuals interpret and respond to the social world (Slevin, 2000: 55). This chapter will discuss how these new forms of action and interaction affect the print newspaper. The starting point is the digitalisation and convergence of technologies because the Internet is one of their products.

2.2. Digitalisation and convergence of technologies

The most widely noted potential consequence for the media institution is the convergence between all existing media forms in terms of their organisation, distribution, reception and regulation (McQuail, 2000: 118). There is a general agreement that convergence occurs at the technological level (European Commission, 1997). Digital technology allows both traditional and new communication services - whether voice, data, sound or pictures - to be provided over many different networks. Therefore, the digital technology underpins convergence. For example, the Internet incorporates radio, film, television and distributes them through push technology (Poster, 1999: 15). For example, by a push of a button or a click of a mouse one can listen, watch or read information from the Internet.

The introduction of digital technology changed the way different media sectors operated. Most countries around the world are affected by the application of digital technologies at different pace and with different scope. Digitalisation means that technologies for the processing and

to use the same language (Hamelink, 1996). Print, geography, broadcasting, satellites, and computer technologies, which developed fairly independently, are rapidly merging into a digital stream of zeros and ones in the global communication network (Tehrani, 1999: 59). In one of the papers presented in a conference at the University of Turku, Immaculada Higuera (2000) argues:

From a historical perspective these sectors had developed separately. Each of them had their own market goals, with different technical needs and requisites. Their respective social and political functions were different, too. Accordingly, the regulation for each of them was also different.

For example, now in Lesotho, telecommunications and broadcasting are regulated under *Lesotho Telecommunication Authority Act of 2000* because of digitalisation. Thus, the Internet became a reality because of the convergence of different technologies.

2.3. Internet

2.3.1. Definitions and Origins

The Internet was born out of an experimental collaboration of the US Defence Department and US academia (Vaknin, 1999 and Mowlana, 1997: 102). It grew exponentially as users all over the world discovered the advantages of linking their computers together in order to share software, exchange electronic mail, and discuss complicated scientific problems (Mowlana, 1997: 102, European Commission, 1997). Today, many forces promoting the Internet as a global communications network are dominated by individuals and organisations in rich countries (Slevin, 2000: 198). It is a fast-growing transnational network that connects millions of computer hosts in a global network of networks (Tehrani, 1999: 47). The European Commission maintains that:

The Internet is a network of networks interconnected on an open basis using Internet Protocol (IP), which enables the Internet to route and transport all the elements of a multimedia service such as text, image, motion video and sound. The IP usually runs over transmission links leased from telecommunication operator (1997).

Therefore, an important aspect of the Internet is its reliance on the telephone. Without telephones, the less developed countries and regions of the world would not be able to log onto the global electronic superhighways (Tehrani, 1999: 49-50). The next chapter touches on the constraints the poor telephone infrastructure has on the Internet in Lesotho.

been essentially user-driven, with user-owned equipment generate a substantial part of the content (European Commission, 1997). Many enthusiasts consider the Internet as an entirely new way for people to interact (Mowlana, 1997: 102, Slevin, 2000: 55). For example, the Internet is a vehicle for the delivery of services to users such as the emergence of a fast-growing electronic-commerce economy.

The Internet as a network is fundamentally and profoundly anti-spatial (Vaknin, 1999). This is the first medium in history which does not require the simultaneous presence of people in time-space in order to facilitate the transfer of information. For example:

Television requires the existence of studio technicians, narrators and others in the transmitting side - and the availability of a viewer in the receiving side. The telephone is dependent on the existence of two or more parties simultaneously. The answering machine and the video cassette recorder both accumulate information sent by a transmitter - and release it to a receiver in a different space and time. But they are discrete, their storage volume is limited and they do not allow for interaction with the transmitter (Vaknin, 1999).

However, a note of discontent with the Internet has sounded and critics have focused on some of its shortcomings and according to Mowlana (1997: 103) these are:

(1) Control Over Content

In theory, anyone can post or upload information onto the Internet while in reality most databases important to people's daily lives are controlled by governments, corporations and academic institutions.

(2) Disenfranchisement

Theoretically the Internet is supposedly available to anyone with a modem and the will to use it, but the reality gives a different picture of lack of universality of access. The profile of users is skewed by race, gender, income, and age and access is restricted by the cost of technology and the steep learning curve for computer neophytes (Mowlana, 1997: 104). Therefore, it is not accessible to those who lack the basic hardware and software concepts and computer appreciation. Eighty percent of all users are computer-literate, middle-class males under the age of 40 (Vaknin, 1999). Whether this applies in Lesotho is subject to discussion as it will be seen in the next chapter.

The question of access to the Internet is vital to this study. In Lesotho there are many factors which affect access. For example, Lesotho with the population of 2.1 million (Lesotho Tourist Board, 2000: 4) is served by 20,000 fixed telephones (*Business Report*, October 26 200) and



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of the Internet and other related telephone based

(3) Social Implications

Since the invention of the telegraph and telephone in the nineteenth century, more and more discourse has taken place through impersonal electronic intermediaries rather than through natural face-to-face communication (Mowlana, 1997: 103). Despite these changes, however, personal communication still remains paramount, people still need to interact. Internet users are united in the fine art of chatting, gossiping, exchanging information, and collaborating in a variety of projects from scientific research to lifestyle preferences, dating, financial transactions, and social movements (Tehrani, 1999: 47).

2.3.2. Internet and the Media Institution

Media institutions have gradually developed around the key activities of publication and wide dissemination of information and culture. Media institutions are internally segmented according to type of technology: print, film, television and radio (McQuail, 2000: 15). However, the Internet is different from other media because it incorporates and distributes them through push technology (Poster, 1999: 15). Push Technology is the notion that useful information can be delivered automatically ("pushed") to you so you don't have to pro-actively search for ("pull") useful information (Gary, 1997).

It is vital to compare the Internet to other media institutions and McQuail (2000: 118) maintains that:

- (i) The Internet is not only or even mainly concerned with the production and distribution of messages. It is at least equally concerned with processing, exchange and storage of information.
- (ii) The Internet is as much an institution of private as well as of public communication.
- (iii) The operation is not typically professional or bureaucratically organised in the same degree as mass media.

