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**ABSTRACT**

The paper defines who an author, a publisher, and a bookseller is and expatiated on the indispensable roles of these key actors in book development in Nigeria. The present fading distinctiveness of these three roles and its implications for the emerging Information Society and the Nigerian Book Industry is the main thrust of the paper. The paper advised on how the Book industry in Nigeria can be further promoted so as to enhance scholarship in the country.

**DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS:**

A book, in the words of Morgan (2006) has been defined as the only place in which you can examine a fragile thought without breaking it, or explore an explosive idea without fearing it will go off in your face. One of the few havens remaining where (your) mind can get both provocation and privacy. It is the intellectual output of man which is consumed by all and sundry, without any discrimination as to race, creed, social or environmental factors.

According to Oduagwu (2005), an author has been defined as the person responsible for the intellectual, literary, and artistic content of a work. A creator / formulator of the ideas to be given to the world through the book. He is the first owner of the right to publish the work he has created. Normally, he may wish to sell the right or assign it to the publisher to reproduce the work, hence the copyright which is denoted by a ©.

The publisher on the other hand has been seen as the entrepreneur who assumes responsibility for the issuance of a book (or other media) to the public. He promotes its sale through the distribution of review copies, advertising, maintaining a sales force and the stock of copies, handles sales both to the wholesalers and retail bookstores and in some cases by mail to individual purchasers.

A Bookseller is the last man before the final buyer in the chain that began with the author. He ensures that books get to the ultimate consumers or users through sales, either to the library (wholesales) or directly to the reader (retail). The sales outlet could be by post or could be electronically sold using the Internet e.g. Amazon.com has electronic retail outlet.

**BOOK DEVELOPMENT AND THE PRESENT FUSSION OF THE TRIPARTITE ROLES**

Book publishing process starts with the submission of a manuscript by an author or his agent. The acquisition editor(s), who is an employee of the publisher, sift through such manuscript to identify whether it is of sufficient quality or revenue potential to be referred to the editorial staff. Once a work is accepted by a publisher, the publisher or the delegated commissioning editor(s) negotiates the purchase of intellectual property right and agrees on royalties rates. The scope and the format of the publication will also be agreed on by both the publisher and the author. Once the immediate commercial decisions are taken and the technical / legal issues resolved between the author and the publisher, the author may be asked to improve the quality of the work through rewriting or smaller changes. Editing may also involve structural changes and requests for more information. Some publishers employ fact-checkers or make do with their editorial staff. After a final text is agreed upon,

the next phase is design. This may include the commissioning of the artwork (which include photographs) or the confirmation of layout. This process prepares the work for printing through processes such as typesetting, dust jacket composition, and specification of paper quality, binding method and casing and proof-reading. If the work is to be distributed electronically, the final files are saved as formats appropriate to the target operating systems of the hardware that will be used for reading it.

The activities of typesetting, page layout, the production of negatives, plates from the negatives and, for hard backs, the preparation of brasses for the spine legend and imprint are now all computerized (Wikipedia, 2006).

The Publisher may subcontract various aspects of the processes described above. In smaller companies, editing, proof-reading and layout might be done by freelancers. Nowadays, dedicated in-house sales people are rapidly being replaced by specialized companies who handle sales to bookshops, wholesalers and chain stores for a fee. Sometimes the entire process up to the stage of printing is handled by an outside company or individuals, and then sold to the publishing company. This is known as "book packaging". This is a common strategy between smaller publishers in different territorial markets where the company that first buys the intellectual property rights sells a package to other publishers and gains an immediate return on capital invested.

Although newspaper and magazine companies still own printing presses and binderies, nowadays, book publishers rarely do and in some cases, author may be their own publisher. Also, it is a common practice in the trade to sell finished product through a distributor who stores and distributes the publisher's ware for a percentage fee or sells on a "sale or return basis".

Hence, before a book can be available and accessible to the reader, the author must have written, the publisher must have produced (and sometimes distributed) and the Bookseller must have sold or marketed the book.

