

Reviewing Liberian journalism

By [Edwin G. Genoway](#)

3 Oct 2012

Journalism is considered a noble profession, and those in such practice are expected to be responsible, truthful, and transparent and balanced in their reportage. Owing to the fact that journalists may also be considered as researchers and serve as medium through which information is exchanged, they are the mirror of society.

Some use the profession as a way of hustling for survival with no passion, and not one that opens up the minds of people to think reason and act from an informed perspective. Journalists the world-over go after stories to ensure factuality and accuracy for public information and trust. At the core of such story gathering are the reporters, most often globally seen as the backbones of media institutions.

They are the first editors while on and from the field, determining the angles from which stories are written and presented to the public. Good stories by reporters may always provide fewer jobs for editors, except where such editors are doubtful about certain information and may want to ask a few questions.

In Liberia today, there are more tape recorder-carrying journalists, pretending to be in search of the news for their entities with separate objectives. While some may not be attached to media houses, others claim to be - all in an effort to make ends meet in the name of journalism.

There are others calling themselves "publishers" not even understanding what a publisher entails in the media world. These are individuals, who sometimes, engage public officials and other heavy weights in the private sector, creating the impressions that they are the 'jogger-knots' of the Liberian media, even though they are under-capacitated in actual journalism.

Mind you, most of these journalists and so-called publishers are evil geniuses, who only employ blackmailing and threatening techniques to lure public officials and others into cash-giving.

Because such officials would want his or her high-earned reputation untainted or un-tempered with in the media, most especially newspaper, they most often submit to negotiations at which time costs are attached to either "killing the story" or embarking on a PR campaign. The fear harbored by these personalities to submit to such mercenary journalism in Liberia is a result of widely appreciated and acceptable nature of the newspapers and radio stations.

Liberia's population is small, while the number of media institutions here are on the increase. Without proper planning in terms of programming and contents, as well as the quality of newspaper and radio or television personnel, the proliferation of media institutions has brought into the profession "join-the-list" whose disability to attract acceptable readership or

listenership rob them of the necessary revenues for sustainability.

As a result, some of these institutions either don't pay staff or shut down.

Those, who worked there as 'reporters or editors 'become jobless and begin to engage in falsehood, impersonation and other forms of mercenary journalism for survival.

In dealing with such unfortunate situation, engulfing the Liberian media landscape, the Press Union of Liberia and the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism are not robust. Other than protecting the journalistic profession in Liberia, their basic concerns are advocacies directed at personal successes.

Media owners or publishers, editors and radio station managers also play a major role in this down-ward trend of the Liberia media. Poor managerial and bill skills, backed by the recruitment of high school kids due to their inability to pay professional journalists are a few of the major factors responsible for the degrading image of the media.

It is common in Liberia to see reporters on the streets of Monrovia in group distributing katos among themselves in serious confusion. Some, most often, get into fist fight with each other for one selfish reason or the other in the presence of onlookers to the detriment of the journalism profession only because a publisher or manager did not do justice to the nobility of the profession.

It is interesting to note that many a time, journalists attend functions invited and uninvited in huge numbers than organisers of such programs only to eat, drink and received katos without justifying what he or she had received.

In all fairness, the declining reputation of the Liberian media must be blamed on the failure of media managers and publishers to recruit and pay professionals good salaries. The recruitment of kids and DJ's by these managers in place of the professionals continues to exacerbate the problems facing Liberian Journalism.

And until the Press Union of Liberia can exert itself as a professional umbrella organization with the necessary professional standards and divorce itself from its ongoing divisive and selfish tendencies, the nobility of journalism in Liberia will continue to diminish, robbing the profession of all of the respect and honor bestowed on it.

Source: [allAfrica](#)

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>