These differences are important because they show that the new media correspond with mass media primarily in being widely diffused, in principle available to all for communication and for free. The Internet, however, transgresses the limits of the print and broadcasting models by:

- (i) enabling many-to-many conversations; (ii) enabling the simultaneous reception, alteration and redistribution of cultural objects; (iii) dislocating communicative action from the posts of the nation, from the territorialised spatial relations of modernity; (iv) providing instantaneous global contact; and (v)*



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...rn subject into a machine apparatus that is

Therefore, what is new about the Internet is the unlimited range of content, the scope of audience reach and the global nature of communication. The Internet is an extension of the old media not their replacement (Livingstone, 1999: 65). For example, in Lesotho the print newspapers, radio and television have a small audience reach (**Tables 1, 2 and 3 on pages 48-50**). Out of six radio stations, four do not broadcast beyond Maseru and the adjacent South African border town of Ladybrand. However, Lesotho on-line newspapers, such as *The Public Eye* and *Mopheme* can be accessed from anywhere in the world.

2.3. 3. The Internet vis-à-vis Mass Communication

When conceptualising the Internet, cognisance needs to be taken of the complexities involved in defining it, particularly, as a mass medium. Many people make the mistake of looking only at the applicability of established theories and methodologies of mass communication without critically examining the definition of the mass communication and assessing its application to the Internet (Slevin, 2000: 73). Therefore, both the Internet and mass communication need to be compared. Four characteristics of mass communication which shall be employed to reflect on the nature of the Internet are identified by Slevin (2000: 73-76):

1. The *institutionalised production and diffusion* of symbolic goods. Mass communication generally involves large-scale institutions concerned with the production and diffusion of symbolic goods. Large broadcasting institutions such as the BBC, CNN, MTV and M-Net would fall into this category. These institutions require expensive equipment, studios and expertise. By contrast, the Internet is a relatively open communication system. It does not require large scale expertise for the production of content.
2. The *instituted break* between production and reception. This deals with the dichotomy that exists between sender and receiver. Mass communication generally involves the one-way flow of information. Producers are never certain how their information will be received. The Internet, on the other hand, blurs the conventional producer/receiver dichotomy. Information flows two ways, and Internet users can equally well be producers of information as receivers of it.
3. The *extension of availability* in time-space. Mass communication generally involves a high degree of time-space distancing in transmission, the extension of the availability of information in time-space also depends on the institutional arrangements involved. Organisations can now store masses of information on their websites and achieve around the clock availability, establishing communicative relationships with interested users on a global scale even before they set foot outside their homes.

forms. This shows that the products of mass communication are not finite, or at least a large range of potential recipients, although with the new kinds of satellite and cable technology, in television for example is steadily shifting away from traditional forms of public service broadcasting produced for a plurality of recipients and moving towards restricted ranges of specialised audiences. On the other hand the Internet is radically transforming the nature of the public circulation of symbolic forms. Moreover, the Internet creates new opportunities for dialogic spaces (Slevin, 2000: 76).

From this discussion it is clear that the Internet brings a new dimension to the larger field of mass communication. The following section deals with the concept of spatialisation.

2.4. Spatialisation

The concept of spatialisation has been developed in the later works of the French theorist of every-day life, Henri Lefebvre. To Lefebvre spatialisation indicates the process of overcoming the constraints of space and time in social life. 'We have passed from the production of things in space to the production of space itself' (Lefebvre, 1979: 285). This passage from production *in* space to production *of* space occurred because of the growth of productive forces themselves and of the direct intervention of knowledge in material production. Even though Lefebvre did not pay special interest in communicational processes he conceptualised space 'as permeated with social relations' (1979: 286). Lefebvre saw spatialisation as not only supported by social relations, but also as 'producing and produced by social relations' (Mosco, 1996: 172).

There has been a general interest by social scientists in the concept of spatialisation and different definitions ensued. Many people, including Mosco (1996: 172), take Henri Lefebvre as their source of inspiration. In *Grundrisse* (1973) Marx talks about the tendency of capitalism to 'annihilate space with time'. This refers to the growing power of capital to use and improve on the means of transportation and communication, to shrink the time it takes to move goods, people and messages over space, thereby decreasing the significance of spatial distance as a constraint on the expansion of capital (Mosco, 1996: 172). However, Lash and Urry amend the Marxian view by disagreeing that capital 'annihilates' but they rather place the emphasis on transformation and say 'it transforms space by restructuring the spatial relationships among people, goods, and messages and, in the process, transforms itself' (1987:85).

significance of physical space relative to the spaces of communication is placed at the centre of the spatialisation process, because of the dynamic balance between differentiation and reintegration:

The new industrial space and the new service economy organise their operations around the dynamics of their information-generating units, while connecting their different functions to disparate spaces assigned to each task to be performed; the overall process is then reintegrated through communication systems (Castells, 1989:348).

The use of media and how it shapes the relations of time and space by accelerating the rise of specific forms of political and social organisation also received some interest from other scholars such as Harold Innis (1972). Again, some writers stress 'time-space distancing' (Giddens, 1990) while others emphasise 'time-space compression' (Harvey, 1989).

Another group of scholars led by Thompson focuses spatialisation in terms of wealth accumulation and the resulting power. There is no doubt that the organisation of economic activity and concentrations of economic power have played a crucial role in the process of globalisation (Thompson, 1995: 151). According to these people all forms of power – economic, political, coercive and symbolic – have both contributed to and have been affected by this process. Mosco asserts that:

The political economy of communication has specifically addressed spatialisation chiefly in terms of the institutional extension of corporate power in the communication industry. This is manifested in the sheer growth in the size of media firms, measured by assets, revenues, profit, employees, and share value (1996: 175).

From these writings it is evident that spatialisation research has taken up the significance of geographic space and growth of organisations. With regard to the growth of media organisations, Mosco gives prominence to media concentration by focusing on vertical and horizontal concentration as discussed below.

2.4.1. Media Concentration

In its practical application, the concept of spatialisation is mainly used to capture the changing structure of the communication industries in terms of their specific form of integration. Integration is measured along the fundamental spatial variables of horizontal and vertical (Mosco, 1996: 175). The buying of 70 percent of Lesotho Telecommunications Corporation by Eskom Enterprises, a division of electricity utility Eskom, is a good example of horizontal concentration.

when a firm in one line of media buys a major interest in related to the original business, or when it takes a major stake in a company entirely outside of the media. Horizontal concentration also takes place when a media firm buys a company entirely outside the media business or when a media firm is swallowed up by a non-media business (Mosco, 1996: 175-176). This means cross media ownership. For example, a newspaper company diversifying its interests by buying a non-media company such as a car rental company or a radio station. The result of such a strategy is conglomeration of ownership.

Vertical integration describes the concentration of firms within a line of business that extends a company's control over the process of production and depending on its ability to manage the flows among stages in production, a company can gain a competitive advantage from the opportunities that vertical integration offers to rationalise its operations (Mosco, 1996: 176). For example, a newspaper company buying a paper mill thereby expanding the company down the production process. These forms of integration are, therefore, essentially means of controlling uncertainties that arise when a company has to rely on external markets to complete the circuit of production.