However, the roles of these three key actors in book development are constantly changing today and the clear distinction in roles hitherto known is becoming blurred by the second. With the modern computer-mediated and ICT-driven working and home environments, an author can at the same time be a publisher and / or a bookseller while a publisher can also double as a bookseller. The issue of desk-top publishing comes to mind.

### **IMPLICATIONS OF THE FADING ROLE DISTINCTIVENESS FOR THE EMERGING INFORMATION SOCIETY:**

A whole variety of technological developments have transformed the way publishers and printers operate to produce printed products. Original texts from writers are now usually in disc or e-mail forms, rather than typewritten, dictated or handwritten. On-screen editing -- using spellchecking, proof-reading, and formatting, and calculation software tools -- has grown in importance, and can be done at the same time as graphic designers and production staff prepare the text for printing using the same electronic version of the text. Fact-checking, referencing and research can now be performed using the Internet. Also, electronic correspondence and transmission of fully formatted material to printers is now becoming the norm. Versions of the same text can be turned into electronic products or posted on the Internet.

Mechanical typesetting has been increasingly overtaken by digital typesetting, developments in Optical Character Recognition and Scanning Technology, and the increased use of Post Script files or Zipped discs from authors / publishers have minimized work for typesetters. Digital printing is displacing lithography for short-run printing, and can offer personalized products. It is also accounting for a steadily increasing share of printing in general in industrialized countries (Ward, 1999). Computer-to-plate technologies have cut out several parts of the production process (for example, it is no longer necessary to make photographic reproductions of typesetting and illustrations, from which lithographic plates were made. Also, page layout can now be performed on the computer screen rather than using "cut and paste" techniques). Colour reproduction has been transformed by digital technologies, which for example allow photographs to be downloaded from a photo library on



the Internet and "dropped in" to a page layout, without the printer ever having the original photographic transparency (ILO, 2000).

Changes in technologies used in copy preparation, typesetting, printing and binding, as outlined above, have transformed the graphical / publishing industries in many countries. There are evident advantages of on-line products being interactive, such as the possibility of peer review of academic articles, instant global responses to information posted on the Internet, and direct access via hyperlinks to the sources of articles and other relevant information. Co-authoring packages exist, allowing writers from around the world to collaborate on drafting for publication.

A new problem has also arisen concerning publishing-on-demand by the new technologies. Until now, the author of a book could sell his or her copyright to a publisher for a fixed time, during which the publisher would guarantee the availability of the book to the public. After that period the copyright would revert to the author, who could dispose of this right again. The new technologies, especially the Internet, are changing this pattern fundamentally. Nowadays publishers can offer "books on demand" via the Internet or other means, and therefore make them available for ever. Books-on-demand services mean that a publisher (instead of a bookseller) can offer a book via the Internet or other means regardless of whether it is in stock or not. The moment a client wants to buy the book, the publisher produces it individually and delivers it to the client. By this new method the copyright never reverts to the author, because the publisher can make the book available at any time (Armstrong and Lonsdale, 1998).

Furthermore, electronic publishing facilitates comparatively easy revision of the text for more conventional monographs. A number of titles included facilities for the reader to communicate corrections, additions, and suggestions directly to the author thus enabling the author to conduct a mode of continuous revision. Such links suggest that, for certain titles, there could be a subtle move away from the traditional responsibility for revision resting with both the author and publisher, to the author alone. Although, there really was a time when the writer's job was to write and the publisher's job was to get it into readers' hands. Clearly that day has passed, and, like in so many other businesses, publishers are "outsourcing" work they used to do themselves--in this case, to author themselves (Larbalestier, 2006).

In addition, the advent of the Internet now enabled modern academics to run electronic journals / articles and distribute academic materials without the need for publishers and without a charge to readers and libraries. In reality, the interests of scholars and publishers have long been in conflict. While the purpose of copyright is to protect the capital invested in the work by the publisher, the wish of the scholar is to have the work as widely distributed as possible. Also, many less-successful writers have found an alternative to the mass market in the form of small presses and self-publishing. Though, there is little market exposure and royalties, yet these alternatives apart from being a threat, provide an avenue that expresses diversity in styles and political views that the mass market has not seen in the last ten to fifteen years.

