

Digital skills necessary for community radio journalists to deliver news on time in a digital environment in Lesotho: Harvest FM case study.

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Declaration

I declare that this is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Masters of Arts by Coursework and Research Report in the Department of Journalism at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

It has not been submitted for any other degree or examination at any other university.

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16 of May 2023

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to look into the competencies required by community radio journalists who also use websites and online digital platforms like Facebook to provide news content. This is accomplished by watching and speaking with local radio journalists about the methods they employ to spread news online. The study explores digital skill sets used on a regular basis by journalists. Furthermore, the researcher aims to find out the role of digital literacy in the context of community radio journalism. Digital literacy is a set of skills required to utilize the Internet and adapt to the digital world (Dewangan & Verma, 2022). This study aims to determine what digital competencies are required for journalists working for community radio in Lesotho. It looks into the attitudes that journalists have towards digital literacy as well as how their experiences with it manifest in the Harvest FM newsroom as example. The unique digital skills required by community radio journalists in Lesotho have seldom been studied despite the fact that media study on the digital skills needed by journalists in a digital environment has received a lot of attention. By employing the diffusion of innovations theory, this research also aids in better comprehending how context affects how new ideas propagate.

The existing research indicates that in the 21st century, it has become patently apparent that media companies and journalists work in a competitive market and are confronted by a variety of challenges (Reyes-de Cózar *et al.*, 2022). Another phenomenon that highlights the need to address this competitive ecosystem is the emerging patterns of digital news production, distribution, consumption, the expanding social media manifestations, and the arrival of digital journalism, which is a highly elusive, shifting, and multifaceted concept (Reyes-de Cózar *et al.*, 2022). This can be done by providing new professionals with the roles, tasks, and skills necessary to meet the demands of the digital media sector and the new labour market (Reyes-de Cózar *et al.*, 2022).

This necessitates analysis and the development of new ideas for the most effective media outlets to reach the intended audience of adults and youth. Developing the appropriate digital skills is important since both the media landscape and the ways in which viewers can access news are radically changing (Oliveira *et al.*, 2012). Because of this, community radio journalists must continually look for innovative ways to engage and retain their audiences (Oliveira *et al.*, 2012). A significant digital skills gap could result in journalists being unable to adapt to the media's digital transition and acquire the requisite digital skills (Oliveira *et al.*, 2012). Additionally, their organizations are vulnerable to losing their distinctiveness and competitive edge to other news organizations (Oliveira *et al.*, 2012). As more and more people tend to prefer acquiring their news from websites and social media platforms like Facebook, it is crucial to comprehend the digital abilities required by community radio journalists in a digital environment.

1.1 Background: Community radio

Despite the development of social media, community radio remains a very popular and important component of the broadcasting landscape (Beavon, 2019). Beavon (2019) states that people from communities who are frequently ignored by mainstream broadcast media have an open mic opportunity due to community radio. This is because community radio seeks for an audience made up of members of the community rather than going after large audiences (Beavon, 2019). Community radio stations educate, entertain, and inform local populations in their own language about issues that are important to them, where traditional media cannot (Hasnat & Steyn, 2018). Community radio, according to Khan *et al.*, (2017), is typically a non-profit radio station that caters to the information needs of people living in a specific locality, in the languages and formats best suited to the local context.

However, according to Radio Regen (2022) some community radio stations may find themselves using a mixed economy model to operate. This means that some community radio stations may have features/characteristics of commercial radio, as community radio is forced into a mixed economy model to maintain their finances and to keep afloat (Radio Regen, 2022). According to Radio Regen (2022), discussing profit in relation to a project like community radio that is committed to enhancing communities and is driven by a volunteerism and social participation attitude may appear repugnant. However, this may have to be the case since community radio stations need to be tough, sometimes even brutal, in order to make the most of their resources and their aspirations (Radio Regen, 2022). Watts (2022) agrees, stating that community radio stations should run advertisements in the form of spot commercials or commercial sponsorship of specific shows in order to make money. This is an accurate portrayal of several Lesotho radio stations that started out as community radios before becoming thoroughly involved in private and commercial endeavours, that the general public came to perceive them as such. As an analogy, Harvest FM, the case study for this research project, claims to be a non-profit organization on its website, earning it the label of a community radio station. However, it has become so involved in commercial activities that it is sometimes mistaken for a commercial radio station. For example, Harvest FM exhibits slight traits of a commercial radio station as it plans to enlarge its transmitting waves to cover the entire country (Harvest FM, 2022).

1.2 Lesotho radio landscape

Radio is the most widely used mass media medium, as well as the most affordable and easily available method of communication, for most people living in poor nations like Lesotho (Ramakhula, 2009). Radio offers a platform for community members who have radio reception to have equal access to information on topics including agriculture, health, local market information, education, and other pertinent subjects of importance (Ramakhula, 2009). BBC News (2017) agrees with Ramakhula and state that Lesotho's most popular medium is radio. Lesotho has come a long way with radio technology, which has been used for decades by many people (Metro News, 2022). According to

BBC News (2017), commercial and private radio stations broadcast alongside state-run Radio Lesotho, the only national station, and the BBC World Service which broadcasts on 90.2 FM. Lesotho liberalized its radio airwaves in 1994, enabling the emergence and growth of community and private radio stations. This was the outcome of the deregulation of the airwaves that followed the advent of multiparty politics in 1993 (Ramakhula, 2009). According to Ramakhula (2009), the Lesotho Bureau of Statistics estimates that roughly 70% of the country's citizens listen to radio.

Hlongoane (2019) states that the radio industry is typically separated into three major subfields: community, commercial, and public radio. Public broadcasting is described as broadcasting services offered by a statutory entity, typically subsidized by the state (Hlongoane, 2019). While community broadcasting is owned and governed by a specific community, commercial broadcasting is owned privately, and its primary goal is to generate profit (Hlongoane, 2019). UNESCO (2022) concurs and states that community radio is governed and operated by and for the communities it serves. Community radio is an important "third pillar" of media, alongside commercial and public broadcasters, and is an essential component of a healthy, pluralistic media sector (UNESCO, 2022). According to Hlongoane (2019), community media have emerged as a distinctive alternative to both commercial and public media. Coyer and Hintz (2013) agree, stating that community media challenges traditional notions of a dual media system, instead proposing a three-tier media landscape comprised of public service, commercial, and community media.

Mats'asa *et al.*, (2019) states that in Lesotho, there are two state-owned radio stations, eleven commercial radio stations, four community radio stations, and four religious/commercial radio stations in the radio industry. A tertiary educational institution, the National University of Lesotho also owns one (Mats'asa *et al.*, 2019). Since 1988, there has only been one television station (Lesotho Television), which is a state-run broadcaster subject to the current government (Mats'asa *et al.*, 2019). Mats'asa *et al.*, (2019) further states that the private radio broadcasting sector has provided Basotho with an alternative to the state-run media, which has traditionally been less critical of government and presented Basotho with a one-sided view. According to Mats'asa *et al.*, (2019), there are ten private and commercial newspapers, one church-owned newspaper, one government-owned newspaper, and three private and commercial magazines in print media.

Currently, as the internet becomes more widely used to access news online, radio is taking advantage of the opportunity to broaden its spectrum/reach by implementing the use of online tools such as Facebook and websites. This means that radio can now cast a wide net and cater to audiences on both traditional radio and the internet by utilizing these tools.

1.3 Harvest FM and its use of Facebook and of other digital tools

Harvest FM was founded to present and evangelize the good news of Jesus Christ to the entire Basotho community holistically (Harvest FM, 2022). The station began transmitting its signal to inhabitants in Maseru and around 60% of the country on May 30, 2003, covering the north up to Botha-Bothe and the south up to Mafeteng under the direction and support of HCJB World Radio from the United States (Harvest FM, 2022). Sutton (2022) states that Harvest FM was registered in 2002 as a non-profit making charity by the then station manager 'Malichaba Lekhoaba who was also the main ideator of starting a Christian community radio station in Lesotho; henceforth seeking donations and support from HCJB World Radio. Sutton (2022) further states that in 2007, after a review of the station's financial performance, Harvest FM started introducing several current affairs programs with the understanding that the pertinent content would not only attract more advertising revenue, but that the station could also play a significant role in bringing socio-political issues to the public and informing them. The review came after the station management and the board of directors at the time realised that by only broadcasting spiritual/religion-based content, the station was not generating enough revenue to cover day-to-day expenses (Koloi, 2023). As stated in section 1.1, Harvest FM has immersed itself into commercial activities that a lot of people as well as some literature regard it fully as a commercial radio station. The above analysis is supported by the Media Institute of Southern Africa Lesotho's (MISA) website, which also astonishingly groups Harvest FM under private commercial radio stations. According to the institution's website, there are six community radio stations which include Moeling FM, Motjoli FM, Pheshakoe Qhii (Mose ho Seaka) FM, Radio Souru, Mafeteng Community Radio, and Dope FM (MISA, 2022). Under the private radio stations there is Harvest FM, 357 FM, Bokamoso FM, MoAfrika FM, Molisa ea Molemo FM, Mohale FM, People on the Move Radio, MXXL Space Age Radio, People's Choice FM, SkyAlpha HD, Ts'enolo FM, Tebernacle FM and Thato ea Hau (MISA, 2023). Under the public radio sector, there is two state-owned radio stations which are Radio Lesotho and Ultimate FM.

Harvest FM has historically relied mostly on radio to disseminate news, but in recent years has begun to share current events on both their website and social media channels, with Facebook serving as the primary channel with 59 thousand followers on their main Facebook page (Harvest FM 98.9/106.4Mhz Official, 2022). Even though not used to a greater extent compared to Facebook, there are other digital tools that Harvest FM uses. These tools include the Harvest FM official website, which typically acts as a brochure, explaining what Harvest FM does, what its programming content entails, and who the presenters and journalists are (Masilo, 2022). Furthermore, Harvest FM has a TikTok account that is used merely for marketing purposes, e.g., events and radio programmes (Masilo, 2022).

According to Sutton (2022), Harvest FM transmits around-the-clock using the best audio technology to broadcast entertaining, educational, peace-promoting, multi-cultural, and multilingual programming. The station offers a combination of spiritual and news programs that tenaciously address the country's most pressing social and political challenges (Harvest FM, 2022). Additionally, social media platforms are used as part of Harvest FM's online presence to engage with audiences. The radio uses Facebook and its website to interact with listeners by regularly posting whatever information they want to get through. This enables the station to efficiently engage with their online audience, hold discussions with them, and get feedback. For audience interaction, the station uses Facebook to produce interesting posts and livestreams current affairs programs so that viewers can see guests being interviewed in the studio and share their opinions in the comment section (Harvest FM 98.9/106.4Mhz Official, 2022).

1.4 Digital penetration: the role of Facebook

Over the years most community radio stations in Lesotho have embarked on extending their audience reach by using social media platforms to disseminate current affairs and to advertise their programming. This is done mostly by using Facebook as the main social media platform and this might be because Facebook is free in Lesotho, and that it allows a radio station to reach further geographically, beyond the FM signal's reach. Due to its widespread use and the fact that its users may access it for free, community radio stations in Lesotho use Facebook as a significant social media tool to digitally penetrate and reach Lesotho's underprivileged populations. Even though this is not unique to Lesotho, Vodacom Lesotho and Facebook teamed up in 2019 to introduce Facebook Flex, a connectivity solution that allows hundreds of thousands of Basotho to follow news and stay connected without having to pay for it (ITWeb Africa, 2019).

Customers of Vodacom Lesotho can talk, post, comment, like, and share information without using any data by using this service, which enables them to transition between free and data modes easily (ITWeb Africa, 2019). NapoleonCat Stats (2022) indicates that in July 2022 there were 654 900 Facebook users in Lesotho, which was 28.1% of the country's total population, in which 54.1% of the total population were women, making up the majority. The majority of users were 215 300 and were between the ages of 18 and 24 (NapoleonCat Stats, 2022). Among them, women outnumber men by the greatest amount of 99 000 compared to the year 2021, making up the widest gender gap (NapoleonCat Stats, 2022).