The economy of Lesotho, for instance in 1998, with the Gross Domestic Product of USD\$882 million compared to USD\$103,623.69 millions of South Africa (SADC, 1999) is so small that there is no visible interest from foreign companies to invest in the print media. There are no foreign owned newspapers in Lesotho. Therefore, the definition of spatialisation will be used broadly as restricting the scope of the study to one definition could confine the study. Now the discussion will be on the impact and effects of the Internet on the concept of spatialisation.

2.4.2. Impact of Internet on Spatialisation

The emergence of the Internet has reduced the time it used to take to physically move information from one location to another over the geographic space. For example, as it will be seen in the next chapter, the time it takes for the people of Mokhotlong in Lesotho to receive an article of *Mopheme* takes anything between a week and a month depending on the time the person who distributes the paper will come to collect it from Maseru (manager *Mopheme*, personal interview, 2000). But the Internet provides an instant access to the news and information.

Some writers believe that media technology is fundamental to the concept of spatialisation. For example:

*in understanding science and technology proceeds
space exist independently in an unshakeable frame
and place would occur. This belief makes it
impossible to understand how different spaces and different times may be
produced inside the networks built to mobilise, cumulate and recombine the world
(Latour, 1987: 288; Graham, 1996: 55).*

The above quotation is a prelude to the relationships between the Internet and spatialisation. Today, different media are accessible because of their relative or absolute locations (Brunn & Leinbch, 1991: xvii). For example, *Mopheme*, in terms of relative location is accessible through its on-line version. However, in terms of its absolute location, it is accessible through its hard copy. They each have their problems of accessibility as one is dependent on computer knowledge and the other on the appropriate physical means of distribution. The world wide web (WWW) allows distant events to affect us more directly than ever before (Slevin, 2000: 199). For example, events in Lesotho affect Basotho living abroad in the same way as they affect those living in Lesotho because of the instant access to on-line newspapers.

The convergence of technologies has made the Internet a success and the Internet has made the concept of the 'global village' (McLuhan, 1962) a reality. The concept of the 'global village' means that communication technologies, such as the Internet, eradicate the physical distance between disparate people, creating an electronic meeting place, and making real time communication between distant parties possible (Stevenson, 1995: 119). The global village has swept aside the hierarchical, uniform and individualising culture of print production and replaced it with a more tactile culture of simultaneous happenings. For example, print culture promotes individualism inasmuch as it implies a privatised mode of reception. 'If an individual wishes to read a book s/he would actively have to seek it out' (McLuhan and Fiore, 1967: 16).

The reconstruction of media into electronic forms of communication has had implications for the reworking of space and time. The elimination of space and time has not been brought by the advent of the Internet only but it is tied to technological advances in mass communications. The news agencies still gather the news items from different sources in different spatial zones and electronically send them to different print and electronic newspapers in different parts of the world (Stevenson, 1995: 121). The speeding up and globalisation of news-gathering practices mean that temporality and distance will become progressively unimportant in governing newspaper content (McLuhan, 1994: 216). The collage-like layout of the modern newspaper contain a number of items that have been transmitted from contexts far removed from those who either read or produce the newspaper. For example, although in each copy of *Mopheme* the bulk of the news is local but frequently there are a few articles of international news bulletins. However, the international news items do not appear in the *Mopheme* on-line

has assisted in the globalising of different media more

2.4.3. Spatialisation vis-à-vis Mass Communication

One of the salient features of communication in the modern world is that it takes place on a scale that is increasingly global (Thompson, 1995: 149). Messages are transmitted across large distances with relative ease, so that individuals have access to information and communication which originate from distant sources:

... with the uncoupling of space and time brought about by electronic media, the access to messages stemming from spatially remote sources can be instantaneous. Distance has been eclipsed by proliferating networks of electronic communication. Individuals can interact with one another, or can act within frameworks of mediated quasi-interaction, even though they are situated, in terms of their day-to-day lives, in different parts of the world (Thompson, 1995: 149).

Reordering of space and time is, therefore, crucial to the process of globalisation. Globalisation is brought about by the development of the media and is part of a broader set of processes which have transformed and are still transforming the modern world (Thompson, 1995: 149). The globalisation of media and telecommunications industries and markets has depended on specific institutional conditions. Digitalisation, consolidation, deregulation, and globalisation are identified as four key trends in world communications (Hamelink, 1994). The globalisation of communication has also been a structured and uneven process which has drawn some parts of the world into networks of global communication more quickly than other parts (Thompson, 1995: 159). The use of Internet technology transforms the complex relationships between local activities and interaction across distance (Slevin, 2000: 198). For example, universal access is a reality, and the most distant user could access the system as easily as a New York tycoon or a Harvard researcher (Mowlana, 1997: 102). In the case of Lesotho, however, this may not apply as the majority of people do not have access to the Internet technology and to the basic print newspapers. For example, the 14 national newspapers (**Table 1 on page 48**) have the total circulation number of copies of less than 50,000 per week for a population of over two million. In the next chapter it will be shown that population of Internet subscribers is also small.

The Internet plays a significant role in the destruction of boundaries of the separate media sectors, which were originally regulated separately (McQuail, 2000: 137). This raises problems of regulation which will now be discussed.

Internet Regulations

Internet access and content is clearly proving very difficult for nation-states (Slevin, 2000: 222). In the realm of technology and scientific discoveries, it is now clear that developments in communication technology such as satellites, computers and video, during the last three decades, have far exceeded the ability of both policy makers and the academic community to deal effectively with such innovations (Mowlana, 1997: 170). The ability of the Internet to cross national boundaries is causing problems of regulation and national governments are finding it difficult to establish policies which will guide this medium. This has led to a situation whereby the traditional boundaries and sovereignties of nations are undermined by the political global communication (Tehrani, 1999: 60).

Opinions on how the Internet should best be regulated have long been divided. Some people argue that the Internet is ungovernable and that the very idea of effective state policy is defunct (Slevin, 2000: 214). The Internet has the most unusual attributes in the history of media as it has no central structure or organisation. It is hardware and software dependent. It (almost) cannot be subjected to legislation or to regulation (Vaknin, 1999). It is from these attributes that the freedom of the Internet emerged.

There are other groups, nevertheless, which believe that the Internet has to be somewhat regulated. There are uncertainties about how states can best regulate the Internet in the interests of their citizens. They believe that the situation might be improved if they could first try to stipulate what kind of conditions government policy-makers must seek to create (Slevin, 217: 217). Slevin gives the following examples: (1) government policy-makers must secure conditions that involve the deconcentration of resources. This means curtailing the excessive power of large conglomerates and other powerful constituencies in such a way that diversity and pluralism are not undermined by the concentration of economic and symbolic power (Slevin, 217: 217). (2) Government policy must secure conditions that involve a clear separation of media institutions from the exercise of state power (Slevin, 217: 217). This need to separate institutions of mass communication from the exercise of state power involves the creation of institutional frameworks within which, for example, the press, radio, and television broadcasting organisations can operate independently (Slevin, 217: 218).