The richness of the new multimedia presentations is exhibited in its combining texts, pictures, graphics, data and animation, and sometimes sounds, music and full motion video in forms that encourage or require the user to interact with the material in a manner not permitted by the "old media". The consumer of the material has a range of options to utilize the material, instead of proceeding (either forward or in reverse) along a predetermined path.

Another major implication of our new electronic environment is that technically, radio, television, cinemas, VCDs and DVDs, music systems, games, computer hardware and mobile telephony publish information to their audience. However, the marketing of a major film often include a novelization, of a graphic novel or comic version, the soundtrack album, a game, model, toys and endless promotional publications. These multimedia works are cross-marketed aggressively; and sales frequently outperform the average stand alone published work, making them therefore, a focus of corporate interest to the detriment of other publishing activities, especially, book publishing.

Also, as a result of profit / commercial considerations, many sub-standard / low quality works (e.g. pornography) are been published these days, especially on the Internet, at the expense of scholarly and professional works of high standard (Larbalestier, 2006).

Notwithstanding, some very successful CD-ROM titles have been developed by book publishers, especially reference works where publishers have added sounds, narration, animation and full-motion video to create the next generation of encyclopaedias, dictionaries and atlases. This is also true for children's titles. For electronic products, the production, promotion and distribution costs are often very much lower than those associated with their traditional media counterparts. This is because the publisher saves the cost of paper, printing, binding and storage. The Internet attracts a huge and ever-growing number of consumers, so that electronic products can be sold more easily. For copyright holders (e.g. publishers and authors), the Net provides new ways of protecting, trading and collecting income from their intellectual property, using databases, digital watermarking and benchmarking and other ways to keep track of the ownership and use of their material, and to clamp down on copyright infringement especially from book pirates. Payments to copyright holders could increase substantially from the new uses of technology (Internet, satellite and cable television, etc.), if piracy can be combated effectively (Larbalestier, 2006).

However, in Nigeria, because of the financial and other constraints involved in being ICT-compliant, most of the authors, publishers and booksellers are still carrying out their traditional roles and are not much benefiting from the new synergy offered by the electronic platform. What then is the implication of this to the Nigerian Book Industry? The next section attempts an answer to this question.

### **CHALLENGES FACING THE NIGERIAN BOOK INDUSTRY AND THE POSSIBILITY OF BEING LEFT BEHIND**

Following the nation's economic downturn of the 1980's, most of the structures or plans put in place for achieving self sufficiency in book production for the education sector collapsed as a result of which Book "famine" descended on Nigeria and the dearth still persists till date (Ike, 2004). Ever since, a number of task forces, foundations, study groups, councils, conferences and committees have been set up to make recommendations on various facets of book production and distribution, including ways to equip the book sector and make it meet the needs of our educational system. The impact of some of these measures has not been much felt.

The publishing industry in Nigeria as it is presently is an "all comers" profession. All that it takes to become a publisher is the erection of a sign post outside an office or a residence without regard to any special training or formal education.

Also, membership of the Nigerian Publishers Association (NPA) - the main professional body for Nigerian Book Publishers, which was established in 1966 - is not mandatory. The membership of the Association as at September, 2004 stood at 103 nationwide (Ike, 2004). The implication of this is that there are probably more publishers outside than within the Association. No predetermined qualification(s) or condition(s) to be met before entering the profession and no control mechanism is put in place whatsoever.

In other words, book publishing in Nigeria is essentially a private sector affair. Expectedly therefore, the book industry is grossly undercapitalized. A few indigenous publishers courageous enough to seek bank loans to finance their publications are discouraged by lack of adequate credit facilities. Also, the low Per Capita Income of Nigerian citizens, affect the publishing industry very adversely. This is because for publishing and book selling to grow, readership and purchasing power of the masses must be tangible.

