

Zimbabwe: 'Social media a threat to newspapers'

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The social media has become a major threat to the viability of the newspaper industry and the existence of journalism as a profession, a Government official has said. Information, Media and Broadcasting Services principal director Regis Chikowore said newspaper circulation across the country was taking a nosedive.

Chikowore was speaking during belated World Press Freedom Day celebrations in Harare on Friday. He said the flow of information through multimedia platforms was unparalleled, but posed the question about the future of journalism in the traditional sense.

"If anybody who can read and write can pass for a journalist, doesn't this pose a threat to the existence of journalism as a profession?"

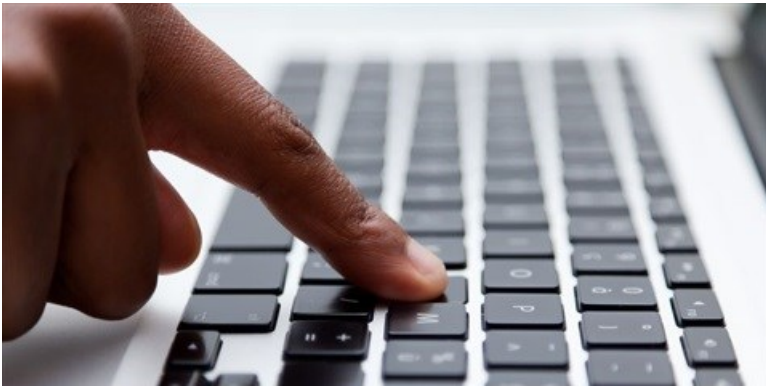


Image via [123RF](#)

Chikowore said with the advent of multimedia formats, many people were now reluctant to buy newspapers and subscribe to radio or television licences when news could be accessed through the social media.

He urged journalists to look into the future of their profession. "As we celebrate Press freedom, journalists should start to reflect on the future of their profession," he said.

Chikowore expressed concern over the dearth of quality reporting among newspapers. "Also arising from the prevalence of multi-media platforms are questions that have arisen in respect of the quality of reporting that leaves a lot to be desired," he said.

"Consumers of news are beginning to feel the pinch of being short-changed through half-baked stories passed as news

and information." World Press Freedom Day is celebrated on May 3 every year worldwide.

The belated celebrations were held at Harare Polytechnic with members from various organisations like Zimbabwe Union of Journalists, Zimbabwe National Editors Forum, Media Monitoring Project of Zimbabwe, Unesco Regional Office for Southern Africa and journalism students at the college in attendance.

The theme for this year is "Let Journalism Thrive! Towards Better Reporting, Gender Equality and Media Safety in the Digital Age".

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