In Lesotho, it will be difficult to try to develop a legislation to govern the Internet because of lack of financial resources. The problem of legislation and regulation of the Internet is not unique to Lesotho only. Within the international arena it can be illustrated by the recent cases of paedophilic pornography pursued by the French and the British governments. In this case police in 12 countries arrested around 100 people suspected of running an Internet paedophile ring known as the "Wonderland Club" (BBC, February 02, 1998). In Lesotho, therefore, the

t sufficient. Even in terms of developing websites the leaving the country for better paying jobs in South Africa. For example, the person who used to design websites for LEO left for Cape Town. Again, like the rest of the continent, there are other priorities the government is grappling with such as the fight against HIV/AIDS epidemic and poverty in general.

2.6. Conclusion

Media technologies play a crucial part in ensuring that time taken between the communicator and the receiver of the information over any space is negligible. It has been demonstrated above that the interactive nature of the Internet has collapsed both the time and space in the social, economic and political life of both the rich and the poor nations. The Internet has an unlimited range of content and a wide scope of audience reach. it has also enhanced the global nature of communication. Therefore, communication is fundamental to the concept of spatialisation. The next chapter will look how MON impacts on the MPN in terms of access, readership, distribution, circulation numbers, etc.

Methodology and Case Study Analysis

3.0. Introduction

In the previous chapter attention was directed at the theories which motivate this study, particularly those that deal with the concepts of spatialisation. Also, the relationship between the Internet and spatialisation was visited. In this chapter concentration will be on the analysis of the data collected, the methods used to collect such data and the application of the theories from the previous chapter.

3.1. Methodology

The study follows a case study method and the methodology used for data collection incorporated both the use of interviews and questionnaires. The case-study focus is on a single actor, a single institution, a single enterprise, usually under natural conditions so as to understand it - that bounded system - in its natural habitat (Stake: 1995). Therefore, in this case-study the two *Mopheme* (The Survivor) newspapers - both print and on-line, will represent today's print media institutions which increasingly operate both the print and on-line versions of their newspapers.

3.1.1. Interviews

Three structured interviews containing open-ended questions were conducted with:

1. The manager of *Mopheme* newspapers, Lawrence Keketso. The aim was to find out how the *Mopheme on-line newspaper* (MON) is marketed, who is targeted, how many people visit its website, who does the counting of the visits, finances, regulations and policies, etc. Importantly, the intention has been to ascertain how the *Mopheme* print newspaper (MPN) is affected by MON. The interviews were held in the *Mopheme's* offices in Maseru, Lesotho on Thursday 24 August, 2000.
2. The interview was held with Mr. Moerane Chenche, the Internet Support Manager at Square One Computers (SOC) one of the two Internet Service Providers (ISP) in Lesotho. The aim was to try to quantify the number of people with access to the Internet in Lesotho. The interviews were held at SOC offices in Maseru, on Friday 25 August, 2000.
3. The interview was held with Mr. Billy Moore, the director of the Lesotho Office Equipment now called LEO, a leading Internet service provider to Lesotho and the host to MON. The aim was to determine the potential readers of MON by getting information pertaining to the

regulations and policies guiding the Internet. Also to try with access to the Internet in Lesotho. The interviews were held in the LEO shop in Maseru, Lesotho on Monday 28 August, 2000.

3.1.2. The Questionnaires

Open-ended questionnaires were administered to:

1. People visiting CBS *Internet Cafe*. Fifty questionnaires were distributed during the week commencing on 28 August, 2000 and only 15 were answered. This was to try to find out who visits the Internet Cafe and reasons for such visits. Again the intention was to try to find out if people in Maseru do read the *Mopheme on-line newspaper* or any other on-line newspaper for their news or whether they are still firmly behind their old traditional *Mopheme*.
2. Students from Lesotho who are members of the Lesotho Student Association (LESA) at the University of Natal ó Durban. The reason was to find out whether these students, who do not have immediate access to the printed version of *Mopheme*, do visit the *Mopheme on-line newspaper* (MON) or any other on-line newspaper for their Lesotho news. Forty questionnaires were distributed to the LESA members during the annual general meeting of the University of Natal's International Students Association which was held in September 2000 and were collected after one week. Thirty-seven questionnaires were returned but two were thrown away because they were not properly filled. Therefore, the analysis is based on the 35 properly filled questionnaires.

The aim of the two sets of questionnaires (CBS Internet Café and UND students) was to ascertain the real impact of the Internet on the print newspapers. Here the main objectives were to try to find out (1) who uses the CBS Internet café in Maseru, what kind of information they seek from the Internet, how much they spend per visit; and (2) whether LESA members read newspapers, the medium they use, i.e. on-line or print newspapers and their reasons. It is stated in the previous chapters that the profile of users is skewed by race, gender, income, and age and access is restricted by the cost of technology and the steep learning curve for computer neophytes (Mowlana, 1997: 104). Thus, it is not accessible to those who lack basic hardware and software concepts. Although, sex of LESA members who participated in this study was not important there were, however, 18 men and 17 women who answered the questionnaire. There were 27 undergraduate and 8 post-graduate students. Twenty-six students came from the capital city, Maseru and the rest from other districts of Lesotho.

The researcher is aware of possible weaknesses in this study due to the nature of the techniques used. The first weakness may be with the use of a case study method which

generalisations and therefore could be erroneous. This weakness may result from the use of questionnaires because of their limitation in probing responses. Questionnaires are structured instruments. They allow little flexibility to the respondent with respect to response format (StatPac Inc., 2000). Again the respondents might misinterpret questions, thus offer wrong information leading to erroneous conclusion (Mikkelsen, 1995: 236). Thirdly, the interview method has its own problems particularly in a country like Lesotho, of late, whereby people are not keen on being quoted, especially on issues which they feel will touch on the government authority in case they are labeled anti-government.

3.2. Mopheme 'Newspapers'

3.2.1. The History of Mopheme Newspapers

The section is going to survey the history and development of the *Mopheme* newspapers. Despite the extensive search, the researcher did not find any documented literature on *Mopheme*. Therefore, the information used here was provided by the manager of the newspapers, Mr. Lawrence Keketso, in an interview held with him in Maseru. This detailed information will also help in the analysis of the media in Lesotho.