Harvest FM, as an example, decided to go digital in 2021 in order to reach audiences where the station's radio frequencies do not reach. The station has its own official Facebook page which was set up on the 4th of January 2021, but different listeners of various Harvest FM shows have set up their own Facebook groups so that people with comparable interests can connect and discuss whatever is

being discussed live on the radio at any particular time. This is where listeners use Facebook functions of liking, commenting, sharing, and tagging to interact with each other. The Harvest FM official Facebook page run by the station has 59000 members (Harvest FM 98.9/106.4Mhz Official, 2022). On the other hand, as stated above, the radio stations' listeners have created six different Facebook groups based on the diverse programming they tune into. The groups with the most members are Harvest fm 98.9MHZ Lesotho with 55,600 members (Harvest fm 98.9MHZ, 2022). The second biggest group is Khetsing Harvest Fm 98.9 MHZ with 24,000 members (Khetsing Harvest Fm 98.9 MHZ, 2022). And lastly, Harvest fm 98.9mhz tsa mabatooa with 12,900 members (Harvest fm 98.9mhz tsa mabatooa, 2022). As much as the listeners have created their own Facebook pages, all the pages differ from the official Harvest FM page by not providing the station's contact details like phone numbers and email address, the link to the official website, physical address, and opening hours. Unlike the official Harvest FM Facebook page that post radio studio guests live and hold competitions, the listener's pages do not portray any sense of influencer strategies. Based on this information, community radio journalists should be able to use digital storytelling tools like Facebook wisely in the 21st century media landscape, which is heavily influenced by digital technology to reach a wider number of audiences and to engage with them.

1.5 Aim of Research

This research project aims to investigate what function digital literacy serves in a digital community radio setting and what digital literacy skills journalists at Harvest FM, as example, need to continue serving the community. The primary goal of this research is to propose an analytical foundation that can provide an insight of what is needed for the practice of journalism in a digital environment especially in community radio in Lesotho, and some potential avenues of action (skills) that might be included into the currently existent traditional journalistic abilities. In order to accomplish this, the researcher will look into what digital competencies journalists in Lesotho's community radio stations need in order to publish and collect news to provide content in a digital world. The researcher will also look into how well-versed in digital literacy Harvest FM's journalists are, as well as their views towards it. The researcher will observe how the newsroom at Harvest FM reflects journalists' experiences with digital literacy.

1.6 Rationale

Addressing the question of what digital literacy skills are needed for Harvest FM's journalists in order to provide timely news material in a digital media environment is very important in this study because according to Magoon *et al.*, (2023), journalists continually need to hone their digital skills as technology has accelerated the media trends of the past 5 to 10 years, and even the audiences have upped their baseline media expectations as technology has evolved. Magoon *et al.*, (2023) makes an example of how the Covid-19 pandemic fast-tracked media trends and forced the audiences to depend on the internet to access current affairs, and how the audiences showed a high amount of participation

during that time. Based on this assertion, it is important for journalists to possess digital skills to keep up with the expectations of their audiences and an ever-growing use of the internet. This question is new because unlike in the past, radio journalists were not expected to work across media platforms; but now it is necessity. Also, the audience now demand digital content they want, when they want it, and where they want it in an interconnected way, which creates an omnipresent timely news delivery (Magoon *et al.*, 2023).

In previous years, all journalists required to perform their daily tasks was a voice recorder, audio editing skills, notepad, a pen, and some familiarity with using Microsoft Word ¹to create documents. That has greatly changed over time since journalists now need to create news material for numerous digital platforms. The key digital channel utilized for this study is Harvest FM Facebook page, which requires regular updates from journalists on current events. Therefore, as the media undergoes a massive digital transition, community radio journalists must learn new digital skills to stay relevant to their audiences or risk being left behind without the required digital skills. Consequently, it has become more critical and necessary for researchers to research the competences and skills required for new journalistic work in media organizations, hence this study.

Maryville University (2020) states that it is important to understand that creating news digitally requires a range of skills, including the skill to use digital tools like smartphones, accuracy, and fact-checking skills, while at the same time gathering and publishing news digitally. According to Maryville University (2021), journalism underwent a significant change in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, requiring journalists to possess a different set of skills like writing compelling stories and using smartphones.

Given this, it is clear that journalists' skills have evolved throughout time, mostly as a result of the industry's continual growth to keep up with technological advancement, and Harvest FM is no different. Since the digital world is currently the environment in which journalists are most likely to function, it is crucial to structure this research project in the same context in order to properly comprehend the new digital skills and competencies that journalists need to learn. Reyes-de-Cózar *et al.*, (2022) agrees to the above accessions and states that the roles and skills of journalists has been changing throughout the 20th century, albeit these changes were more noticeable in the first two decades of the 21st century and that this was mostly due to the profession of journalism constantly adapting to new technologies.

As a practical example to the above statement, the media sector in Lesotho is gradually eschewing the one-medium reporting methods of the past and adopting the use of social media networks like

¹Microsoft Word is a word processor that you may use to produce documents, reports, letters, and resumes that are of a professional calibre (Computer Hope, 2021).

Facebook and other digital channels like websites. This can be observed in how Lesotho's commercial and community radio stations are using the country's free Facebook service to reach individuals of all socioeconomic classes, including the socially disadvantaged. Kemp (2022) claims that despite the fact that Lesotho's digital landscape changes from year to year, one thing is certain: new internet users are added every year, which leads to the landscape's continued expansion. He states that there were 1.13 million internet users in Lesotho in January 2022, out of a total population of 2.17 million people, making the country's internet penetration rate in the beginning of 2022 51.9 percent (Kemp, 2022). Between 2021 and 2022, according to Kemp (2022), there was an increase of 110 000 internet users in Lesotho, or +10.8 percent.

Based on the above insights, it is clear that social media usage is gradually rising in Lesotho, making it crucial for journalists to possess the necessary abilities to disseminate news on digital platforms. The above statistics show that the internet usage is becoming more significant as a news source for transmitting news and information because of the continued growth of digital penetration, which shapes the skill sets needed for radio journalists. According to earlier literature cited in this chapter, radio journalists in Lesotho are embracing social media, especially Facebook, as a useful tool to increase or sustain their audience. Therefore, it is important to examine the role of digital literacy and the digital skills required by community radio journalists for them to be able to deliver, analyse, evaluate, and create news in a wide variety of mediums, using Harvest FM as an example. This will in turn make journalists better versed in news production and timely news delivery.

1.7 General research question (GRQ)

According to Mattick *et al.*, (2022), a research question is a question that a study or research project aims to answer, and it addresses an issue or problem that is answered in the study's conclusion through data analysis and interpretation.

In the below research questions, it is important to note that digital skills in the main research question refers to which digital tools are needed by radio journalists and how they are operated in a digital environment, while digital literacy in specific research questions refers to why those tools are important. According to Othman (2023) digital skills concentrates more on knowing, while digital literacy focuses more on understanding.

Based on the rational, the following general research question (GRQ) can be formulated:

- **GRQ:** What digital skills are necessary for journalists in community radio in Lesotho to publish and gather news in order to deliver news on time in a digital environment?

1.8 Specific research questions (SRQ)

From the above GRQ, the following SRQ's can be formulated:

- **SRQ1:** What digital literacy skills are needed for Harvest FM's journalists in order to provide timely news material in a digital media environment?
- **SRQ2:** What attitudes on digital literacy do the journalists at Harvest FM hold?
- **SRQ3:** How do journalists' experiences with digital literacy manifest in the Harvest FM newsroom?
- **SRQ4:** What recommendations can be made to advance digital literacy research required to equip community radio journalists?

Chapter 2

Literature review and theoretical framework

2.1 Literature review

A literature review examines previous academic research on a particular subject (Onwuegbuzie & Frels, 2015). Theoretical and methodological contributions to a given issue are also a component of literature review, and by principle, current information that includes practical findings is also included in the literature review (Onwuegbuzie & Frels, 2015). The goal of this literature review is to place this research into the framework of the body of knowledge already written on the subject, and to find out what function digital literacy serves in the world of digital media and what skills radio journalists need to have in order to function effectively in this environment.

Vithalani and Nagarajan (2022) states that news reporting that is trustworthy is seriously threatened by the lack of digital skills. While the newsroom still places a high value on the conventional qualities of outstanding journalism, such as research, writing, and reporting skills, the prevailing digital environment requires that journalists provide a flexible range of digital capabilities to their newsrooms (ICFJ, 2022). This suggests that radio journalists need to be digital and information literate. Information and digital literacy, according to Green (2023), are critical tools for individuals to have in today's rapidly evolving information age. Digital literacy is the ability to use information technologies and the internet to find, assess, use, share, and create content, whereas information literacy is the ability to identify the level and type of an information need and then find, assess, and effectively use the necessary information (Green, 2023).

According to the Vithalani and Nagarajan (2022) the use of social media networks as the primary news source is on the rise. However, journalists, particularly in developing digital nations, lack the skills and tools necessary to be active in the constantly digitizing media landscape and this risks journalist being forgotten in this shift to digital technology (Vithalani & Nagarajan, 2022). The best approach to bridge this gap is to make sure that journalists continue having an influence, and to increase digital use and continued access to skills (Milano, 2019). Understanding digital news sharing is a critical skill for journalists, according to Lita (2022), because phones now serve as newsrooms and social media sites as channels for news dissemination. Social media platforms are constantly adding new features in order to increase their user base and improve user experience (Maryville University, 2022). In order to keep up with the rapid innovation and evolution of platforms, journalists must be aware of these characteristics and equipped to use them to work more efficiently when they have access to the necessary digital skills (Vithalani & Nagarajan, 2022). According to Jiexi (2021) this is critical because audiences can become engaged and productive members of society when digitization is combined with the necessary digital skills. By growing digital use, journalists' skills gap may be closed, and this could allow them to advance into the future. (Milano, 2019).

ICFJ (2022) states another solution in bridging the digital skills gap in the digitally influenced newsroom as on-the-job training, because the requirements of the digital age are continuously evolving, and journalists find it challenging to keep up.

Considering the above information, two studies that are particularly relevant to this study are Oliveira *et al.*, (2012), as the purpose of her study is to better understand how radio journalists perceive the changes that have taken place in their field as a result of the incorporation of the online platform and the internet into newsrooms. Oliveira *et al.*, (2012) study's primary goal is to comprehend how journalists view the impact of the digital environment on journalistic practices and tasks. This study is critical in this research project as it focuses on the use of social media in community radio stations. Oliveira *et al.*, (2012) study indicates that audiences can use online platforms like Facebook and Twitter to offer their opinions on the subjects, suggest fresh ideas, or contribute information about an event covered by journalists. Furthermore, Oliveira *et al.*, (2012) further indicates that once people within and outside of the newsroom are involved in the communicating process, the presence of journalism in social networks enhances the possibility of more diversity and pluralism in news production. Ingram (2022) agrees with the afore mentioned and states that because of social networks, radio audiences and journalists can now interact and discuss current events. Oliveira *et al.*'s piece of literature is utterly important in this research project because it clearly links social media and community radio and makes a clear assertion that social media facilitates the ease at which information can be distributed rapidly by radio journalists.

The second key study is that of JISC (2019), which provides a framework for digital skills to give a general description of the skills required in a digital organization in order to develop an internal, local, or locally customized version of a digital skills structure. The study also maps digital expertise across various staff roles within a team, department, or the entire organization in order to spot digital skills gaps. According to JISC (2019) these digital skills framework makes it possible for individuals to communicate, collaborate, and solve problems in order to achieve their potential effectively and creatively in all spheres of life, including learning, work, and social interactions.

There are five categories/key areas to master in a digital world, according to JISC's (2019) digital skills framework:

- Information and communication technology (ICT) skills,
- Media, information, and data literacy skills,
- Digital creation, problem solving and innovation skills,
- Digital communication, collaboration, and participation skills,
- Educational technology development.

For the purpose of this study, it is imperative to define information and communication technology (ICT) skills, digital communication, collaboration and participation skills and digital creation, problem solving and innovation, and media, information, and data literacy skills. These four key areas are relevant to this study because they speak directly to the facilitation of the creation, storage, management, and dissemination of news by digital means. They also have a tremendous impact on how fast news reaches the audience. However, educational technology development is not part of journalists' toolkit as it focuses on designing and developing digital instructional material for learners in a digital setting (JISC, 2019).

Information and communication technology (ICT) skills:

Information and communication technologies (ICT) relates to journalism because ICT are a broad category of tools used in journalism to collect, store, retrieve, process, analyse, and disseminate information (Kwanya, 2014). Mobile phones, computers, and networked systems like the Internet and the World Wide Web (WWW), among other things, are common examples of ICT (Kwanya, 2014). ICT tools are now being used by journalists to gather, process, and broadcast news (Kwanya, 2014). Furthermore, recorders, audio players (such as iPods), cell phones, digital cameras, laptops, and other devices are examples of such equipment (Kwanya, 2014).

According to JISC (2019), under this framework there are two main elements which are digital proficiency which means the use of ICT-based devices, applications, services, and equipment. Proficiency is the aptitude to keep up with ICT as it involves the assurance to accept technological skills (UNESCO, 2022). The second element is digital productivity which means the ability to choose digital devices that are appropriate for diverse jobs after weighing their advantages and drawbacks, as well as the usage of ICT-based tools to complete tasks effectively, productively, and with attention to quality (UNESCO, 2022).

