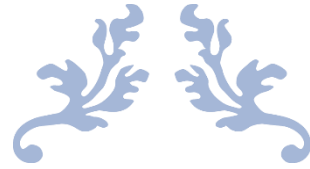


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TETFUND-NRF FINAL REPORT

**TECHNOLOGY, POLITICS, AND SOCIETY: A 'BIG DATA' APPROACH TO
THE STUDY OF NEW MEDIA USAGE IN NIGERIA'S DEMOCRACY**



CENTRE FOR DIGITAL HUMANITIES, UNIVERSITY F LAGOS

Executive Summary

Since the emergence of new media technologies in the 1990s, our modern world has been undergoing a revolution that is sweeping across every sphere of our social space and human endeavour. These socio-technological advancements have continued to reshape interactions, reframe communications, and reconfigure the mechanics of our daily lives. Within the context of our social and political spaces, the use of the new modes of communication are reframing our democratic experiences, breaking down political and identity barriers, building bridges and baking new civil relationships within the socio-political space and public sphere. The huge communication and interaction value chains being created are progressing at an unimaginably significant scale transforming discursive practices in our private and public domains, with significant impact on democratic practice in young democracies. This study, situated within the framework of Digital Humanities, focuses on a critical and systematic investigation of the use of the internet, new media and digital technologies in Nigeria's democracy between 2015 and 2019. It explores and curates a range of data generated during these electoral cycles with the aim of constructing a big virtual repository ('big data') of digital political discourse that can be studied and analyzed towards mapping and monitoring electoral practices and development of democratic governance in Nigeria. It investigates, describes and documents of the use of technology in a growing democracy. The project thus affirms that data and its underlying structures, the dynamics of data relations, and newer data technologies are processes that are rapidly evolving and impacting political practice and democratic cultures in Nigeria. It equally demonstrates that building a digital repository of this specialized corpus/data extracted from political activities in Nigeria has the capacity to improve democratic cultures and electoral practices in a young democratic context. It presents datasets that can enable the production of critical information and inform policy decisions for the development of democratic practice and further evaluation of the role of technologies in promoting a knowledge-based society. The outcome enables researchers; political actors, stakeholders and policy makers to better appreciate the role of technology in democratic practice. It provides useful information on strategies that addresses contemporary challenges facing Nigerian fledgling democracy such as weak political institutions, ballot stuffing/snatching, electoral conflicts, post-election violence, hate speech, fake news. Ultimately, it sheds more light on the power of technology to transform electoral and political practices. The project challenges electoral regulators, state and non-state actors, political actors, elected officials and other stakeholders to improve the deployment of fit-to-size new technologies that will stimulate further the creation of an improved enabling environment and level-playing ground for democratic practice and strong political and state institutions in Nigeria. It is anticipated that if the research outcomes are fully implemented by the relevant authorities and stakeholders, the project will contribute to the ongoing efforts to enhance tech-driven electoral practices, participatory democracy, good governance anchored on peaceful and credible elections, accountability and strong democracy in Nigeria, and other similar socio-political contexts. The repository domiciled at the University of Lagos web/server data centre (<https://cedhul.edu.ng>), is open access with findable, accessible, interoperable and re-usable data.

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