In the political economy of the media the issue of ownership is very important as it gives an indication of where the controlling power lies. Therefore, it is fundamental to this study to know who owns and controls *Mopheme*. One other thing that is vital is the realisation that although *Mopheme* newspaper is both print (MPN) and on-line (MON) based, the two did not start at the same time nor were the reasons for starting them the same. The first part will centre around the *Mopheme* print newspaper (MPN) and the second part will focus on the *Mopheme on-line newspaper* (MON). How they are funded, the target audiences and distributions will all be discussed.

3.2.2. Mopheme print newspaper (MPN)

MPN is a weekly newspaper owned by a group called Newsshare Foundation. Newsshare Foundation is a co-operative group which was formed by some media practitioners of Lesotho who were mostly freelancing for international news agencies. The idea of forming a newspaper was conceived of in 1993 but the first issue was only released in March 1994. When approaching the 1993 Lesotho's multi-party general elections, this group saw a gap in the independent media operations in Lesotho, which was brought about by the transformational changes as the country was moving from military to democratic rule. The changes had a great impact on the media in general. For example, the manager of *Mopheme* asserts, "At the time, I



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newspaper and the management of that newspaper wanted to agree with them, so I decided to quit (personal interview: August, 2000).

It has been the aim of *Mopheme* from its inception to get involved in social responsibility and advocacy activities. Some of its objectives are: (1) to train at least two journalists every year and also to run short in-house journalism courses; (2) to provide media consultations in Lesotho and in the Southern African region; (3) to participate in such advocacy programmes as (i) HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns, (ii) voter education so that voters can make some informed choices, (iii) crime prevention campaigns.

The newspaper operates in an environment that has little interference from the government. The editorial is free to publish any news and information, even information that is anti-government. However, minor problems of intimidation and harassment arise occasionally from the senior government officials and police, which taint this freedom (manager *Mopheme*, personal interview, August 2000).

Mopheme is not a commercial newspaper but more of an experimental paper (manager *Mopheme*, August, 2000). It survives mainly on donations from donors such as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). For example, in 1994 USAID donated R43,000 to Newsshare Foundation to buy the initial computers and other office equipment (Ministry of Information, 1996: 22). MPN started with a print run of 2,000 copies and four years later the print run is still the same 2,000. When asked about this state of affairs, Keketso, the manager of *Mopheme*, answered that the advent of the Internet killed MPN's circulation.

"When we first published on-line a lot of our subscription from outside the country went down. It is difficult to charge fees for Mopheme on-line (MON) considering that the credit facilities are not available in the country. So we depend mainly on people's goodwill for donations. However, we still print 2,000 copies but it is no longer like in the past when we knew that it was going to be sold out" (personal interview, August 2000).

Mopheme is an English newspaper in the country where the majority of the population speaks Sesotho. This creates a language barrier which automatically excludes most people from subscribing to it. The manager of *Mopheme* says "When *Mopheme* started it was targeted at a broad spectrum of people but when it reached the market it attracted a certain type of audience. Now, I would say our target is the elite, the academics, the politicians, the government officials" (personal interview, August 2000). Today, MPN is one of the most popular newspapers in Lesotho. LESA members ranked it third behind *Moeletsi oa Basotho* and *Moafrika* which came out first and second, respectively. *Moeletsi oa Basotho* and



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and 5,000 copies, respectively. But its on-line version, students.

Mopheme is a small newspaper and like most newspapers in Lesotho it is constantly faced with problems of distribution. As shown in the previous chapters, most newspapers in Lesotho are based in Maseru and are mainly distributed in Maseru. For MPN to reach most parts of the country it is distributed on public transport. It is distributed to all urban areas in the lowlands from Quthing in the south to Butha-Buthe in the north. It is difficult to distribute MPN regularly in the highlands. For example, to Mokhotlong we have one person who comes to Maseru once a month and he collects all the issues for that month (Manager *Mopheme*, personal interview, August 2000). This person is given 10 copies per issue to go and distribute. By the time the newspaper reaches its readers the news is no longer one week old but some news is more than a month old. The people outside Lesotho have to subscribe to MPN in order to receive it by post. Again, this can take a long time before reaching the subscriber depending on the distance and the country where the newspaper is going.

The MPN is released every Monday while MON is updated on Mondays and released on Tuesdays. In updating MON excerpts of content are lifted directly from the printed version and uploaded onto the Internet. According to some studies one quarter of on-line newspapers conduct their own journalistic initiatives, but three quarters simply lift content from the printed paper and place it on-line (Nua: 2000).

The survival of newspapers hinges mainly on how well they can attract advertisement from outside. The differences, however, between MON and MPN is that MON does not have advertisements while MPN has many including job vacancies and tender notices from different government ministries. MPN has a sports section with professionally taken black and white photographs but the MON does not have photographs at all.

3.2.3. *Mopheme* on-line newspaper (MOP)

Mopheme on-line newspaper (MON) was started under a different set of conditions to the MPN. The first time *Mopheme* went on-line was on a trial basis towards the end of 1995 hosted by *Africa On-line*. At this time the only Internet service that was available to Lesotho was the e-mails provided by the Rhodes University. In 1997 MON became an independent entity hosted by a Lesotho Internet service provider called ÆLEO. In 2000 MON still continues to contribute news to *Africa On-line*.

Mopheme went on-line in 1997 because of a proposal LEO was trying to get Lesotho news on the Internet and a number of local newspapers were approached but it was only *Mopheme* which agreed to the joint venture. The manager of *Mopheme* indicated that they agreed "...more out of curiosity because we wanted to see how it worked. We did not really understand what this issue of on-line was all about, and we were prepared to proceed with it. We only realized later that we were losing a lot of the (print) subscribers" (personal interview, August 2000). This venture is completely sponsored by LEO. The initiative has been going on since 1997. *Mopheme* does not have the qualified staff to handle the on-line service. Therefore, in this venture LEO does all the Internet designs and layouts while *Mopheme* staff edit the contents (director LEO, personal interview, August 2000).