Media, information, and data literacy skills:

Journalism is related to information, data, and media literacy because these skills are concerned with the ability to search for, evaluate, and use information. Media and information literacy skills are concerned with how information is displayed in media, such as text, images, video, and audio (JISC, 2019). Data literacy skills, on the other hand, are concerned with how complex information is represented in data form in media, such as numbers, graphs, charts, and statistics (JISC, 2019). According to JISC (2019), this framework includes three elements: media, information, and data. The first element is media literacy, which entails being able to critically receive and respond to messages in various media such as texts, graphics, video, and animation, as well as curate, re-edit, and repurpose media (JISC, 2019).

The second element is information literacy, which refers to the ability to locate, assess, manage, curate, organize, and share digital information (JISC, 2019). Finally, data literacy element which refers to the ability to collect, manage, access, and use digital data in spreadsheets, databases, and other formats, as well as interpret data through the use of queries, data analyses, and reports (JISC, 2019).

Digital communication, collaboration, and participation:

Journalism is related to digital communication, collaboration, and participation because these concepts include attitudes and actions for interacting with people online (Atallah, 2023). Creating digital networks through social media or exchanging messages in text-based forums are two examples (Atallah, 2023).

According to JISC (2019), under this framework there are three main elements which are digital communication which means the ability to effectively communicate in digital spaces and media, including text-based platforms, online videos, audio, and social media platforms; create digital communications for various purposes and audiences; and to recognize and deal with untrue or damaging digital communications. The second element is digital collaboration, and it means the ability to interact effectively in digital teams and working groups using shared media and tools in order to develop shared content using common productivity tools (JISC, 2019). The last element is digital participation which means creating trust and positive connections, sharing and amplifying messages across different media platforms (JISC, 2019). According to Al-hassan *et al.*, (2011) it is particularly important for community media to aspire to have a closer relationship with its audience for empowerment.

Digital creation, problem solving and innovation skills:

This is the ability to design, develop, and generate a variety of digital resources, such as videos, photographs, audio, and to maintain websites; it is all about having the skills, knowledge, and understanding to do so (Digital Capability Toolkit, 2022). This is why digital creativity, problem-solving, and innovation are related to journalism, because by using digital tools and techniques, people like journalists can conduct research, find solutions to issues, and come up with new ideas (Digital Capability Toolkit, 2022).

JISC (2019) agrees with the above assertions and indicate that under this framework there are three main elements which are digital creations which is the ability to design and/or produce new digital artefacts and materials, including writing for digital platforms, producing digital images, producing audio for digital platforms and videos. The second element is digital research and problem-solving, which is the ability to use digital information to address issues and provide answers (JISC, 2019). The last element is digital innovation which means the capacity to use digital technology in a variety of scenarios to adopt and develop new practices in areas like organizational, social, and workplace-based

contexts (JISC, 2019). Bradshaw (2017) agrees and indicate that both new and experienced journalists must experiment, pick up new skills rapidly, and develop entirely new kinds of storytelling skills if they want to stay relevant in this era of tremendous creativity and change. Oliveira *et al.*, (2012) place greater emphasis on radio journalists, indicating that the increasing adoption of digital technologies in radio provides journalists with the opportunity to learn new digital skills to advance their careers, allowing for a faster and more extensive degree of listener involvement. According Resler (2020) even if a radio journalist produces the best news content possible, it will be completely useless if they are unable to disseminate it effectively across a variety of channels.

In addition, it's crucial for community radio journalists to be able to recognize stories that, in contrast to the conventional single-medium stories, can be presented in a variety of ways (Koon-Stack & Zimmermann, 2022). According to Koon-Stack and Zimmermann (2022) journalists must have the skill to choose stories that fit their respective organizations and that work well with multimedia. The best multimedia stories are complex, filled with action, information, compelling characters, and strong emotions that can all be expressed through many platforms (Koon-Stack & Zimmermann, 2022). Also, journalists need to know how to utilize social networks for news gathering as well as how to use social media to learn about topics, connect with people, have conversations with people, identify trends, and distribute their own work (Marshall, 2013). Having the afore-mentioned skills according to Koon-Stack & Zimmermann (2022) can boost audience interaction and engagement since people enjoy stories they can explore. According to Oliveira *et al.*, (2012:103), the preceding statement is important because community radio stations have demonstrated a gradual convergence process over the years, and as a result, community radio journalists should learn how to multitask and learn digital skill to manage multimedia sharing platforms in order to avoid being restricted to sound productions. According to Krüger (2014), radio journalists need to hone their multi-media skills, understand various writing standards, practice using video and images, and become accustomed to identifying what works and what doesn't on the web.

Even though there is sufficient amount of prior research pertinent to this study, this study is unique because it focuses especially on the digital literacy skills required of community radio journalists in Lesotho, using Harvest FM as an example.

2.2 Theoretical framework

According to Jansen (2023), a theoretical framework is a structure that can hold or support a theory of a research study, and it introduces and describes the theory that explains why the research problem under study exists. That being said, it is important to elucidate digital literacy as it forms the theoretical framework of this study. According to Julien (2018) it is important to consider literacies in general when interpreting the concept of digital literacy. Modern definitions of literacy go beyond the classic definition, which only involves reading and writing, to also include interpretive and creative

skills that may be used to a variety of texts in written and other formats (Julien, 2018). From a practical standpoint, digital literacy refers to the set of skills, knowledge, and values necessary to impart and access digital information effectively, efficiently, and morally (Julien, 2018).

The theoretical framework for this study is digital literacy and information literacy. This is because globally, journalists are recognized as both information consumers and information communicators (Dewangan & Verma, 2022). According to Dewangan and Verma (2022), twenty years ago, telephone or in-person interviews were the only ways for journalists to obtain information. However, the idea of acquiring knowledge has significantly changed in the digital age; today, information may be quickly accessible from the Internet, digital archives, and online databases (Dewangan & Verma, 2022). Based on this, Hobbs *et al.*, (2013) states that it is crucial to investigate the attitudes of community radio journalists and how they feel about the significance of digital literacy. This is because digital literacy is a crucial life skill for the 21st century, as people receive the majority of their information from highly constructed visual images and complex sound arrangements rather than traditional sources (Hobbs *et al.*, 2013).

According to Oliveira *et al.*, (2012), in order to comprehend the digital changes that are taking place in a digital journalism field, one must consider both how the profession of journalism is socially constructed and how these socially shared meanings develop from the interactions between journalists and their social surroundings. Therefore, this study encompasses two major areas that include a change in organisational roles brought on by learning of digital skills, and the use of innovation to advance journalistic work. Consequently, this study will draw on two communication theories namely diffusion of innovation theory (media as innovation) and theory of sociocultural evolution.

Since this research project is grounded on diffusion of innovation theory, sociocultural evolution theory, digital literacy theory, and information literacy theory, the following sub-sections will deal with the application of the aforementioned theories and link each theory to this study. This will help to shed some light on the main research question's answer and will serve as a guide to generate some themes and sub-themes.

2.2.1 Sociocultural evolution

The theory of sociocultural evolution is pertinent to this study because it offers a theoretical framework for analysing historical and present changes in the media industry and offers a framework for examining the effects and advancements of media in the digital age. According to Acerbi (2016) sociocultural evolution is a general concept for theories of cultural evolution and social evolution that describe the advancement of societies and cultures over time. This theory generally offers models for comprehending the connection between innovations, social order, and societal values, as well as how and why they change over time (Acerbi, 2016). Maryville University (2022) concurs and makes an example of the evolution of social media in a digital environment, and states that it has been fuelled

by the human desire to interact as well as advances in digital technology. The theory of sociocultural evolution, according to West and Turner (2010), was created to explain the adjustments that life forms make in order to remain alive in a hostile climate. These adjustments are alterations that enable living things to adapt to changing surroundings (West & Turner, 2010). Some organisms die due to their inability to adjust, whilst those that adjust grow and prosper (West & Turner, 2010). West and Turner (2010) further state that according to this communication theory, organizations that take steps to modify their systems to accommodate the new digital environment have a better chance of prospering and thriving. Those who do not make an effort to adapt to a changing environment risk becoming obsolete, which can have serious consequences (West & Turner, 2010). May (2013) agrees and states that radio, like the rest of the media, is undergoing unprecedented change at an incredible speed, and one of the best ways to fully succeed with radio, is for broadcasters to be creative in its application. May (2013) indicates that as radio accessibility continues to expand, digital platforms are important because they enhance it. This is the case with Harvest FM's newsroom, which uses Facebook and, to a lesser extent, their website to disseminate information.

2.2.2 Sociocultural news construction in a digital environment: Harvest as an illustration

Harvest FM previously used radio as its primary and sole platform for disseminating news. The radio gradually and fully integrated digital media platforms such as Facebook and the website to disseminate news. The station's method of disseminating news evolved from just audio on live radio to images, text, videos, and graphics on the aforementioned digital platforms. Their Facebook page is also used for live current affairs streaming, allowing radio listeners to see presenters and guests in the studio. This demonstrates that creating and delivering news is a never-ending journey that improves with new media environments and new skills learned by journalists, whether traditional or digital. Having said that, it is appropriate to say that the digital era provides the entire media industry with a new paradigm of modernization and advancement. Fortner and Fackler (2014) concur and state that a sociocultural construction of news perspective shifts away from viewing news as a fully formed and stable entity and toward an acceptance that news is an inherently dynamic entity shaped in a social environment. The educational and personal background of a journalist, workplace arrangements, and interactions with the larger society over time all have an effect on the construction of news (Fortner & Fackler, 2014).

2.2.3 Diffusion of innovation theory

Since this study is focused on the utilization of digital skills and their requirement, it is necessary to comprehend how digital skills trickle down to journalists after their initial conceptualization, hence the diffusion of innovation theory. As the digital era gradually catches up with the journalism industry, many digital skills are being adopted by journalists. As briefly discussed in the previous chapter, diffusion of innovation theory attempts to explain how, why, and at what rate new ideas and technology spread from the originator through a social system to a specific group. This is an accurate

reflection of how new digital and technological skills spread from large corporations to journalists e.g., the classic example is of how Facebook was initially used exclusively by the campus community of a specific university but eventually spread to the general public and then into the journalism industry.

According to Nordin *et al.*, (2021), despite the fact that social media is similar to other traditional communication channels in that its primary goal is information dissemination, its introduction has resulted in a new digital environment. Social media allows people from all walks of life to share content or opinions without being limited by traditional mass media gatekeepers, and its popularity has spread to all levels of society, thus increasing the frequency of information-seeking behaviour (Nordin *et al.*, 2021). Since social media is a popular communication platform used by people of all ages, it is critical that it be fully optimized for knowledge transfer and innovation diffusion (Nordin *et al.*, 2021). Mustaffa *et al.*, (2011) indicates that there are four key factors involved in the diffusion process and they are innovation, communication channels, time, and the social system. The initial factor that triggers diffusion is the innovation or introduction of something new into the social system (Mustaffa *et al.*, 2011). The innovation or introduction requires the members of the social system to adopt it, which requires some form of communication to persuade them to reach a shared understanding to accept change (Mustaffa *et al.*, 2011). Sirk (2020) expounds on the key factors involved in the diffusion of innovation:

Innovation

According to Sirk (2020) innovation is an idea, practice, or object perceived as new by an individual, group, or organization and must be new in the literal sense. Complexity, adaptability, and compatibility are characteristics of an innovation that influence its chances of adoption (Sirk, 2020). Another crucial characteristic is trialability, which refers to the ability to test ideas on a limited scale e.g., an earlier example of Facebook, which began as a network to connect fellow Harvard students and alumni, has grown to become the world's most popular social networking site (Sirk, 2020). Finally, observability refers to how easily others can see the outcomes of an innovation (Sirk, 2020).

Communication channels

Communication channels, according to Sirk (2020), are an important factor in the diffusion process because people need to spread the word about new technology and concepts. The two types of communication channels are mass media and social networks (Sirk, 2020). Information in the mass media travels from a channel to an individual, whereas information in social networks travels from person to person, implying that communication methods include face-to-face, broadcast media, mobile, electronic, and written communication (Sirk, 2020).

Social System

A social system is a collection of interconnected units and individuals, groups, or organizations may constitute these units (Sirk, 2020). The key point is that members of the system work together to achieve a common goal, and members of a social system can help or hinder adoption (Sirk, 2020). If an innovation is compatible with the structure of a culture, it will be successful (Sirk, 2020). This means that Harvest FM is a social system because according to Fulgencio and Lefever (2016), a social system in the diffusion of innovation theory is a physical or social environment that targets social issues or needs, and it's an environment to which people belong and within which they function.

Time

Adoption of innovations takes time, so time is an important variable in diffusion (Sirk, 2020). Time is analysed in terms of the innovation-decision process, which refers to the time between first learning something and forming an opinion (Sirk, 2020). Time allows potential adopters to be exposed to communications for a set period of time before deciding whether or not to adopt (Sirk, 2020).