Nigeria has a well-articulated copyright law, administered by the Nigerian Copyright Commission (NCC). However, the copyright enforcement is weak and thus leaves room for improvement; this has led to a high incidence of book piracy. The sporadic efforts made to fight the pirates by the NPA and NCC is still very ineffective to say the least. This situation has really discouraged further local intellectual efforts.

The new technologies, especially the computer and reproduction machines, have also permitted an indiscriminate duplication of works. Many readers now prefer to photocopy or scan the work than buying an original copy which is more expensive, thus reducing the sales potential of the original work.

A handful of Publishers in the country have warehouses with their own fleet of distribution

vehicles. Most have no capacity to promote and sell their books nationwide while many Booksellers do not have sufficient capital base to order for large quantity of books that will make the desired impact, this then drastically reduces the sales prospects of the books. Other problems relating to book sales promotion in Nigeria are:

- Inadequate bibliographic instruments (e.g. abstracts, indexes, bibliographies etc.) for announcing new publications and documenting all publications-in-print. (Ochogwu, 1991).
- Unsatisfactory Book Review media. Only a few newspapers in Nigeria carry periodic book reviews. Thanks to New Nigeria newspaper which tries in this direction.
- Publishers'/Authors'/Editors' non-compliance with the state and national legal deposit laws which require a publisher /author / editor to deposit a specific number of their works with the State and National Libraries. This would have helped in creating a worldwide awareness for the work via the National Bibliography of Nigeria (NBN), a publication of National Library of Nigeria.

Presently, most of the publishing equipment and raw materials are imported, apart from their high cost, they also attract heavy import duties. In addition, it is not always easy replacing the spare parts of this equipment or repairing them in case of a breakdown. Also, difficulty in obtaining typographical and other publishing software is another brake on local publishing (Diallo, 2005).

In addition, many of the publishing staff and book sellers are untrained and not brought up to appreciate scholarship. Generally speaking, the level of education of most operators of typesetting or compugraphic machines working with the commercial printers is very low. This leads to too many errors in both galley and page proofs, which the publisher must detect and correct before the final press work. Each category of staff in the Book sector requires different kind and level of academic background and technical competence which are derived presently only through apprenticeship.

Also, official documents imprint change as governments and parastatals change. New States emerge from time to time thus making it near-impossible to track down Government documents and make them accessible to people.

To date, most educational materials are still taxed. This inhibits the growth of book publishing in Nigeria. Nigeria does not adhere to the Net Book Agreement (NBA) of 1962 which placed books and educational materials on zero vetted lists. (Nwogu, 2004).

These and many more are the constraints to book development in Nigeria. How then do we address these problems?

#### **PROMOTING THE BOOK INDUSTRY IN NIGERIA:**

Several intervention attempts have been made by the Federal Government, other non-governmental organizations (e.g. Book Aid International (formerly Ranfurly), British Council, World Bank, ETF, etc.) and individuals, to provide books for the school systems.

In recent years, the USA has emerged as a major source of book donation to Nigeria, from book aid agencies, church organizations, groups of Nigerians, and individual donors to Nigerians resident in the USA. The Saber Foundation Inc. USA has also come into the picture in a big way by offering to pay the freight costs of foreign-sponsored book donations projects to Nigeria (Ike, 2004). Brothers Brother Foundation of USA is currently arranging to send volumes of books to Nigerian Universities under a special arrangement with the Committee of University Librarians of Nigerian Universities (CULNU).

However, Government intervention schemes did not cater for the general readers or the millions of Nigerians outside the formal education sector. Hence, foreign book donations, which have helped to fill the yawning gap in the publishing and sales output of Nigerian Publishing Houses and Booksellers, will continue to do so for quite a while. The ultimate goal must, however, be for Nigerian Authors, Publishers, and Booksellers to produce and make available, the bulk of the books required for formal and non-formal education in the country particularly in areas where suitable foreign books are unlikely to be available.

