# ICT AND THE FUTURE OF JOURNALISM PROFESSION (II)
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In the first part of this feature, we discussed ICT tools and how journalists could use them to enhance their work in the newsroom. The emphasis was, however, on Blogging. We concluded that there were several platforms for Blog creating. That the one that was used at the WEB 2.0 workshop for Editors, senior journalists and Educators was BLOGGER.COM.

It is important to assure Ghanaian journalists that creating a Blog is no big deal at all. So, if you want to create a Blog, all you need is a computer that is connected to the Internet. Then you go to the URL and "dial" www.blogger.com and follow the instructions. That is all!

In this article, the focus will be on Podcasting, Wikis and Videoblogging. Even though we could not master the practical application of these ICT tools due to technical challenges, at least the theory we were taught at the WEB 2.0 workshop could be shared with colleague journalists who may be interested in the subject matter.

## Wiki

And so what is Wiki?  A wiki which must be pronounced as "wee-kee" or  "wick-ey" is said to be a kind or type of website that allows anyone visiting the site to modify, add, remove, rewrite or simply put, edit the content as quickly as easily as a b c. This element of Wiki makes it a most effective ICT tool for collective and collaborative writing in the history of online-journalism or e-journalism or web-journalism in the 21st century so far.

The magic of Wiki is that the editing on it takes place in real-time. In other words, any changes that are made on Wiki appear instantaneously online "feelee- feelee". The implication is that, if you are a Professor of say, archeology or zoology and you write an article or some thesis or you propound some theory in your own field of specialty. But you write in such  a jargon that even your fellow Professors cannot make head or tail out of your theory, especially where there are some factual errors or so, a first year Junior High School (JHS) student who has some basic facts and figures about what you are writing, can go to Wiki and correct your "huhudious" theory.

Then, another reader who visits that Wiki and realises that what the JHS student was saying was so childish that it cannot stand the test of time any intellectual gymnasium, that fellow, too, whether he is a sugar cane crusher in Cuba, or 'agbelikakro' vender at the Mallam Atta market in Ghana, can also go on the Wiki and effect changes according their whims and caprices.

One practical and vital use Wiki can be put to in a newsroom is that it makes it possible for different members of the same newsroom to contribute to the same news item or story from their perspectives from various locations simultaneously. For example, in 2008, during the general elections in Ghana, journalists can submit their reportage from various constituencies in all corners of the country. Then Editors in newsrooms can instruct their correspondents to send their individual stories to the Wiki whereby every reporter will be in a position to read and even edit a story submitted by his or her colleagues from different locations in real time. Again, like Blogging, there are several platforms you can use to access Wiki. Since this article is targeted at journalists, it is

relevant to cite this one: www.mediawiki.com . The earlier Ghanaian journalists start using these ICT tools to enhance their profession the better.

**Podcasting**

And so, what is Podcasting, too? You may ask. Well, the first time I personally heard of the term Podcasting was about two years ago or so from one Mr Andy Carvin, who came from the US to run some programme for some students at the University of Ghana, Legon here  in Accra. And it was Dr Amos Anyimadu, one time of the Political Science Department of the University, and who was also in charge of the Technology Assessment Project (TAP) in Ghana, who invited me to meet with the man Andy.

And to be honest with you, when I first heard the word *Podcast* that day I thought the man was trying to say *broadcast* but was saying the wrong thing.  It was later when I saw the spelling of the word before I realised that Podcast was different from broadcast. So, therefore, what exactly is podcast? Simply put, podcast is a radio-style programme that can be downloaded from the internet and listened to on a computer or an mp3 or burned onto a CD.  For purposes of this article, suffice it to mention just a few more uses of Podcast such as radio broadcast, event information, and communication – get internal or external information to recipients, listen to music, lectures, talk shows, tutorials and interviews.  Other uses include story telling, directions, commentaries, sportscasts, audio tours and virtual tours.

We were told at the workshop that basically, there are four stages of Podcasting process. These include Recording, Editing, Hosting and Promotion. As the first process implies, Recording means you must physically record the content or the radio programme or event you want to podcast with a digital recorder such as Maycom HandHeld field recorder, which I am yet to see, let alone own one.