The Rate of Adoption

The rate of adoption measures how quickly an idea spreads to a specific percentage of people, which often increases larger after early adopters take a complete control of an idea (Sirk, 2020). Opinion leaders have a significant influence on the early majority, providing the necessary momentum to reach critical mass (Sirk, 2020).

According to Sirk (2020), there are five stages of adoption based on diffusion of innovation theory. The first stage is awareness, in which a person becomes aware of the innovation and has some idea of what it is and what it does. Second, persuasion occurs when a person develops an attitude toward the innovation, which can be positive or negative, and feels compelled to seek information about the innovation (Sirk, 2020). Third, a person weighs the benefits and drawbacks of using the innovation and decides whether to adopt or reject it (Sirk, 2020). Fourth, implementation, in which a person puts the innovation to use while still determining how useful it is (Sirk, 2020). Finally, a person examines the outcomes of the innovation decision and makes a final decision on whether to continue using the innovation; this decision may be motivated by group confirmation (Sirk, 2020).

As an illustration of the Harvest FM case study through the above stages of innovation, Respondents 1 (editor) stated that before they fully implemented the use of Facebook in their newsroom, they could not reach all the districts of Lesotho and realized that they should use Facebook to reach people in areas that radio does not reach; this is the awareness stage. Respondent 1 stated that they closely watched what big radio stations like Lesedi FM, and Metro FM did with Facebook; this is the persuasion state because they were enticed by what they saw. Then after weighing the pros and cons, they copied the use of Facebook and integrated it into their newsroom, and this is the decision stage. They applied the Facebook innovation to determine its usefulness, which is the implementation stage.

And finally, they saw growth through the Facebook reactions e.g., likes, comments and shares and decided to keep it; this is the continuation stage. This means that the above-mentioned radio stations were the trend-setters/innovators and Harvest FM an adopter. With Harvest FM adopting and implementing the use of Facebook, it became a social system that dispersed the Facebook innovation and use to its audiences through a communication channel of radio to great awareness. In turn, the audiences welcomed the use of this innovation (Facebook) by watching the current affairs livestreams and other posts, and in turn reacting.

2.2.4 Digital literacy theory

Digital literacy theory is important in this study because today's journalists must be able to meet their information needs with digital platforms, multimedia tools, the Internet and social networks, as well as respond quickly to new media challenges. This means journalists need to be digitally literate and have digital skills to survive in a digital setting like a converged newsroom (Greer, 2008). According to Carretero (2021), digital skills are the ability to find, evaluate, use, share, and create content on digital devices such as computers and smartphones. On the other hand, UNESCO (2018), asserts that digital skills include a variety of skillsets for using digital tools, communication programs, and networks to acquire and manage information.

Since computers and various applications, as well as the internet, have become essential means of communication and information acquisition in the digital society, it is critical for journalists to understand how to use them in the current digital environment. As a result, journalists of today will be able to satisfy their informational demands using digital platforms, multimedia tools, the Internet, web, and social networks, and act swiftly in the face of new media challenges (Dewangan & Verma, 2022).

Furthermore, the theory of digital literacy is important in this study because one of its points of departure is that, journalists should work continuously to become digitally literate and to accept and be skilled in changes in the media profession. Meaning a thorough knowledge of this new era of digital literacy and what it implies for journalists has never been more important given the uncertain and exciting state of the global media environment (ICFJ, 2017). Moreover, journalists must come up with all-encompassing strategies to stay up with the digital revolution because according to ICFJ (2017), journalists and newsrooms lack the technological expertise necessary to tackle the problems they face in an era of fake news, digital security risks, and competition for audience attention. As a result, newsrooms rely on a limited set of digital skills, and journalists are unable to fulfil their responsibility to inform the public in a timely and accurate manner without harming their sources or themselves (ICFJ, 2017).

Reedy and Parker (2018) define digital literacy as the ability to identify and use technology knowledgeably, innovatively, and analytically to meet the needs and challenges of daily life, learning,

and work in the digital age. According to Dewangan and Verma (2022), the term "digital literacy" is credited to Paul Gilster (1997), who considered digital literacy to be a logical extension of literacy and defined it as the capacity to comprehend and utilize data in variety of formats from a diverse set of sources when proffered through the use of computers. According to Reedy and Parker (2018), being digitally literate is more than just understanding how to use technology; it is also understanding how to manoeuvre effectively in a digitally enhanced environment. Being digitally literate also entails understanding how to transfer digital skills learned in one situation to another and seamlessly transitioning from one platform to another (Reedy & Parker, 2018). Career Wise (2021) indicates that there are five key digital literacy skills which are:

- **Photo-visual literacy:** This is the ability to recognize an image or infographic and comprehend its symbolic meanings.
- **Socio-emotional literacy:** This is the ability to recognize the advantages of operating in the digital space while also recognizing the risks associated with working in digital world and how to avoid them.
- **Reproduction literacy:** The ability to create a constructive, genuine, and creative work or interpretation by integrating separate pieces of information from different online sources.
- **Branching Literacy:** Understanding the intricacies of digital world and how the digital world works. It is the ability to remember how you got to a specific website and how to leave it and selecting options based on visuals.

2.2.5 Information literacy theory

Information literacy theory is relevant to this study because, in a digital environment, radio journalists must understand why and when they need information, where to search for it, how to evaluate it, use it, and communicate it ethically. Information literacy is defined by Limberg et al. (2012) as the ability to find, evaluate, organize, use, and communicate information in all of its forms in a digital environment, particularly in situations requiring decision making, problem solving, or knowledge acquisition. It combines research, analytical thinking, computer technology, and communication skills (Limberg, 2012). According to Kundu *et al.*, (2020) information literate people are aware of how they gather, use, manage, synthesize, and create information and data in an ethical manner and have the information skills to do so effectively. Kundu *et al.*, (2020) indicates that Paul Zurkowski coined the term "information literacy" in 1974, defining it as the ability to recognize, appraise, collect, assess, adapt, arrange, and convey information within an iterative context of review and reflection.

2.3 Conclusion

This chapter outlined how this study draws on four theoretical constructs: diffusion of innovation theory, theory of sociocultural evolution, digital literacy theory, and information literacy theory. The primary objective of this chapter is to demonstrate how these four theoretical approaches relate to the

use of online technologies in a digital environment in a community radio setting. Firstly, in the diffusion of innovation theory, the literature in this chapter suggests that digital platforms have diffused and advanced dramatically over the years, and they have become one of the biggest innovations in the history of media; meaning information spreads quickly and can be seen by a large number of people, particularly with the rise of social media platforms such as Facebook. Since the content of posts or information shared in stories by news outlets can influence people, journalists have formed intricate networks with their audiences to allow participation e.g., Harvest FM Facebook pages. Also, according to the literature in this chapter, news can be created and spread quickly since the diffusion of the internet and social media networks. The main idea behind the diffusion of innovations theory is that technology and the internet have a strong impact on how people communicate and influence one another, which means that in the context of the current study, Harvest FM journalists and newsroom have been influenced by larger news agencies to adopt the idea of using digital platforms to disseminate news. Secondly, as per the literature in the theory of sociocultural evolution, individuals learn in the context of their social and cultural environment. Therefore, the wide diffusion of digital media platforms has had a broad cultural impact because people primarily consume news on digital platforms such as Facebook. According to the literature, digital media, particularly social media, have enormous reach today and, as a result, have the most influence on the sociocultural behaviour of a large portion of the human population. In accordance with the literature there has been a sociocultural shift because many people use electronic devices such as computers and smartphones to transmit and consume news, resulting in more individuals switching from conventional media platforms in favour of new digital media, hence the adoption of the digital platforms by radio journalists.

Thirdly, the digital literacy theory, which according to the literature in this chapter indicates that it includes the skills needed to use innovation safely, proficiently, and accountably. As innovation becomes more firmly entrenched in everyday life, the necessity of developing digital literacy skills for radio journalists in order to deliver news across platforms becomes more evident. The literature points out that radio journalists should be able to combine creativity, functional skills, internet safety, communication skills, the ability to search for and select information, collaboration, social and cultural comprehension, critical analysis, and information evaluation. Lastly, information literacy theory, which earlier in this chapter was defined as the ability to recognize, identify, assess, and use information effectively. In accordance with the literature, the primary references of information literacy are rapid technological development and the acquisition of new information. In the influx of new information, community radio journalists should be able to identify and use the information in an appropriate way. The information literate journalist can identify the requirement for new information, assess the value of the information, efficiently obtain information, and assess the validity of the information and its origin.

Chapter 3

Method

3.1 Introduction

This study looks into the skills that community radio journalists in Lesotho need to deliver news on time in a digital environment, using Harvest FM as an example. The preceding chapter outlined a theoretical framework and highlighted the significance of all theoretical approaches involved in this study. The previous chapter also discussed the relationship between social media and community radio and why it is important for community radio journalists to possess digital skills. The purpose of this chapter is to provide an outline for the design of an empirical study on digital skills needed in a digital environment that will be presented in chapter 4.

The research approach and research design used in this study is discussed in this chapter. The research methods, sampling and measuring instruments will be discussed as well as the limitations of the study. According to Pamplona (2022), research methodology refers to the specific processes or methods used to identify, select, process, and analyse data on a specific subject.

3.2 A qualitative research approach

A qualitative research approach is used in this study. According to Crossman (2020), the qualitative research approach is a type of social science research approach that gathers and deals with data that does not entail numbers. Bhandari (2022) concurs and states that a qualitative research approach entails gathering and analysing non-numerical data such as text, video, or audio to better understand concepts, opinions, or experiences. It can be used to gain in-depth perspectives into an issue or to develop fresh research ideas (Bhandari, 2022).

According to Du Plooy (2009), a qualitative approach is grounded on inductive reasoning, where research begins with questioning or observations in order to develop theoretical propositions. According to Sutton and Austin (2015), qualitative research allows researchers to access study participants' opinions and feelings, which can help researchers create an understanding of the meaning that individuals attribute to their experiences that are relevant to the elements being investigated, such as digital skills required in a digital environment in a community radio setting Harvest FM as example. Teherani *et al.*, (2015) define qualitative research as a systematic investigation into social phenomena in natural settings. These phenomena include, but are not restricted to, how people perceive aspects of their lives, how individual people or groups acts, how organizations operate, and how interactions structure relationships (Teherani *et al.*, 2015). The researcher investigates why things occur, what occurs, and what those occurrences imply for the participants under investigation (Teherani *et al.*, 2015). As a result, a qualitative research method will aid the researcher in comprehending the perspectives of community radio journalists in a digital environment. This approach will allow respondents to convey their views and perceptions on digital literacy as they

understand it and directly experience it. Finally, using Harvest FM as an example, a qualitative research approach will assist in understanding what digital skills community radio journalists require.

Nieuwenhuis and Smit (2012) designate that one of the basic methods of a qualitative approach is interviewing. However, according to Gaille (2018), although the qualitative research may be successful in gathering accurate data, the study's limited sample size may present challenges. Many viewpoints are frequently necessary to make an important decision in order to prevent making a costly error (Gaille, 2018). That could imply that several research phases would be necessary to compile all the information required to make such a challenging choice (Gaille, 2018). Also, the data acquired is only reliable at the time it is gathered because this approach is reliant on individual perspectives, which might change (Gaille, 2018).

3.3 Research design

This study employs a case study as a qualitative methodological research technique. According to McCombes (2023) a case study is a research method for developing a comprehensive, multifaceted understanding of a complex issue in its real-world context. It is a well-known research design that is widely used in many fields, particularly the social sciences (McCombes, 2023). McCombes (2023) further states that a case study is an appropriate research design when a researcher wants to gain concrete, contextual, and in-depth knowledge about a specific real-world subject. It allows the researcher to look into the case's key features, meanings, and implications (McCombes, 2023).

Harvest FM is used as a case study in this instance. The case study techniques aided the researcher in obtaining an enormous amount of information about the use of digital platforms, particularly Facebook, in a community radio context. The case study techniques allowed the researcher to purposefully select journalists and a radio newsroom rapidly uses Facebook to report current events in a real-life context. A case study technique is thus useful in this study, as it is used to investigate the perspectives of radio journalists and the emergence of Facebook use in community radio stations. Harvest FM is chosen for this study because it is more consistent with Facebook use than any other radio station in Lesotho. In this study, the researcher uses a case study to gather detailed information over a week through structured interviews and observation.

3.4 Research questions

General research question (GRQ)

What digital skills are necessary for journalists in community radio in Lesotho to publish and gather news in order to deliver news on time in a digital environment?

3.4.1 Specific research questions (SRQ)

SRQ1: What digital literacy skills are needed for Harvest FM's journalists in order to provide timely news material in a digital media environment?

SRQ2: What attitudes on digital literacy do the journalists at Harvest FM hold?

SRQ3: How do journalists' experiences with digital literacy manifest in the Harvest FM newsroom?