The following, therefore, have been suggested to be the way forward in the journey towards self-sufficiency in book production and marketing in Nigeria:

- University Presses have the capacity to be truly indigenous, without any external influence on

their publishing programmes, philosophies, and editorial policies, hence, they should be established or well developed in all the Universities in the country to promote scholarly publishing and should be well funded. Their products (which will be of the highest standard) should be adequately subsidized. At present only a few of the Universities in the country can boast of a full-fledged publishing outfit. Hence, Universities in Nigeria should be encouraged to establish and sustain publishing houses.

- As a result of the large capital involvement, the Federal and States Governments in their bid to promote indigenous book publishing should establish more Paper Mills which will be designed to manufacture pulp paper to feed the Book Publishing outfits in the country while the moribund Paper Mills should be revived. Also, to promote scholarship in the country, State governments can set up publishing presses to publish commercially at a subsidized rate.
- The possibility of securing licensing rights from foreign publishers of needed scholarly, scientific, and technical books under agreed terms for the purpose of reprinting in Nigeria should be explored. This has been successfully done in India (Aguolu and Aguolu, 2004). The Federal Ministry of Education and the Nigerian Copyright Commission can play an important role in ensuring successful negotiations for the licensing rights.
- To inculcate professional knowledge, skills and confidence and to prepare the way for both internal and external competitions, the Federal Government, National Association of Nigerian Authors, the Nigerian Publishers Association, Nigerian Bookseller Association, Nigerian Book Foundation and other stakeholders should periodically organize workshops and seminars on various aspects of book writing, publishing and marketing to improve the skills of the authors, publishers and booksellers.
- While the Library Schools in Nigeria should develop more comprehensive courses in Publishing as it is being done at the University of Ibadan and the Federal Polytechnic Nekede, Owerri; the Departments of Creative Arts, Fine Arts and Mass Communication in some of the tertiary institutions in the country should offer courses in Book Design or Graphic Arts. The Polytechnics and the Universities of Technology in the country should also initiate a course in Printing / Publishing Technology and Information / Book Marketing which will be offered up to the HND or first degree level. Visible progress has been made in this regard by Yaba College of Technology; Federal Polytechnic, Oke; IMT, Enugu and Kaduna Polytechnic, Kaduna. (Aguolu & Aguolu, 2002 and Oduagwu, 2005).
- The local publishing capacity can be strengthened by means of tax relief, the application by Federal government of Conventions and International Agreements such as those concerning intellectual property rights, the Florence Accord, the Nairobi Protocol and the provision of credit facilities for acquiring printing equipment and presses (Diallo, 2005).
- Exhibitions, Trade Fairs, Book Festivals, Book Signings, Write Shops, Illustration Workshops, Compliance to legal deposit laws, Engaging Librarians that will help in producing bibliographical instruments, Book Reviews and Advertisement in newspapers and television stations will go a long way in creating and increasing awareness on the products of local Book Authors, Publishers and Booksellers.
- Finally, a fund can be commissioned or endowed to assist indigenous publishing efforts, especially those publishing in local languages for the 'new' literate. Also, in creating the fund, local philanthropists can have a place to disburse their financial benevolence.

## **CONCLUSION**

This work started by defining an Author, a Publisher and a Bookseller. It further expatiated on the indispensable roles of these key actors in the development of the book industry. The present fading distinctiveness in their roles and its implication for the emerging Information society and the challenges faced presently by the Nigerian Book Industry were discussed. The paper made suggestions on how the Nigerian Book industry can be further promoted so as to enhance scholarship in the country.

In sum, we should realize that the general paucity of information and materials in this country has greatly hampered the growth of the Education Sector. This in turn, has militated against the full realization of the goals of education (e.g. as contained in the Millennium Development Goal, the Vision 20-20-20, etc.). Therefore, we should know that meaningful instruction and research can only take place in a climate where different kinds of resources are available, affordable and accessible to all regardless of age, creed, sex, ethnic background, religious and political affiliations, colour, etc.

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