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THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY
Graduate School of Media and Communications

**MONETISING DIGITAL CONTENT: LESSONS FROM NATION MEDIA
GROUP**

By

Augustine Kipkogei Sang
535146

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of
Arts in Digital Journalism.

Nairobi, Kenya

11/02/2022
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APPROVAL PAGE

The Aga Khan University
Graduate School of Media and Communications

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Digital Journalism.

Members of the Thesis Evaluation Committee appointed to examine the thesis of AUGUSTINE KIPKOGEI-535146, find it satisfactory and recommended that it be accepted.

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11/02/2022

DECLARATION

MONETISING DIGITAL CONTENT: LESSONS FROM NATION MEDIA GROUP

I, **AUGUSTINE KIPKOGEI SANG-535146**, declare that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university and that, to the best of my knowledge, it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference has been made in the text. The editorial assistance provided to me has in no way added to the substance of my thesis, which is the product of my research endeavours.

A photograph of a handwritten signature in blue ink on a light-colored background. The signature is cursive and appears to read 'Augustine Kipkogei Sang'.

Signature

Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my son Ethan, my wife Nancy, my dad Kenneth, my mum Elizabeth, my sisters Janet and Juliet, and my brother Edwin for their encouragement and support.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I acknowledge the scholarly advice and support given to me by my supervisors, Dr Njoki Chege and Hesbon Owilla. I am grateful for their encouragement and guidance, which contributed significantly to the completion of this thesis. I acknowledge the contribution of all the participants of this study for offering their insights, without which, the study would not have succeeded. I am grateful for the input made by the Thesis Evaluation Committee members. I also wish to thank the AKU-GSMC management, faculty members, staff, and fellow students for their support. I acknowledge the support given by Henry Kibira and Kimweli Wambua, who went out of their way to ensure that this project was a success. I also wish to thank the library staff at AKU-GSMC for their unwavering support throughout the course of this study.

ABSTRACT

The advent of digital media has seen legacy news organisations record a decline in revenue as audiences shifted online, where access to information was relatively cheaper and more convenient. Newspaper circulation plummeted, and so did their revenue as advertisers followed the audiences online, where the media were abundant and could pay less. Media houses switched focus to digital after traditional models were disrupted, the intention being to use digital to plug the losses in legacy platforms. Within this tenet, this study sought to determine the lessons learned by legacy media in Kenya and identify the critical success factors in the marketing of content on the digital platform. The objectives were to establish the lessons learned in the monetisation of digital content, determine the critical success factors in the monetization of content by legacy media on the digital platform, and determine the challenges facing legacy media in Kenya in their efforts to monetize content on digital platforms. The disruption of innovation theory and media economics formed the theoretical framework. The researcher adopted a qualitative research approach and an exploratory research design. In-depth interviews were used to generate data. The study sample size was achieved through purposive sampling technique. Data was analysed through thematic statistical tools. The findings of the study established that the media house has drawn important lessons on the need for continuous improvement of content and that delivery platforms must be set properly. Further, the findings established that the success factors in monetisation on the digital platform are content, technology, and the market economy. In addition, the study determined that Nation Media Group (NMG) is experiencing an uphill task in convincing readers to pay for content on a platform where they used to access it freely. The study concluded that paywalls and consumer paid models can only be successful if the media houses invest in quality content, understand their audiences, and target them through optimal use of technologies available. The researcher recommends that for media to succeed in monetising content on the digital platform, they must ensure that they offer audiences quality and exclusive content through platforms that have the best user experience. Based on the findings, the researcher suggests further investigation on what the media can do to keep their premium content exclusive.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AKU-GSMC:	Aga Khan University-Graduate School of Media and Communications
NMG:	Nation Media Group
KNBS:	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics
SG:	Standard Group Plc
KARF:	Kenya Audience Research Foundation
CA:	Communications Authority
MCK:	Media Council of Kenya
FTA:	Free-to-air
OECD:	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
NYT:	New York Times