3.4 Research methods

The research methods used for the empirical study in this study are semi-structured interviews and observation.

3.5.1 Semi-Structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews are employed in this study because they allow for data collection premised on an interview schedule that guides the researcher in terms of questions and important points to cover (see Appendix 1). According to Lindlof and Taylor (2022) an interview schedule is essential in qualitative research because it helps the researcher to obtain more data by asking follow-up questions or clarifications to the questions they have prepared. As a result, the information collected is more relevant and useful (Lindlof & Taylor, 2022). The interviews will be conducted in person with the aid of a voice recorder. By recording the responses, the researcher will be able to probe deeper into the generated questions. According to Nieuwenhuis and Smit (2012), semi-structured interviews let the researcher discover and delve into fresh inquiries that are pertinent to the subject under study. The researcher will conduct a series of interviews with one editor and four journalists about their daily tasks, especially in relation to producing news for their online audiences.

Du Plooy (2009) designates that semi-structured interviews permit the interviewer to diverge from the subject matter and to ask follow-up questions centred on the respondent's responses, particularly when the interviewee's answers are not clear.

3.5.2 Observation

In this research study, participants were observed in their newsroom settings and how they use digital tools to disseminate news. According to Urban Institute (2022), observation is essential because it enables researchers to watch things that participants might not regularly notice or mention in an interview. Observational data collection provides a clear description of the environment, any activities occurring in that environment, the participants, and their interactions with each other (Urban Institute, 2022). A one-week visit was made to observe how journalists carry out their daily tasks of writing, revising, and publishing their work on the earlier mentioned platforms. This will allow the interviewer to understand how digital literacy manifests in the newsroom.

A variety of techniques, including listening, reading, touching, and recording behaviour and phenomenon features, can be used to acquire data through observation (Dudovskiy, 2022). The direct

access to study phenomena, high application flexibility, and creation of a permanent record of phenomena for future reference are all benefits of the observation data gathering approach (Dudovskiy, 2022). The disadvantages of this strategy include the need for more time, high levels of observer bias, and the impact of observers on source data, which can affect how sample group elements behave (Dudovskiy, 2022).

3.6 Sampling

This research study employs convenience sampling. According to Simkus (2023), convenience sampling is a technique/method of non-probability sampling that allows researchers to select their sampling grounded on convenience. Simkus (2023) also states that convenience sampling can also be utilised when the researcher intends to observe the behaviours, sentiments, and perspectives of the target audience, which is the case in this study. Convenience sampling is convenient in this is because the sample is very limited due to the small size of Harvest FM newsroom and its journalists. The participants who have taken part in this research were the key informants. Therefore, the news editor who is also the station manager and four journalists from Harvest FM were interviewed about working in a digital environment. The researcher also looks into their attitudes of digital literacy and the overall digital skills required to deliver timely news in a digital environment in Lesotho, using Harvest FM as an example.

3.6.1 News Editor

Harvest FM's news editor is an ideal participant because she is aware of all the technological changes and developments brought about by the digital environment, such as other distribution platforms used in addition to radio.

3.6.2 Radio journalists

Four radio journalists are ideal participants because they are more involved in the story production line for digital distribution as well as radio, and they are sufficient to determine whether they understand what digital literacy is and how it applies in a digital media landscape.

3.7 Interview schedule

The interview schedule serves as a guide for the researcher to conduct semi-structured interviews with the Harvest FM news editor and four radio journalists (see Appendix 1). To maintain anonymity in this study, the respondents are referred to as follows:

- **Editor: Respondent 1.**

Respondent 1 is a 31-year-old female and started working at Harvest FM in 2018 as a journalist and news reader, and was later promoted to news editor in 2020, and station manager in 2021.

- **Journalist 1: Respondent 2.**

Respondent 2 is a 26-year-old male and started working at Harvest FM as a journalist and graphic designer in 2020 and has a BA Degree in Graphic Design. In his previous experience, he was graphic designer, video editor, photographer, and audio engineer.

- **Journalist 2: Respondent 3.**

Respondent 3 is a 33-year-old male and started working at Harvest FM in 2021 as a journalist and newsreader and has Diploma in Education.

- **Journalist 3: Respondent 4.**

Respondent 4 is a 29-year-old female and started working at Harvest FM as a journalist and news reader in 2016 and has a Diploma in Mass Communication.

- **Journalist 4: Respondent 5.**

Respondent 5 is a 36-year-old-female and started working at Harvest FM in 2010 as a journalist and news reader and was later promoted to current affairs presenter.

3.8 Analysis of data

The replies resulting from the semi-structured interviews conducted face-to-face are critically analysed word for word to formulate answers which will share the same viewpoint as per digital literacy. To represent the respondent's' views, the data is analysed and reported as direct quotations in the findings (Chapter 4). Results will be deliberated on under the formulated themes constructed on the rate of recurrence during the interviews. Demonstrating participants' views through themes permits the researcher to categorise issues, topics, resemblances, and differences that are revealed through the participants' explanations (Sutton & Zubin, 2015). The themes will be construed, and deductions drawn grounded on the answers of the participants.

3.8.1 Data synthesis

Data synthesis is the method of joining the key points of the results from two or more interviews or studies, therefore the main views of the participants will be joint to make an overall point (McCombes, 2020). In order to synthesize and present the findings in this study, deductions will be reinforced by the use of direct quotations from the participants. This makes sure that the participants' perceptions are signified and that the findings being discussed under the themes arose from the participants not the researcher (Sutton & Zubin, 2015).

3.9 Limitations and ethical considerations

Although Harvest is being used as an example, it might not accurately represent stations of this nature in Lesotho or other underprivileged environments.

3.9.1 Ethical considerations

- **Ethics committee:** The University of Witwatersrand's Ethics Committee approved this research study after ensuring that it met the Committee's accepted standards. The protocol number is JOMS 2022/6.
- **Informed consent:** The purpose of the study and how the findings will be used were fully explained to the respondents. The respondents were informed that the interview recordings would be destroyed once the study was completed. The researcher has the signed consent forms from the respondents and the permission letter from the radio station manager to carry out the research.
- **Voluntary participation:** The respondents were informed that they could withdraw their participation in the study at any time if they so desired.
- **Confidentiality:** The respondents were informed that their responses would be kept confidential and that any identifying information about their names would not be openly written in this study.

3.10 Conclusion

In this chapter, the research approach and how it will be used in this study was described. This will help the researcher to understand the digital skills needed by journalists in a community radio setting in Lesotho, with Harvest FM used as example. Also, the choice of the participants was deliberated on and their significance in this research study. The next chapter will deliberate on the findings of the empirical study.

Chapter 4

FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The literature study concluded in chapter 2 that community radio journalists in Lesotho require digital skills to deliver news on time in a digital environment. The rationale for this study was stated in chapter 1 (see section 1.7) that community radio journalists must learn new digital skills to stay relevant to their audiences or risk being left behind.

The findings of the empirical study are presented in this chapter. The interview schedule in Annexure 1 stipulates questions that yield answers to the problem and the primary goal of this research study.

4.2 Presentation of the findings

The results of the semi-structured interviews are now described and analysed.

The sub-themes beneath each theme will be discussed in section 4.3 below by providing their functional use in this study and meanings, followed by highlighting the participants' supporting quotes. A theme, according to Bernarte (2023), is a theoretical idea based on empirical research such as observation and interviews, whereas a sub-theme shares the same organizing notion as the theme but focuses on a noteworthy specific component.

4.3 Innovation

In chapter 2 (see section 2.1), it was argued that in order for community radio journalists to thrive in a digital environment, journalists need to be innovative in order to use digital technology in a variety of scenarios, and to adopt and develop new innovative practices in areas like organizational, social, and workplace-based contexts. As a theoretical points of departure, the innovation theme emerged from the diffusion of innovations theory and suggest that journalists should adopt the use of new innovative digital platforms like Facebook to disseminate news (see section 2.2.3). The sub-themes digital distribution platforms, digital skills training, time, digital devices, attitudes, and digital news production are taken to investigate digital literacy at Harvest FM. In section 4.3.1 below, the findings attained from the semi-structured interviews with Harvest FM news editor and journalists will be deliberated on according to the above sub-themes.

4.3.1 Digital distribution platforms

The delivery of digital media content such as audio, video, pictures, and text over an online delivery medium such as the internet is referred to as digital distribution platforms in this study (Peek, 2019). This also includes the platforms used by Harvest FM to distribute news to their audience. Harvest FM

is no longer limited to only sharing news content via audio on radio. This also implies that using social media has broadened the radio frequency of community radio, alleviating the constraint of relying solely on radio.

Respondent 1 said:

“Since Facebook is widely used in Lesotho, we decided to use it as one of our digital distribution platforms. This allows us to reach a lot of people at the same time. Since we also livestream all our current affairs programmes, Facebook allows our audiences to see what is happening in our studio, and that raises engagement. The incorporation of Facebook in our newsroom has afforded Harvest FM an opportunity to reach beyond our radio frequency modulations, therefore reaching people who are both in remote areas of Lesotho and international destinations.”

Respondent 2 added:

Digital distribution platforms like Facebook help us build a big audience because we also use it to advertise and market our programmes e.g., we recently made an announcement on radio and a poster on Facebook about a live memorial service of one of our Harvest FM former colleagues who passed away. He passed away working as the prime minister’s press attaché. Our frequency was flooded on the day of the memorial because even people who were not listening to the radio when an announcement was made saw the poster on Facebook. The memorial service was also livestreamed on Facebook and people from all walks of life both in Lesotho and in other countries watched on Facebook. The number of views on that day were unbelievable. We also use Facebook to tease the listeners and create suspense to redirect the audience to listen to the news and current affairs programmes on radio.”

Facebook augments the Harvest FM radio platform. All respondents agreed that digital distribution platforms have augmented the radio platform, which was previously the only means of audience reach.

As a result, community radio journalists must be capable of using digital distribution platforms innovatively in order for their news content to reach a larger audience in a timely manner. This deduction is related to the theory in this study as Oliveira *et al.*, (2012) state that community radio journalists must constantly seek innovative ways to engage/interact and retain their audiences (see chapter 1, section 1.1). Therefore, it can be deduced that community radio journalists need interaction and participation skills in a digital environment.

4.3.2 Digital skill training

In this study, digital training means any kind of learning that is complemented by technology or by instructional practice that makes real use of technology. According to Tinworth (2023), digital skills training for journalists is significant because it is a step towards learning new things that can improve an individual's confidence to work in an online environment and to use technology for work, learning and daily life.

Respondent 1 said:

"Facebook is just not about playing and having fun. So, after realizing how useful Facebook is in a radio setting, we decided to headhunt and engage someone with digital skills; someone who's familiar with the digital environment (which is Respondent 2) and started working with him. We had our personal Facebook accounts, but our knowledge was limited on the business side of things. At the beginning, he was the only one managing our Facebook page. Since we engaged him in 2020, we have learned a lot of things in terms of managing a radio station Facebook page, and realized that managing a page for business purposes is deeper than we thought. Among other things, he taught us how to use Facebook for promotion and branding purposes, as well as to go live when reporting and in studio. Other than that, we learn and copy digital related things from other advanced radio stations."

Respondent 2 concurred and said:

"It is such an amazing experience to share my knowledge and skills with my colleagues. Before becoming a journalist, I produced my own music and had to do everything by myself. Additionally, I'm a graphic designer by profession. The entertainment industry has helped me a lot because I designed my own Facebook promotional posters and covers, I edited and shot my own videos and took pictures where necessary. So, in me there are graphic design skills, photography skills, video shooting and editing skills. So, merging all of those skills makes me a full digital newsroom."

The remaining respondents agreed and said they have learned and attained a lot of skills from Respondent 2 and from watching other radio stations. The conclusion reached is that journalists at Harvest FM learned digital skills from observing how other innovative radio stations implement the use of Facebook in a radio setting, and also picked digital skills from their colleague who has a vast experience of working in a digital environment. It can also be deduced that Harvest FM journalists do not bring digital skills along into the job but learn from each other and by copying other radio station. Therefore, it can be deduced that community radio journalists need video shooting and editing skills, graphic design skills, and photography skills. Further deductions that can be made is that community radio is inclining toward commercial radio impulses (see section 1.1), and that community radio is gradually integrating citizen journalism features into their work. According to Kocic *et al.*, (2021), the

integration of citizen journalism into community radio augments chances for distributing news among geographically distant communities who share similar interests, and it also spreads possibilities for interested individuals outside the rural communities to have access and contribute to the news via digital platforms offered by community radios e.g., Facebook.

4.3.3 Time

In this study, time is defined as the speed it takes for news content to reach the audience. Sora (2016) asserts that the planning and design of digital environments and devices reduces work time while increasing work efficiency. This means that, unlike when radio was the only platform for news delivery, news can now be delivered on time, and in some cases, as it happens. Furthermore, time speaks to the element of immediacy/speed as the news reaches the audience fast (Shaunie, 2023).

