

Zimbabwe: Keeping it at the cutting edge

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Our management at [Alpha Media Holdings](#), publishers of three national newspaper titles, recently made changes at *NewsDay* and the *Zimbabwe Independent* to refresh the editorial teams and give them a bit of zing.

In this world where the social media is changing the face of society and journalism, there is always need to reorganise to inject dynamism and punch in news coverage.

It's not just media organisations which have been jolted out of their comfort zones by social media, all sorts of businesses and individuals have had to adjust in a bid to keep up with changes in the increasingly shifting operating environments, mainly triggered by technological innovations and growing customer demands - in this case newspaper readers.

At this point it is important to reaffirm we are driven by what our readers or the market wants. We hold no brief for anyone, including the publisher. This is the way we operate.

But that was a parenthesis even though it's central to our editorial policy. Technological changes and the advent of social media, among other such momentous developments, are also rocking Orwellian regimes - which thrive on authoritarian control - around the world.

That is why it is surprising to find some regimes still clinging onto old-fashioned and failed totalitarian models in the 21st Century. In the case of Zimbabwe, government remains frozen on a Stalinist paradigm in terms of its political culture and how it relates with its citizens and the media.

But remaining handcuffed to the past is hardly the best strategy of coping with the only constant in life - change. The fact is whether we are talking about president Robert Mugabe's birthday party tomorrow, the Eurozone crisis and the Greek bailout, Whitney Houston's recent death, the Arab Spring, the Occupy Movement, phone-hacking scandal or Zambia's recent victory at the African Cup of Nations, social media is gaining momentum and exerting ever more dramatic impact on us, making state control of the media, information and censorship redundant.

That's why as media we need to keep on adjusting to service our readers and audiences better. Despite changes around us, we will not change our vision, mission and values as a newspaper. But we may change a few things in our coverage of news to refocus and achieve differentiation as we work to maintain and consolidate our market position.

Our focus remains the same: To be the most reliable and trusted provider of business news, information and data, as well as political insight in Zimbabwe. To achieve this, we need to provide cutting-edge, incisive and dynamic news coverage, as

well as compelling investigative reporting and analysis on multimedia platforms.

Credibility, relevance and professionalism will remain our core values in service of communities and democracy in our role as a public watchdog. We want to be the home to fresh ideas, critical thinking and investigative journalism.

Even though we acknowledge the role of social media, we however don't want to overstate its impact on society and, more specifically, on journalism. Certainly, real scoops and insightful reporting are still better secured through traditional investigative methods, with social media serving as a tool to achieve that.

We hope to change how our people relate to government and interact with public institutions and their leaders, as well as society at large. It is important to ensure informed, honest and robust debate in society, while helping to improve how people make their choices and connect to business and the economy.

As a newspaper, we will continue to hold government to account and fight for progressive democratic alternatives. Our spotlight will remain on the public and private spheres of life to expose abuse of power and corruption, while chasing consequential stories in the public interest.

This means we will have to push the envelope or frontiers to get good stories and broaden the democratic space in our operations. It will be an uphill task but a welcome challenge.

Source: allAfrica.com.

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