Unlike the MPN which targets mainly the people in Maseru and a few individuals outside Maseru, MON targets primarily Basotho who live outside Lesotho and non-Basotho who are interested in the Lesotho affairs. The manager of *Mopheme* indicates that it is difficult to get hold of the MPN when people are outside the country, hence the establishment of MON which can be accessed from anywhere in the world. "... they don't have the local readership. People accessing MON are the foreign embassies, people who have visited Lesotho and want to find out what's happening. MON gets access from university sites from all over the world" (director LEO, personal interview, August 2000). LESA members bear testimony to this as 33 out of 35 indicated that they never read on-line newspapers when they are in Lesotho but rely on print newspapers. However, 27 pointed out that they rely on the on-line newspapers for their Lesotho news when they are in Durban. Out of 35 respondents 18 stated that they read MON only and 4 do not read newspapers at all. The majority of them mention that they get their news from MON, while a few get it from other on-line services such as the *Public Eye* and *Africa On-line*. Below are LESA members reasons, quoted verbatim, which might not apply to everyone, for reading the on-line news:

- _ It is readily available unlike printed newspapers which one has to subscribe to and then wait a week or two before the paper gets here.
- _ News gets to us faster than when we are at home as there is no transport needed.
- _ Saves time to read from the Internet as only the juicy stuff is placed on the Internet.
- _ Easier to read as you can just scan through it quickly without too much time being wasted on long stories.
- _ The Internet is quicker, cheaper and reaches places where printed newspapers do not reach.
- _ Cheap and does not occupy any space in my small study, cum-bedroom.

te how the Internet has overcome spatialisation which is
constraints of space and time in social lifeö (Lefebvre, 1979:
285). The students agree that the Internet overcomes these constraints of space and time. For
example, LESA members have access to Lesotho news via the Internet, a facility which
majority of people in Lesotho do not have access to. The students in their responses assert that
the Internet is cheaper than print newspapers. Most students were not aware that in Lesotho to
have Internet access at Internet Cafés it costs R10.00 every fifteen minutes. On the question of
who has access to the Internet when in Lesotho, 22 showed that they have access. But only
one student has the Internet facility at home while the rest access it from government offices,
private offices or the Internet Café.

MON Funding

MON contributes immensely to the growth of MPN by creating business for it. There is no
direct revenue accruing from MON but it has managed to market *Mopheme* internationally:

*Recently, we had a job advertisement on the MPN from a Saudi Arabia oil
company and they knew us through the MON and they contacted us. There is also
a group of companies from South Africa which wants to advertise on our on-line
newspaper. Because this touches on our ISP's policy, we are working on the
modalities of payment , i.e. how much LEO is going to charge us and all that
(manager of Mopheme, personal Interview, August 2000).*

The two cases are clear examples of how distance and time can be overcome by the Internet
and how Internet has made a reality the concept of 'global village' as propagated by McLuhan.
As mentioned earlier the concept of 'global village' means that communication technologies,
such as the Internet, eradicate the physical distance between disparate people, creating an
electronic meeting place, and making real time communication between distant parties possible
(Stevenson, 1995: 119). For instance, MON in this case has managed to bridge the distance
between Lesotho and Saudi Arabia to such an extent that business initiative got carried out.

Another small source of revenue which could be linked to the MON are the royalties *Mopheme*
gets from *Africa On-line* for allowing their site to be accessed through the *Africa On-line*.
Africa On-line pays newspapers companies whose on-line services can be accessed through it.
They are paid according to how many times a site has been visited. Therefore, *Africa On-line*
keeps track of the number of people who visit MON through their website. LEO does not keep
records of the number of people visiting MON. 'We keep records on sites that we sell because
those we have to do report back and to say subscribe again or continue with the service
because this is what you are getting out of it'ö (director of LEO, personal Interview, August
2000). For example, they keep track of the number of people visiting the *Public Eye*
newspaper.



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in Lesotho

3.3.1. Impediments to Internet growth

Mopheme on-line is an example of what the Internet and related technologies can offer Africa, not only Lesotho. MON shows how the Internet can provide the opportunity to overcome some of the traditional constraints to economic development such as distance from market (the Saudi Arabia example above) and lack of information on market trends. MON has managed to play a significant role in situations whereby the print version could not have successfully participated. There are, however, many constraints to the development of the Internet based economy in the continent. Chief amongst these are the inadequate telecommunications infrastructure and, perhaps more importantly, high Internet access charges, the high cost of computer and telecommunications equipment, and a serious shortage of skilled technology personnel (Nua, 1998).

3.3.2. Access to Internet

To be connected to the Internet can be costly. It was indicated by the Internet Support Manager at Square One Computers (SOC) that to initiate the Internet connection with them one needs a modem which cost about R275.00, pay a connection fee of R150.00 and a month subscription fee of R80.00. On top of this there is a dial-up connection fee of about R6.00 an hour at R0.60 every three minutes for a local charge if based in Maseru. Therefore, in Lesotho getting connected to the Internet can be costly even though it is cheaper than in most African states. The average cost of a dial-up Internet connection in the rest of Africa is US\$75 (R560 at \$1 = R7.50) per month compared to US\$10 (R70.00) in the United States and US\$15 (R105.00) in England (Nua, 1998). Further, local telephone connect charges in Africa can be very significant whereas in the United States local calls are free. These charges are very high considering that reading an on-line newspaper can take a long time for the website to open and be readable and to move from one site to another. The 15 respondents who answered the questionnaire that was administered at the CBS Internet Café in Maseru showed that they use the Internet for reading and writing e-mails only. Thirteen out of fifteen were foreigners and all fifteen have a bachelors degree as their minimum qualification. They all agree that the charge prohibits people from just browsing or even reading on-line newspapers. The minimum charge per visit is R10.00 for 15 minutes. This is in contrast to what LESA members say about the cost of the Internet. LESA members think that on-line newspapers are a cheap way of getting their Lesotho because they do not pay anything as they can just walk into any university Local Area Network (LAN) and freely get connected to the Internet.

been very difficult to gauge which gender group uses the Internet. In the CBS sample, 60 percent of all users are computer-literate, middle-class males under the age of 40 (Vaknin, 1999). From the CBS sample out of 15 respondents seven were men and eight were women. The sample from LESA members gives a similar pattern of 18 men to 17 women. Therefore, it is difficult to draw any conclusion from the two samples in order to gauge which gender group uses the Internet more than the other.

Computer illiteracy is another impediment to the Internet access in Lesotho.

“The Internet in Lesotho is not growing at the rate that it should be growing. We can’t find Internet staff in Lesotho. Why? Because there is no Internet (education) in schools. Why? Because it is too expensive. LTC (Lesotho Telecommunications Corporation) has made no effort to promote it in the schools” (director of LEO, personal interview, August 2000).

This statement is supported by Africa’s Internet leaders who met later in Abuja, Nigeria in September, 2000 and called for an accelerated development of the telecommunications and Internet industries in Africa. In announcing that this is necessary if the continent is not to be left behind they said, “Programmes to increase computer literacy and Internet awareness in educational establishments, community organizations and small businesses, are also vital to the future success of Africa in an Internet-driven global economy” (Financial Gazette, 2000).