Respondent 2 explained how time is an important element in a digital environment and that one must have real-time reporting skills in order to produce and publish news on the go. This means journalists need a sense of urgency, which according to EmployeePedia (2023) is a self-management soft skill that breaking news reporters and journalists in general need in order to carry out a task instantly on time and with great concentration.

Respondent 2 said:

“The time it takes for news to reach the audience is very brief compared to the time when we were only using radio. For instance, I recently reported about a burning grocery wholesaler store, where I made a Facebook livestream and reported about the incident live. In the past I would have to gather what was happening there and then come back to the newsroom and write an article about the incident, then wait for the news hour. By that time, some of the listeners might have heard it somewhere and it is not news to them anymore. In some cases, when there is a Facebook livestream on our official Facebook page, our journalists and current affairs presenters who are not out in the field are able to write an article about the incident and include it in our news hour or current affairs programme for people who do not have access to Facebook to also be updated. For the journalist who is in the newsroom at the time of the livestream, it means they are in the newsroom but in the field as well.”

Other respondents agreed, stating that working in a digital environment has allowed them to save time and resources because when they are out in the field, all they need is their mobile cell phones and mobile data to communicate and send news back to the journalists in the newsroom, eliminating the need to rush back to the newsroom to write news. However, according to Wanayama (2022) even though digitisation speeds up the pace at which news can be gathered and disseminated across digital platforms, downsides like the abolition of gatekeepers who maintain journalistic integrity/ethics, distortion of news, disinformation and misinformation, hate speech and online harassment are

involved, and may become major threats to the journalism industry. The conclusion reached is that the digital environment saves time, thus speeding up the delivery of current news. This deduction is related to the theory in this study as Oliveira *et al.*, (2012) state that community radio journalists' adoption of digital technologies and acquisition of new digital skills enables a faster and more extensive degree of listener involvement (see chapter 2, section 2.1). Therefore, it can be deduced that community radio journalists need sense of urgency as a skill in order to share news on time as they happen.

4.3.4 Digital devices

In this study, digital devices refer to electronic devices/tools used to gather and produce news digitally. All of the respondents said that one of the devices that helps them report and file their stories is a mobile phone. This means that community radio journalists need mobile journalism skills for storytelling, news creation, newsgathering and news dissemination. According to Wenger (2014) mobile journalism skill is the ability to create news and disseminate them using a smartphone.

Respondent 1 said:

“In a digital environment, a mobile phone is very important because as an editor, journalists are able to send me news even when I am not in the office. I am then able to edit articles before they are read live on radio. Likewise, when journalists are out in the field gathering news, they are able to communicate and submit news to the newsroom with ease. Furthermore, when we began using Facebook Live for our current affairs programmes, we used our own personal mobile phone. As time went on, we saw a lot of impact in terms of growth an audience engagement on our Facebook page. As a radio station, that forced us to shift a bit. We had to invest a lot in Facebook because we realized it's the future. We bought a digital camera with good video quality, refurbished our studio, and installed brighter lights for good lighting.”

Respondent 4 concurred and said:

“When attending a press conference, I am able to write news and record interviews for short news clips with my mobile phone and send them to the newsroom with WhatsApp. This allows news to be shared timely on radio and Facebook with the audience before they get stale.”

The remaining respondents agreed and said they have a newsroom WhatsApp group where they communicate and share story ideas based on the various news beats, they cover in their newsroom. However, WhatsApp is not being studied in its entirety in this research project because Facebook is the most commonly used application in the Harvest FM newsroom. According to JISC (2019), a

digitally literate individual should be able to design and/or produce new multimedia content and materials, such as writing for digital platforms, producing digital images, producing audio for digital platforms, and producing videos (see chapter 2, section 2.1). Therefore, it can be deduced that community radio journalists need Facebook livestreaming skills for live reporting and audio production skills for short news clips (sound bites).

4.3.5 Attitudes

In this study, attitudes are defined as community radio journalists' understanding of digital literacy. This refers to their understandings of what digital literacy is and why it is important in a community radio setting.

For example, respondent 5 said:

“Being digitally literate in a community radio setting is imperative. When you are digitally literate everything becomes so easy. Unlike in the past, now I can just prepare the news bulletin on my mobile phone. It is also very easy to connect and communicate amongst ourselves with digital platforms like Facebook. We also use videos and pictures in a creative way to enhance our stories on our Facebook page.”

Respondent 1 concurred and said:

“Using social media for news dissemination is so exciting and so easy because everything is at our fingertips. We learn something new every day and that makes me happy.”

Respondent 2 added by saying:

“We are at the point where we have one foot in the fourth industrial revolution, where machines are taking over from people, and that should scare us. So, if journalists don't appreciate learning about everything when it comes to digital environment and digital literacy in their own journalism field, there will come a time when they will not be employable. As journalists we have to be fearless and to do something, we have to learn about digital literacy; even if it's just the basics to be in the know.”

All of the participants agreed and stated that being digitally literate in a digital environment improves and expedites journalistic work processes. As a result, it is possible to conclude that community radio journalists require digital literacy skills in order to thrive in a digital environment. This deduction is related to the theory in this study because Oliveira *et al.*, (2012) state that learning new digital skills advances the careers of community radio journalists (see chapter 2, section 2.1). Therefore, it can be deduced that community radio journalists at Harvest FM hold positive attitudes about digital literacy based on the excitement they portray towards using digital platforms for newsroom purposes.

4.3.6 Digital news production

In this study, digital news production is defined as the ability to produce and distribute editorial content via the internet rather than only producing and sharing news on radio. Taylor (2022) defines digital news production as the ability to disseminate information using a combination of audio, text, video, and interactive graphics. Taylor (2022) also states that digital news producers require traditional skills such as good writing abilities. According to Van Dijk and Van Deursen (2010), traditional and digital media skills relate closely to each other as they both require operational, formal, information and strategic skills.

Respondent 2 said:

“It is important to have digital news production skills because if you have the ability to modify radio news article which is in text and combine it with pictures or a video on Facebook, that attracts a lot of people because they can see what really happened. Having digital news production skills allows us to adjust, duplicate and disseminate news over several platforms.”

Other respondents agreed, stating that having digital news production skills allows them to be adept not only in radio production but also in producing news content for other digital news platforms. As a result, community radio journalists require digital news production skills in order to share news across multiple platforms. This deduction is related to the theory in this study because Reyes-de Cózar *et al.*, (2022) state that the emerging patterns of digital news production and the expanding social media manifestations necessitate journalists having digital skills (see chapter 2, section 2.1). Therefore, it can be deduced that community radio journalists need news editing skills in order to integrate their radio news content with multimedia components like pictures and videos for their digital media platforms.

4.3.7 Digital systems/applications

In this study, digital systems/applications are defined as a collection of interconnected components that have been designed to perform a specific function without additional human design input (Alcocer, 2021). The coordination of inputs, changes in use, and the production of outcomes using a variety of components that work together to transform, store, or control information or materials is referred to as digital or technological systems (Alcocer, 2021).

Respondent 2 explained this as follows:

“We livestream every current affairs programme on Facebook. We use three applications (apps) to livestream our shows and they are vMix, Streamlabs and OBS. vMix has pre-

settings that allows us to add and edit chyrons² (peoples' names) when we are live. We use OBS when we broadcast live or when we want to broadcast pre-recorded material. We also use OBS when we have already made pre-settings because with OBS, we are not able to create chyrons within the software, but we use Photoshop to create them and then import them into the software. Then there's Streamlabs and we use it to create subtitles on screen. vMix also allows us to create subtitles live on screen."

Respondents 1 and 2 stated that when working in a digital environment, one must have strong video capturing and editing skills. They also agreed on the importance of having some graphic design skills in order to create chyrons and other promotional materials for programs that can be posted on Facebook in order to attract traffic. A conclusion can be made that community radio journalists require technological skills in order to operate various technological systems used to digitally produce news. This conclusion is consistent with the theory, as Kwanya (2014) states that journalists must have digital skills in order to operate networked systems to collect, store, retrieve, process, analyse, and disseminate information (see chapter 2, section 2.1). Therefore, it can be deduced that community radio journalists need Information Communication Technology (ICT) skills in order to understand and operate a wide range of technology software and applications.

4.3.8 Conclusion: Innovation

From the above discussion it is clear that respondents acknowledge the importance of having digital skills in a digital environment as well as the importance of integrating digital media platforms with a community radio to produce news. The respondents understand the use of news production systems like Streamlabs³, OBS⁴ and vMix⁵ to produce Facebook livestreams that allows audience engagement. All three applications allow the user to switch inputs, mix audio, record outputs, and live stream cameras, video files and audio (vMix, 2022). According to the above discussion, it is also clear that the respondents require digital skills like video recording, audio recording, livestreaming, information, and communication technology (ICT) skills to manage their Facebook page, and information and communication technology skills to communicate better, e.g., use of mobile phones tell write stories and to capture pictures, audio, and videos.

² Chyrons means a tag line overlaid on the lower portion of a video image during a news broadcast (Merriam-Webster, 2022).

³ Steamlabs is a free and open broadcaster application/software that allows users to distribute their content on platforms such as Facebook Live, YouTube Live, and Twitch (Streamlabs, 2022). It enables users to add visual alerts to the screen, such as the names of the individuals being interviewed and subtitles (Streamlabs, 2022).

⁴ OBS Studio is a cross-platform open-source screencasting and streaming app (OBS Studio, 2022).

⁵ vMix is a vision mixer software that allows users to switch inputs, mix audio, record outputs, and live stream cameras, video files, and audio (vMix, 2022).

4.4 Digital environment

In chapter 2 (see section 2.2.3), it was argued that in order for community radio journalists to thrive in a digital environment, their skills must evolve in tandem with the fast-paced digital environment in which they work or risk becoming obsolete. As a theoretical points of departure, the digital environment theme emerged from the theory of sociocultural evolution and suggests that journalists that do not adapt to the ever-changing digital environment will be left behind or their careers will perish, while those that adapt to the digital environment will flourish in their careers (see section 2.2.1). The sub-themes journalistic roles, work practices, and newsroom layout are used to investigate the digital environment in a community radio setting using Harvest FM as an example. The findings from the interviews with Harvest FM's news editor and journalists will be discussed in sections below in light of the aforementioned sub-themes.

4.4.1 Journalistic roles

Journalistic roles in this study refer to basic day-to-day responsibilities in the Harvest FM newsroom. According to Lundberg (2017), the digital environment has changed the traditional roles of journalists because, unlike in the past, journalists can now use the internet to publish stories worldwide in a matter of seconds. According to Lundberg (2017), this is due to advancements in the equipment used to record and publish news, such as digital cameras, mobile applications, smartphones, and social media.

For example, respondent 4 said:

“Journalistic roles have changed tremendously, and community radio journalists need to have digital skills to disseminate news because currently, the use of the internet to distribute news is at the pinnacle. To demonstrate how much of a change the digital environment has brought within the roles of a journalist, I sometimes don’t go out in the field to gather news, I just log into Facebook and look for news tips then make a few follow-ups to verify the facts. This means as community radio journalists, we need fact verification skills because we pick up most of our news tips from digital platforms like Facebook. However, as much as Facebook helps us with news gathering, I also hold a view that some journalists may become lazy and spend the whole day surfing Facebook for news; therefore, becoming fully depend on Facebook. It would be good to sometimes just look for tips that you will verify physically by visiting the news scene.”

Respondent 1 said:

In the digital environment, you don’t need to be too comfortable; you need to learn digital skills otherwise you will be left behind and stagnant. It is very sad that some people in the media industry don’t even know how to go live on Facebook. Facebook keeps developing its functions and it is very important for community radio journalists to familiarize themselves

with them. Luckily, when we talk in terms of our newsroom staff percentage that is familiar with Facebook, we have about 80 to 90%. And it is quite gratifying to see that even those who are not familiar with it, are willing to learn and adapt.”

Respondent 3 concurred and said:

“The digital environment has made our job very easy because for example, Facebook brings news to us, we don’t have to go out like in the past to get news tips. We access a lot of news online and all we have to do is to verify the facts before publishing them.”

Respondent 2 said:

“It is very important for community radio journalists to be digitally literate because people who are not even journalists overtake their journalism career on social media by posting fake news; and they make a lot of money out of it, therefore hindering media houses to make enough money. So, it is important for community radio journalists to have digital skills to keep up with the ever-changing digital world and for them to stay relevant in their own field. It does not even mean one has to go deep into learning digital skills, but I think having basic digital skills and being eager to learn is enough.”