Editing means that after recording the content, it must be edited usually on a PC or computer. They say the format usually used is called WAVE FILE Format, which is a file format for storing digital audio (waveform) data. This one, if you don't know, don't feel shy and make your face as if you know "Kpaoo" or "Daabida." Just consult a technical person or someone who knows to show you how to go about it. Period. I don't know either.

In terms of Hosting, too, they say after editing, you must host your podcast on the Internet, using options such as BLAST PODCAST (do you know that?) If you don't know visit http://www.blastpodcast.com and you are there. Or use PODCASTER HOSTING by going to http://www.podcasterhosting.com and others. All these were like some Greek jargons to most of us who were at the workshop. But if you are a journalist today, it is better for you to be exposed to such jargons at the threshold of the 21[st century] and the beginning of ICT revolution, rather than to go into hibernation and coil your tail in between you thighs. Otherwise, by the time the century enters its second half, you will be out of coverage area in modern journalism.

The final stage of Podcasting, which is Promotion, is that, at the end of this process, your podcast is ready for downloading by users and you will have to take steps to promote it to your target audience. This simply implies that you must let the world know that you have podcast on some specific radio programmes for some specific audience to listen to. For example, if Radio Ghana broadcast some programmes in local languages, say, on farming or fishing, or breastfeeding for nursing mothers; or HIV/AIDS

educational campaign for sex workers at the time they were all busy in their various fields of endeavour, you, as a journalist, enjoying only music somewhere, what prevents you from podcasting these vital programmes on CD and sending them to your parents or opinion leaders in the villages? These are some of the practical ways journalists can use Podcasting to help society.

**Videoblogging**

Another very important ICT tool or by-product of WEB 2.0 we were introduced to which must be mentioned in this article of theoretical knowledge sharing is Videoblogging. The Resource person who took us through this lesson is a young chap by the name Mr. Prince Deh. We were told he is one of the very few Videobloggers in West Africa if not on the entire Africa continent. We could all see that the young man knows his stuff. Unfortunately for us, the technical environment in which we were learning placed limitations on our out put. This brilliant ICT guy could not display his 'techy' skills to his full potential because the computers were operating below capacity in terms of internet connection. It was like how the Akosombo Hydro Dam was operating below capacity in the Republic of Ghana a few months ago.

But we learned that Videoblogging or Vlogging for short is making videos and posting them on the Internet with the intention of getting responses from viewers. Basically, you need Video Camera/Camcorder, Computer with Video Editing Software installed, Internet Connection and a Blog Account/space to make a successful Videoblogging. Just visit websites such as Youtub.com and [www.blip.tv](www.blip.tv) for more information if you are reality interested in this wonder of wonders of ICT tools

**Suggestions**.

I have observed that the various ICT tools enumerated in the first and second articles, namely, Blogging, Podcasting, Vlogging and Wikis can be used in Ghana as vital communication development tools. I therefore, wish to suggest that the Select Committee on Communication in Ghana Parliament must mobilise all Members of Parliament (MPs) to contribute part of  MPs Common  Fund to purchase relevant communication equipment , especially, standard  Podcasting and Vlogging  gadgets and fix them at the disposal of Parliamentary Press Corps, so that journalists and other media professionals can use this equipment to podcast or videocast proceedings of parliament either in recorded form or stream them live to various constituencies in locale languages of various PMs in the country.  The MPs themselves can take podcasting or videocasting of their deliberations along with them anytime they are visiting their constituencies to prove to their people that they were not sleeping in Parliament at all. I have more ideas for MPs on this issue and if they call me day or night, I would not mind placing some of my ideas at their disposal virtually free of charge for the advancement of Mother Ghana.

The organisers of WEB 2.0 workshop as well as sponsors including those working behind the scenes like GINKS Country Coordinator, Alhaji Ibrahim Inusah, must be commended for their foresight, ingenuity and creativity. The ball now is in the court of journalists locally and globally. The question they must keep on asking themselves is: Where will ICT take the Journalism Profession to by the end of the 21st Century?