Therefore, the development of the wired economy in Africa is seriously constrained by the shortage of skilled human resources. Most Information Technology and related companies in the continent face huge shortages of skilled personnel. Universities and technical colleges in Africa are often ill equipped to provide training on current technological developments and consequently provide training unsuited to the needs of the market (Nua, 1998). In an interview about the shortage of skilled personnel the director of LEO argues:

The whole Lesotho problem there,[sic] comes to bear because they don’t have the people to do the websites. If they do, they would not have them for long because they will go and work in South Africa. There are too many small newspapers and they don’t have sound Internet technology right now, because there aren’t that many Basotho Internet users, because of the cost. And I don’t see this situation improving in the near future (director of LEO, Personal Interview, August 2000).

The director of LEO illustrated that the problem touches on everyone because even LEO’s websites designer left them in June 2000. She moved to Cape Town as it was a hassle getting her a work permit. This means that there is lack of both local and foreign Internet expertise in Lesotho.

in Africa are rapidly increasing. As of June 2000 the total number of the Internet users in Africa is estimated at 2.77 million (Nua, 2000) from a figure of between 800,000 to 1 million in January 1998, 700,000 of which were in South Africa (Nua Surveys: 1998). Lesotho's number of Internet users is increasing. The Lesotho's two ISPs allege that they have around 1,350 dial-up subscribers – LEO has achieved the 1,000 mark sometime back and SOC has 350. They estimate that Lesotho with the population of over two million has an estimated 5,000 computer network. It means that there is one Internet user for every 400 people. This ratio of 1 to 400 is above the African average. For example, it is estimated that 1 in 6 people use the Internet in North America and Europe whereas the comparable figure for Africa, excluding South Africa, is 1 Internet user for every 5,000 people. South Africa in 1998 an Internet utilisation rate of 1 in 65, and this was below the world average of 1 in 45 (Nua, 1998). The ISPs believe that if LTC could provide a better telephone service the situation could improve. Therefore, the telephone situation in Lesotho needs to be discussed.

3.3.5. Teledensity

The telephone infrastructure in Lesotho impedes the expansion of the Internet (Director LEO, personal interview: August 2000). Lesotho with its population of 2.1 million is serviced by 20,000 fixed telephone lines provided by LTC (*Business Report*, October 26, 2000). The teledensity (the number of telephone lines per 100 people) of Lesotho for the purposes of Internet provision is one. This means that there is one telephone line for every 100 people. By comparison, the teledensity in Sub-Saharan Africa is currently estimated at 0.5, in the United States is 65 (equivalent to one phone line for every two people), and 45 in Europe. The situation in Africa is compounded by the fact that the vast majority of phone lines are in urban areas whereas approximately 80 percent of the population lives in rural areas (Nua, 1998).

There is an estimated 12,000 cellular telephone connections so far rolled out by Vodacom Lesotho, a subsidiary of Vodacom South Africa (*Business Report*, October 26, 2000). However, the Internet service cannot be provided through them. The technology in Lesotho does not allow anyone to have access to the Internet unless they are connected to the LTC telephone line system (Internet Support Manager at SOC, personal interview, August 2000). For example, people in the rural areas are outside the LTC line system and therefore, cannot get the Internet service even if they can afford service. The director of LEO believes that the new partnership between LTC and Eskom will improve the service. The telephone service as provided by LTC at the moment stifles growth of the Internet service because people do not have access to telephones.



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Web

People still prefer getting their news from the print newspapers. Newspaper websites still have few readers in comparison to daily newspaper circulation (Nua: 2000). This is also proven by most of LESA members who explained that they still prefer the print newspaper. Students gave the following reasons:

- _ Printed newspapers are more interesting because they have more information than the on-line newspaper as stories are written in full detail.
- _ With printed newspaper I read the story at my own rate.
- _ With the Internet the process of logging in is long and laborious.
- _ You can read a newspaper where you like but with on-line paper you have to sit at a compute.
- _ Print newspapers are available to everyone even to those who have no access to computers.
- _ Print newspapers are accessible to everyone who can read unlike the Internet newspapers which requires one to have a computer and the skills to operate it.

It is because of this low interest compared to print newspapers that on-line papers are not making profits. After just five years, half of the on-line newspaper websites in the US and Canada are beginning to show signs of profit or at least breaking even, according to a new report from the World Association of Newspapers (Nua: 2000). In Lesotho subscription is not paid and there are hardly any advertisements on the on-line newspapers. However, many people believe that even the print press is not making profit either. "There are too many small newspapers in Lesotho. Newspapers here are run on low budget and I don't think any of them make profits at the end of the day. They are all funded by donor organisations. Now we have lots of big fish in a small pond" (director LEO, personal interview, August 2000). *Mopheme* has contemplated putting up charges for the MON but "this is difficult considering that credit facilities are not available in the country" (manager *Mopheme*, personal interview, August 2000).

Generally, with print newspapers, advertisements are limited because there is only so much space available. With the web technology, however, there is no space limitation, so a company can construct a message that is several layers deep, with animated graphics, sound, even full motion video (Ringera, 1999). This points to the myriad of opportunities that the shift from paper to electronics opens to users. In the case of MON small excerpts of news with no pictures are uploaded every week.

However, electronic newspapers do have some advantages. They have been seen as easier to use compared to their electronic versions. This is a point that was raised over and over by LESA members. After all, once a person subscribes to the print newspaper, it is on the doorstep each day or each week if it is a weekly like MPN. To get newspapers electronically, however, the consumer has to boot up a computer, dial an Internet service provider, run a browser program such as Netscape, and visit a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) day after day, to get the newspaper's site. One of the LESA members showed that this is a labourious exercise which discourages her from reading the on-line newspapers.

Additionally, to retrieve what the consumer is looking for, s/he has to wait as each page, photo and graphic, downloads at various speeds while tying up the household telephone line, and paying an access charge for this privilege. However, as more convenient and efficient ways of using new technologies are discovered, these shortcomings will be overcome (Stromnes, 1998: 257).

3.4. Conclusion

The chapter brought together the theories as discussed in Chapter Two and tried to see how they can be applied to the case study. It was seen that the Internet impacts directly on the concept of spatialisation. The Internet has managed to break down the geographic distance which were an impediment to delivery and access to news. Instant access to news and information is now a reality. Moreover, the majority of the respondents demonstrated that they still prefer print newspapers for their news.

CHAPTER 4

Conclusion

In the late 1990s, Lesotho saw the emergence of the Internet and this has had serious impact on the lives of those it touched. As a result some newspaper institutions developed on-line versions of their print newspapers. It has been the aim of this study to explore the impact of the Internet on the print press in Lesotho. *Mopheme* on-line newspaper was used as a case study. The objectives of the study were: (i) to find reasons that lead newspapers to establish on-line versions of their papers, (ii) to ascertain the impact of on-line newspapers on the print press, and (iii) to examine the questions of access to the Internet, telecommunication infrastructure and ownership of the media.