All of the respondents agreed that the digital environment has simplified their journalistic work. As a result of the preceding discussion, the study concludes that the digital environment has impacted traditional journalistic roles such as having to go out into the field to gather news. This means that the role of news gathering physically is receding fractionally, therefore requiring journalists to have online newsgathering skills. This is consistent with the literature in this study, as ReyesdeCózar *et al.*, (2022) state that the roles and skills of journalists are constantly changing as the profession of journalism adapts to new technologies (see chapter 1, section 1.7). However, Mukherjee (2022) agrees with responded 4 on the view that online news gathering makes some journalists lazy and states that there is a downside to this as news acquired online are less strictly edited in terms of length and content, therefore are lower in quality editing, which may result in journalists who gather news online not getting all the relevant facts of the story. Furthermore, news acquired on online platforms may be unreliable as there is a deficiency of gatekeepers like editors and sub-editors, and some of the online platforms are run by people with little to no background in the fundamentals of journalism (Mukherjee, 2022). Therefore, it can be deduced that community radio journalists need online newsgathering skills to gather news on digital platforms like Facebook, and news verification skills to verify their authenticity.

4.4.2 Work practices

Work practices in this study refers to how the workflow in a digital environment has been impacted. Workflow, according to Pratt (2022), is a series of activities required to complete a task. With the

exception of the first and last steps, each step in a workflow has a specific step before it and a specific step after it (Pratt, 2022).

Respondent 1 said:

“In the past our newsroom had specific work practices that don’t apply now because we see them as repeated efforts. In the past a journalist would need to go out and gather news and come back to write them, then give the article to his/her peers for sub-editing before being submitted to me. Now that is not the case anymore; journalists just submit their articles straight to me to edit and approve. Sometimes depending on where they are or vice versa, they just use WhatsApp me to submit their articles.”

The digital environment, according to all respondents, has changed many work practices. As a result, it is possible to conclude that the digital environment has influenced some work practices and that news articles are approved quickly when using technological/digital applications. However, Saisho (2023) states that the downside to news being approved quickly has a negative impact of not maintaining the standard of accuracy. This is because if news is approved hurriedly, there is limited time to check if the facts are true or not (Saisho, 2023). This is related to the literature in this study because Bradshaw (2017) states that work practices change when journalists experiment, learn new digital skills, and entirely develop new types of storytelling skills (see chapter 2, section 2.1).

4.4.3 Newsroom layout.

The roles and positions that exist in a newsroom are referred to as newsroom layout in this study. The layout, positions, and journalistic roles of newsrooms are constantly changing as a result of the digital environment (Weber, 2018). As a result, newsroom managers are forced to hire journalists with skill sets that extend beyond the basics of writing (Weber, 2018). This implies that the digital environment has had an impact on other positions and roles. Harvest FM's newsroom had to abandon peer sub-editing in favour of articles submitted directly to the editor.

Respondent 1 said:

“Doing everything digitally saves time and money. This means we don’t need a lot of journalists in the newsroom.”

Respondent 2 made the following example:

“I can single-handedly report both by writing an article and submitting it to the journalists left in the newsroom for the news hour by WhatsApp, and at the same time make a Facebook livestream about an incident that is happening in a totally different district.”

This suggests that in the digital age, one journalist can perform multiple roles at the same time, and a deduction can be made that community radio journalists need multitasking skills to concurrently

perform several interrelated tasks. This links with the literature in this study as Bastos *et al.*, (2012) indicates that radio newsrooms have established new ways of working as a result of the digital environment, which has altered how news is produced in general (see chapter 2, section 2.1). Therefore, it can be deduced that community radio journalists need multitasking skills in order to carry out different newsroom duties concurrently.

The digital environment, according to all respondents, has changed even the layout of newsrooms. A simple example could be linked to what respondent 1 said by stating that unlike in the past when they relied on printed paper for their newsreaders, now they don't use printers anymore.

Respondent 1 said:

“The digital environment has changed our newsroom in such an amazing way, a lot has changed around here. In the past we had a printer in our newsroom; now we are operating without it because newsreaders can send news articles to the computer in the studio or use tablets to read news.”

As a result of the foregoing, it is clear that not only are some positions underutilized, but there are also some physical changes brought about by the digital era. Therefore, it can be deduced that community radio journalists need mobile reading skills in order to function in a paperless digital environment.

4.4.4 Conclusion: Digital environment

According to the discussion above, Harvest FM respondents understand the changes brought about by the digital environment. Respondents demonstrated this through real-life examples of how they carry out their daily work, such as gathering news through digital platforms, recognizing the need for fact-checking skills, and having to take on more roles than was previously done in a traditional newsroom.

4.5 Digital literacy

In chapter 2 (see section 2.3.), it was deduced that for community radio journalists to produce and distribute news timely, they need digital literacy skills and show computer competency in order to search, find, evaluate, and compose information through typing, writing and by using different mediums that allow the incorporation of videos, text, pictures, and graphics.

As a theoretical points of departure, the digital literacy theme emerged from the digital literacy theory and suggest that journalists should have digital skills in order to find, assess, use, share, and create content on digital devices (see section 2.2.4). The sub-theme digital skills is taken to investigate digital literacy at Harvest FM. In the next section, the results obtained from the interviews with Harvest FM news editor and journalists will be discussed according to the above-mentioned sub-theme.

4.5.1 Digital skills

In this study, digital skills refer to community radio journalists' ability to strategically use digital storytelling tools to connect with audiences across multiple platforms. According to St Bonaventure University online (2022), journalists must be able to think critically and creatively about the best media forms to serve their target audience.

Respondent 5 said:

“In the digital environment, there’s a new thing every day and I make it a point to learn something new about digital marketing daily. This is because there is Facebook just for posting recreational posts, and Facebook business. With the business side of Facebook, one has to know digital marketing in order to market current affairs programmes. You also need to know how to create content, and most importantly know your audience. In the digital environment one needs to have a strategy of how the content go out to the audience and when. That being said: we live in a very fast paced digital world and in two to three years from now it will be a totally different world. Therefore, community radio journalists need to have digital skills like social media scheduling, livestreaming, creating interactive graphics for Facebook, shooting, and editing videos. Most importantly community radio journalists need to fully understand the digital platforms they use to serve their audience.”

All respondents agreed that having digital skills is vital because it keeps community radio journalists relevant and allows them to stay connected with audiences, resulting in the growth of the radio brand for which they work. This assertion implies that community radio journalists need digital skills in order to build stronger relationships with their audiences through the use of, among other things, videos and livestreaming. This is consistent with the literature in this study, as Marshall (2013) states that journalists must understand how to use social media to connect with and converse with their audiences (see chapter 2, section 2.1). Therefore, it can be deduced that community radio journalists need digital marketing skills, content creation skills, audience knowledge skills, content strategist skills, social media scheduling skills, and interaction, engagement, and participation skills.

When talking about connecting and conversing with audiences, respondent 3 said:

“In a digital environment, it is imperative to engage with the audience and have a conversation with them by responding to their comments on Facebook. It is so fulfilling to realise that the audience takes interest in your work and react accordingly. This also makes me happy because we can tell if our content is reaching the people and if they resonate with it. So, it is important to respond to them so that they also feel appreciated.”

4.5.2 Conclusion: Digital skills

According to the above discussion, respondents recognize the importance of having digital skills in a digital environment, as well as the importance of being able to think creatively and critically about the most appropriate social media platform to use, which in this case is Facebook.

4.6 Information literacy

In chapter 2 it was deduced that for community radio journalists to function well in a digital environment, they need skills to know when information is needed, how to obtain it, how to organise it and how to critically evaluate it once it is found. As a theoretical points of departure, the information literacy theme emerged from the information literacy theory and suggest that journalists must understand why and when they need information, where to search for it, how to evaluate it, use it, and communicate it properly (see section 2.2.5). The sub-themes information analysis and information evaluation are taken as theoretical points of departure to investigate information literacy in a community radio setting in Lesotho using Harvest FM as example. The results of the interviews with Harvest FM's news editor and journalists will be discussed in the section below using the above sub-themes.

4.6.1 Information analysis

In this study, information analysis refers to the ability to identify and separate the most striking information conveyed by a given digital information source, as well as the ability to break down intricate information to gain a better understanding of it for the audience (Albers, 2015).

For example, respondent 5 said:

Information analysis is very important in the digital environment. Sometimes I take news on digital platforms like Facebook. If the content is difficult, I break it down for our listeners or I make a follow-up on the news tip and contact the involved sources to explain it before being broadcasted."

All of the participants agreed that information analysis is essential for making news stories understandable to the audience. The conclusion is that in a digital environment, community radio journalists require information analysis skills in order to clarify stories in simple terms for their listeners to enjoy. This is consistent with the literature in this study, as Koon-Stack and Zimmermann (2022) state that journalists must be able to select stories that are both beneficial to their organizations and interesting to their audiences.

4.6.2 Information evaluation

In this study, information evaluation refers to the ability to assess information obtained from digital platforms. According to LibGuides (2022), in a digitally motivated environment, a journalist with

information literacy skills can scrutinize who produced the information on digital platforms, what their intention for sharing the information was, and if the information is accurate.

For example, respondent 4 said:

"It is vital to have practical digital skills like research and information verification skills, that allows us to make use of credible online sources. Having digital fact verification skills makes one vigilant when attaining information from the internet. For example, community radio journalists need to be able to trace the originality of news before publishing them either on digital media platforms or on radio. For instance, there are so many Facebook accounts of the current Prime Minister Sam Matekane with thousands of followers; that ends up confusing journalists about which one is authentic. Therefore, before publishing any information from any of those Facebook accounts, one has to verify the information with the Prime Minister's office."

All of the participants agreed and stated that having information evaluation skills is important in a community radio setting that is motivated by the digital environment, so that the correct information can reach the audience. With that said, it is possible to conclude that community radio journalists require fact-checking skills in a digital environment. This relates to the literature in this study because Maryville University (2020) states that gathering and publishing news digitally requires a variety of skills, including fact-checking skills (see chapter 1, section 1.7). Therefore, it can be deduced that community radio journalists need information analysis skills to deconstruct information into smaller categories for easy understanding, and information evaluation skills to understand when they need information, where to attain it, and the verification of sources.

4.6.3 Conclusion: Information literacy

It can be concluded from the preceding discussion that the participants recognize the importance of having information analysis skills in order to fully clarify stories for the audience to understand their meanings. Another conclusion that can be drawn is that the participants understand the importance of having information evaluation skills in order to combat the spread of fake news.

4.7 Observation findings

A one-week visit was made to observe how journalists carry out their daily tasks of writing, revising, and publishing their work in the digital environment. This allowed the interviewer to understand how digital literacy manifests in the newsroom and to observe and witness skills that the participants may not routinely notice or mention in an interview.

Table 4.7.1 Observation findings

Area	Date	Observed skills	Researcher's observation
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Innovation.	12/12/2022	Livestreaming skills:	Current affairs programmes are broadcasted live on radio and Facebook. This allows journalists to interact with their audiences in real time. It also allows the audience to engage by commenting on the live video. A cameraman has been hired specifically to assist journalists in going live. As the video plays, Facebook Live shows how many people are watching. Observed tools: Desktop computers, Streamlabs application, OBS studio, vMix application, studio camera, and mobile phones. Weaknesses: without the hired cameraman, some journalists struggle to operate the studio camera, therefore sorely depending on him.
Digital environment.	13/12/2022	Online news gathering skills.	Some journalists get news tips from Facebook, which eliminates the need for extensive field work. Observed tools: Desktop computers and mobile phones. Weaknesses: Some journalists display signs of overdependency on gathering news on Facebook and breaking news are not always available on Facebook, which in turn makes them follow-up on anything just to have news.
Digital literacy.	14/12/2022	Digital skills.	The journalists combine audio, video, photos, and graphics. This makes the stories they share on Facebook more alluring, resulting in more views. Observed tools: Desktop computers, Photoshop, digital camera, and voice recorders.

			Weaknesses: Only respondent 2 has the ability to use Photoshop and helps the others where the need arises, which results in him overextending himself more than the others.
Information literacy.	15/12/2022 And 16/12/2022	Information analysis and evaluation skills.	Journalists analyse and evaluate online information to locate the most appropriate information and to ensure the reliability and accuracy of their sources. This aids in the removal of untrustworthy, misleading, and inaccurate information e.g., if they find information on Facebook, they call the sources directly by a phone call. Observed tools: Desktop computers, landline phone and mobile phones. Weaknesses: There is a lack of fact-checking abilities because apart from calling sources directly, the participants lack knowledge in the use of tools like Afrika Check and lack of verifying news by checking mainstream news organisations.

4.7 Conclusion

The findings of the literature study were compared to the findings of the empirical study in this chapter to see how they differed or how similar they are. This chapter aimed to provide an understanding of what skills are required, as well as whether journalists understand what digital literacy is and what it entails. According to the findings, technology has increased the efficiency of Harvest FM's newsroom and widened its broadcasting spectrum by using social media platforms, particularly Facebook. The findings also indicate that the use of technological systems increases news production levels and makes the job easier at Harvest FM. However, the findings unearthed that some journalists are not able to use some digital applications/Software like Photoshop, which indicates that they are overwhelmed by the digital skills required of them.

In the following chapter, general research questions and specific research questions will be addressed.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

The findings of the empirical research were presented and discussed/analysed in the previous chapter. The main focus of this chapter is to answer the general research question (see chapter 1, section 1.8), as well as the specific research questions (see chapter 1, section 1.8.1). The empirical study reveals that it's important for journalists to have digital skills, particularly in a community radio.

A research problem was identified in this study: community radio journalists require digital skills to deliver news on time in a digital environment. The research problem/rationale stated that lack of digital skills causes community radio journalists to fall behind in terms of timely delivery of news (see chapter 1, section 1.).

5.2. Answering the research questions.

5.2.1 The General research question: What digital skills are necessary for journalists in community radio in Lesotho to publish and gather news in order to deliver news on time in a digital environment? (See chapter 1, section 1.8). The answers attained through semi-structured interviews and observation will be used to answer these questions.

5.2.3 SRQ 1: What digital literacy skills are needed for Harvest FM's journalists in order to provide timely news material in a digital media environment? (See chapter 1, section 1.8.1)

The semi-structured interviews with Harvest FM's editor and four journalists provided answers to this general research question. The solution was discovered by comparing the interview findings to the literature (see chapter 4, section 4.3.2). The empirical findings established that sharing news quickly in a digital environment via digital platforms such as Facebook is important because the audience is updated faster when the news is still current, sometimes in real-time via functions such as Facebook Live (see chapter 4, section 4.3.2). This was supported by the literature review, which found that community radio journalists require digital skills that enable them to use the various forms of multimedia that the internet provides, such as text, graphics, and video in addition to audio (see chapter 2, section 2.1). Based on the results drawn-out from the empirical findings, the digital literacy skills needed are as follows (see section 4.5.1):

5.2.4 Technical skills:

- **Livestreaming skills:** community radio journalists need livestreaming skills in order to create and share videos in real-time. Livestreaming skills include having the ability to interact with viewers in real-time, knowing how to use a digital camera, and having the ability to plan streams ahead of time (see section 4.3.3).

- **Graphic design skills:** community radio journalists need graphic design skills in order to pull interest to their news content in an attractive way. Journalists require graphic design skills in order to create visually attractive and well-structured designs by combining color, shapes, space, appearance, and typography (see section 4.3.2).
- **Photography and video skills:** community radio journalists need photography and video skills in order to shoot quality pictures and clear videos to use on their social media pages. Photography skills enable journalists to provide an overview of current events by using images to tell a story (see section 4.3.2).
- **Audio production skills (sound bites):** community radio journalists should have audio production skills in order to record and edit audio. This skill is important because it helps the listeners to visualise stories and event (see section 4.3.4).
- **ICT skills:** community radio journalists should have ICT skills in order to operate software and applications that makes their work easy. ICT skills is the ability to switch on a computer or any mobile device, log in and connect to the appropriate platforms and programs to carry out a work-related task (see section 4.3.7).

5.2.5 Marketing skills

- **Digital marketing skills:** community radio journalists need digital marketing skills in order to drive social media traffic to their stories (see section 4.5.1).
- **Content strategist skills:** community radio journalists need content strategist skills in order to know how the content go out to the audience and when. Content strategist abilities include the ability to write, edit, and share content with the target audience through different online platforms at the appropriate time (4.5.1).

5.2.6 Computer skills

- **Social media scheduling skills:** community radio journalists need social media scheduling skills in order to plan ahead. Social media scheduling skills means having the ability to plan social media updates and content ahead of time using social media management platform or other publishing tools e.g., Streamlabs and OBS (see section 4.5.1).

5.2.7 Writing skills

- **News editing skills:** community radio journalists should have news editing skills in order to adapt certain radio stories to digital media platforms. This skill is important because it allows journalists to edit and present information in chunks for the online audiences (see section 4.3.6).
- **Online news gathering skills:** community radio journalists need online news gathering skills in order to be able to gather news on online platforms like websites and social media

platforms like Facebook. This skill allows journalists to gather and investigate stories easily using digital platforms (see section 4.4.1).

5.2.8 Fact-checking skills

- **News verification skills:** community radio journalists need to possess the ability to check and verify facts attained online (see section 4.4.1).

5.2.9 Content creation skills

- **Content creation skills:** community radio journalists need content creation skills in order to create content for people to consume via any medium. Content creation skills are important for journalists as it allows them to carry out research, develop strategic ideas and turn those ideas into quality news content that can be shared with a specific online audience (4.5.1).

5.2.10 Analytical skills

- **Information analysis and evaluation skills:** community radio journalists need information analysis skills to draw clear conclusions from information attained online. They also need information evaluations skills to shape and verify information. Both information evaluation and analysis skills help in critically making balanced judgement about information attained online (see section 4.6.2)

5.2.11 Audience analysis skills

- **Audience skills:** community radio journalists need to have a skill to identify their audience and adapt their news content to the audiences' level of understanding and interests. Having audience skills enables journalists to delve deeply into their audience's preferences and patterns by learning about their demographic information such as age, education, and location (see section 4.5.1).
- **Interaction, engagement, and participation skills:** community radio journalists need interaction and participation skills in order to communicate and partake in conversations on their news content on digital platforms. This allows community radio journalists' use of social media platforms to lead to a greater participation and engagement for audiences already online. This skill is particularly important in a community radio setting predominantly in a digital environment because traditionally, community radio caters for immediate community in a specific geographical area. But with the digital environment that provide a wider coverage, even audiences not necessarily in that specific area where the radio station operates can participate and be engaged by responding to their comments on Facebook or any other digital platform (see section 4.5.1).

5.2.12 Self-management skills

- **Sense of urgency:** community radio journalists need a sense of urgency in order to create and share news on time. Sense of urgency is a skill that allows journalists to gather news as they occur, report news as immediate as they happen, and concurrently update digital editions on news (see section 4.3.3).
- **Multitasking skills:** multitasking skills are important for community radio journalists because they can carry out a number of tasks at the same time. Multitasking skill is the ability to do different work activities and shifting attention from one task to another e.g., focusing on news production and adapting news content for multiple digital platforms (see section 4.4.3).
- **Mobile reading skills:** community radio journalists need mobile reading skills in order to work effortlessly in a digital environment that does not make use of paper. Mobile reading skill is the skill to read from portable electronic devices that are able to display text and hold a number of reading material (see section 4.4.3).

5.2.3 SRQ 2: What attitudes on digital literacy do the journalists at Harvest FM hold?

Semi-structured interviews with Harvest FM's editor and four journalists were used to answer this specific research question. The empirical findings established the significance of understanding and knowing what digital literacy is. According to the findings, being digitally literate in the digital environment improves and accelerates journalistic work processes (see chapter 4, section 4.3.4). The empirical findings were supported by a literature review, which found that having digital literacy skills improves the effective, efficient, and moral dissemination and access to digital information (see chapter 2, section 2.1).

Based on the results drawn-out from the empirical findings, the attitudes on digital literacy held by Harvest FM journalists are positive. This can be derived from the direct words picked up during the interviews e.g., exciting, happy, fearless, and creative (see section 4.5.1). It can be deduced that their positive attitude has a very powerful influence in their learning behaviour and willingness to continue learning. Their self-efficacy and belief that being digital literate can yield necessary outcomes to execute their journalistic responsibilities with ease in terms of news production is evidence that they welcome digital literacy with amenability. Another positive attitude indication toward digital literacy is that they are able to carry out newsroom digital actions successfully e.g., Facebook livestreaming and online news gathering among others.

5.2.4 SRQ 3: How do journalists' experiences with digital literacy manifest in the Harvest FM newsroom?

Observation and semi-structured interviews with Harvest FM's editor and four journalists were used to answer this specific research question. The researcher compiled all of the respondents' perspectives on how they perceived digital literacy in the Harvest FM newsroom. The empirical study discovered that digital literacy manifests itself through practical skills such as using digital distribution platforms such as Facebook, communicating via digital applications such as WhatsApp, using digital devices such as cameras and mobile phones, and utilizing digital news production systems such as Streamlabs, OBS, and vMix (see chapter 4, section 4.3.7).

The observation approach is also used in this specific research question, which confirmed that using Facebook Live during current affairs shows enables current affairs presenters, who also work as journalists, to connect with their audiences in real time. Observation also revealed that during the show, the current affairs presenters/journalists are assisted by a qualified cameraman. Throughout the show, Facebook Live displays the number of viewers. The observation method also discovered that not all journalists go out on field work, but rather use Facebook to gather information. Furthermore, observation revealed that a news story can be prepared for a radio news hour and then later merged with a correlating video, photos, or graphics and shared on Facebook to boost engagement. The researcher discovered that the journalists have fact-checking abilities because they verify information obtained online via phone calls (see chapter 3, table 3.9.1).

5.2.5 SRQ4: What recommendations can be made to advance digital literacy research required to equip community radio journalists?

Using Harvest FM as an example of a community radio station, this study focused on the digital skills required by community radio journalists in Lesotho. More research opportunities may arise from investigating digital skills required in other radio models, notably public and commercial radio models. Further research may be conducted by addressing the same research problem in a different setting, context, using a bigger sample and location e.g., digital literacy skills needed for community radio journalists in remote provinces of South Africa.

5.5 Conclusion

The deduction made from this study as a whole is that community radio journalists in Lesotho must constantly acquire and arm themselves with digital skills in order to function in a digital environment. This will help them produce trustworthy news content to share with their audience on time. Furthermore, this study suggests that community radio journalists working in a digital environment should consider and fully comprehend how to utilize pictures, videos, and other multimedia features to communicate news messages to the general public in an engaging and effective manner. Moreover, this study discovered that community radio journalist nowadays should know how to use social media

and establish relationships with individuals. One of the most important deductions from this study is that using mobile phones and other mobile devices to carry out every reporting process is extremely crucial. As a result, a community radio journalist must be able to record, cover, edit, and disseminate journalistic items such as news stories, pictures, and videos using a mobile phone.

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APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Topic: Digital literacy

Questions:

1. How have the digital environment and working practices changed in the newsroom at Harvest FM?
2. What adaptations have the media and journalists' jobs undergone as a result of the digital age?
3. What skills in digital literacy are required of journalists working in a digital environment at Harvest FM?
4. What do journalists at Harvest FM think about digital literacy?
5. What advantages does digital literacy have in helping journalists comprehend the new roles that come along with a digital environment?
6. How has the working environment for journalists been impacted by new media platforms, information gathering, processing, and dissemination methods, digital literacy, and internet dominance?
7. How might digital literacy assist journalists in finding fresh information and confirm their sources?
8. Do you think journalists need to be adept in all necessary digital era tools and skills? If so, why?

Topic: Media change/the use of Facebook

9. Which digital media channels/platforms does Harvest FM use to distribute its content?
10. What specific skills have the digital environment brought to the Harvest FM newsroom?
11. What ways has Facebook helped Harvest FM share news material better?
12. How has Facebook advanced reporting at Harvest FM?
13. What new ways has Facebook helped Harvest FM provide digital news?
14. What skills has Harvest FM integrated into its digital news production?

Topic: News production

15. What other technical tools have been used by Harvest FM to provide news alongside Facebook?
16. What equipment/devices does Harvest FM use to produce news?
17. Which sequence does news production follow in terms of the platforms that are employed? For instance, is it the case that news is broadcast first and then disseminated on digital channels, or vice versa? And why?

18. Has Harvest FM's use of Facebook resulted in any diminution of journalistic roles or working methods in any way?

19. How does the newsroom at Harvest FM demonstrate digital literacy?

How has the digital environment facilitated the fusion of radio broadcasting with online/digital media e.g., Facebook?

20. What changes has the news production at Harvest FM undergone as a result of the use of social media?

21. What changes have been made to the layout of the Harvest FM newsroom as a result of the digital environment?

22. How has the typical newsroom structure altered in terms of Harvest FM's editing procedures given the rise to digital media?

Topic: Journalistic skills

23. What specific skills are required in a world of digital media to produce and disseminate content? For instance, webcasting and web publishing skills.

24. Have digital skills at Harvest FM had an impact on traditional journalistic skills? For instance, fundamental journalistic skills like strong writing and storytelling abilities.

25. What skills and knowledge in information and communication technology (ICT) are required of journalists at Harvest FM e.g., the ability to manage social media or web 2.0?

News distribution

26. How efficiently can information be created and distributed using digital platforms?

27. How has the integration of the Harvest FM newsroom and other media platforms been aided by the use of digital tools like Facebook and radio.

28. How has Facebook improved Harvest FM's multimedia storytelling?