The study was informed by the theories of spatialisation which signify the process of overcoming the constraints of space and time in social life (Lefebvre, 1979: 285). The two concepts of space and time were important in finding out how the on-line affects the print newspaper. The Internet hinges much on the convergence of computer and telephony technologies, therefore, its role in overcoming the spatial variables are crucial.

Findings and Conclusion

It has been illustrated that with the concept of spatialisation attention is drawn to the declining significance of physical space relative to the 'spaces of flow' (Castells, 1989:348). With the uncoupling of space and time brought about by electronic media, the access to messages stemming from spatially remote sources can be instantaneous. Distance has been eclipsed by proliferating networks of electronic communication (Thompson, 1995: 149). LESA members confirmed that the Internet has helped newspapers to overcome the physical constraints of space and the time (survey conducted, September 2000). The time it used to take to receive news on Lesotho has been drastically reduced. For example, students explained that they now have instant access to Lesotho news through MON, a facility which the majority of people in Lesotho do not have access to. Thus, the Internet plays a big part in ensuring that news can be read the moment it is uploaded on the Internet.

Scholars, such as Thompson (1995) and Mosco (1996), explain spatialisation in terms of wealth accumulation and the resulting power. They give prominence to media concentration by focusing on vertical and horizontal concentration as discussed below.



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There is no media concentration in Lesotho. The newspapers are for a small population which reads mainly in the vernacular, Sesotho.

The impact of the Internet on the Lesotho print media has had both negative and positive effects. MPN has managed to change the relations between the management of *Mopheme* and its readers. Many Basotho living outside Lesotho no longer subscribe to MPN but they read the MON for their Lesotho news. This has had a negative impact on the MPN as it led to the drop in circulation. The impact in terms of access has been positive. The development of on-line newspapers as a new way of publishing has introduced a new, efficient, and fast way of disseminating and accessing news (Khan, 1999). In their agreement LESA members maintained that with easy access to the University of Natal's Internet facilities, they now get their news on time.

MPN is a small newspaper and like most newspapers in Lesotho it is constantly faced with problems of distribution. Transportation has been one of the main problems in this regard. Public buses are used to transport the newspaper from Maseru to the mountain districts of Lesotho. This has led to a situation whereby people receive their newspaper a month after it is released. The mode of distribution has not been reliable as it depended on certain individuals who have businesses to attend to in Maseru. For instance, if the chosen Mokhotlong businessman does not have any reason to go to Maseru, then the papers for that month are not going to be distributed in Mokhotlong. It is difficult to distribute MPN regularly in the highlands.

LESA members indicated that the majority of people in Lesotho with access to the Internet do not read on-line newspapers if the printed versions are available. Consequently, the local sales revenue of MPN does not get affected by MON. From the responses it is clear that the exorbitant charges asked by the Internet cafés and the LTC are an impediment to the growth of the Internet in Lesotho. This follows the international trends that print newspapers are still preferred by most people. Newspaper websites still have few readers in comparison to daily newspaper circulation (Nua: 2000). Depending on how the on-line newspaper is designed this can cause losses in profits by the print newspapers. MPN experienced a drop in subscription from outside Lesotho when MON first went on-line because people were able to get their news from the Internet without paying anything. This led to the reformatting of MON whereby excerpts were taken from MPN and uploaded on MON. This helped in getting back some of the lost subscribers.

People still prefer getting their news from the print newspapers. This has been found to be the case in Lesotho. LESA members illustrated that they never read the Lesotho on-line

. However, the majority of them stated that they only get when they are outside the country because of easy access to the internet facilities. Also, the print newspapers take a long time to reach people in the rural areas and people outside Lesotho.

The management of *Mopheme*, in an effort to attract, expand and maintain the present readership of MPN, has also attempted to improve the image of its on-line publication. These developments have taken place in response to endeavours that have been initiated by institutions outside Lesotho with which *Mopheme* has entered into relations. The manager of *Mopheme* affirmed that MON stimulates business for the MNP. There is no direct revenue accruing from MON but it has managed to market *Mopheme* internationally (manager *Mopheme*, August, 2000). For, business relations have been created between Lesotho and other countries as it has been illustrated in the example of a Saudi Arabian company advertising in MPN. The on-line and print media, therefore, do not hinder the development of the other. There is sufficient room for them to exist side by side.

The findings clearly confirm that to be connected to the Internet is expensive, hence the on-line newspapers cannot be thought of as replacements to print newspapers. The Internet is simply not at the level where it can be thought to be a threat to the newsprint in Lesotho. Few Basotho can afford to spend R10.00 for 15 minutes to browse the Internet at the Internet café. Simultaneously, not many people living in Lesotho can afford to have Internet connections installed in their homes for a monthly subscription fee of R80.00 excluding the monthly telephone bill. Most of LESA members maintain that they still prefer print newspapers over the on-line newspapers.

For Lesotho to fully participate in the global economy and politics, there is a need to develop the Internet infrastructure. Without telephones, the less developed countries and regions of the world would not be able to log onto the global electronic superhighways (Tehrani, 1999: 49-50). There is an obligation on the part of government to ensure that people have access to telephones in order to participate in the global economic activities. With Lesotho's low teledensity of one, that is 1 out of every 100 people having a telephone, and the situation not improving, the Internet is increasingly inaccessible to large sections of the population.

The Internet has made the 'global village' (McLuhan, 1962) a reality by eradicating the physical distance between disparate people, creating an electronic meeting place, and making real time communication between distant parties possible (Stevenson, 1995: 119). This was proved in the study by LESA members who stated that they receive instant news and can give instant feedback to the editor on MON if need be. However, the rural Basotho are not members of this global village because of lack of telecommunications infrastructure. One

Plain old telephone is still a new technology to the
g world (Dunn, 1995:33). By the same token, telephone
in Lesotho is still a new phenomenon to the majority of the people and as a result the Internet
is out of their reach.

Lesotho is also following the global trends whereby there is a conspicuous lack of regulations
guiding the Internet. Drafting legislation to regulate Internet access and content is clearly
proving very difficult for nation-states (Slevin, 2000: 222). The study indicated that high
charges by LTC to ISPs have lead to the Internet being a tool for a select few rich people in
Maseru. It is important that government policy should focus on reducing the cost of
information technology to the end user. The government must provide enabling legislative
framework which will protect Basotho from being exploited by ISPs and telephone companies.
The Internet has broken down the spatial constraints of space and time and created new social
activities. On-line newspapers transgress the limits of print and broadcasting but it is not in a
position to replace the print media.

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(1) Interview - Manager Mopheme Newspapers

(2) Interview - Director LOE