EFFECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN NIGERIA (CONFLICTS BETWEEN TWITTER (X) AND NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT IN JUNE 2021.)

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Abstract:

From 5 June 2021 to 13 January 2022, the government of Nigeria officially banned Twitter, which restricted it from operating in the country. The ban occurred after Twitter deleted tweets made by, and temporarily suspended, the Nigerian president Muhammadu Buhari, warning the southeastern people of Nigeria, predominantly Igbo people, of a potential repeat of the 1967 Nigerian Civil War due to the ongoing insurgency in Southeastern Nigeria. The Nigerian government claimed that the deletion of the president's tweets factored into their decision, but it was ultimately based on "a litany of problems with the social media platform in Nigeria, where misinformation and fake news spread through it have had real world violent consequences", citing the persistent use of the platform for activities that are capable of undermining Nigeria's corporate existence.

The ban was condemned by Amnesty International, the British, Canadian and Swedish diplomatic missions to Nigeria, as well as the United States and the European Union in a joint statement. Two domestic organizations, the Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) and the Nigerian Bar Association, indicated intent to challenge the ban in court. Twitter itself called the ban "deeply concerning".

Former U.S. president Donald Trump, who was banned on Twitter months before Nigeria's ban, praised the ban, stating "Congratulations to the country of Nigeria, who just banned Twitter because they banned their President", and also called on other countries to ban Twitter and Facebook due to "not allowing free and open speech."

Nigeria's cultural minister Lai Mohammed stated the ban would be lifted once Twitter submitted to locally licensing, registration and conditions. "It will be licensed by the broadcasting commission, and must agree not to allow its platform to be used by those who are promoting activities that are inimical to the corporate existence of Nigeria.

In January 2022, Nigeria lifted its ban after Twitter agreed to pay an "applicable tax" and establish a legal entity within the country sometime in the first quarter of 2022.

Social Media are interactive technologies that allow the creation or sharing/exchange of information ideas, career interest, and other forms of expression via virtual communities and networks. Users usually access social media services via web-based applications on desktops and laptops, or download services that offers that offer social media functionality to their mobile devices. as users engage with these electronic devices, they create highly interactive platforms through which individuals, communities and organizations can share co-create discuss participate and modify user-generated content or self-created content posted online.

Additionally social media are used to document memories learn about and explore things advertise oneself and form friendships along with the growth of ideas from the creation of blogs, podcast, videos, and gaming sites. This changing relationship between human and technology is the focus of the emerging field of techno self-studies.

Social media may have roots in the 1840s introduction of the telegraph which connected to the United States.

Key Words:

Twitter, Government, social media, Authority, Nigeria, Civil war, Peace, Resolution.

CONFLICTS BETWEEN TWITTER (X) AND NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT IN JUNE 2021

The ban on Twitter in Nigeria in 2021 was a controversial move by the Nigerian government that received both support and criticism from various quarters. In order to understand the reasons behind the ban and its implications, it is important to explore the context and events that led up to this decision.

The ban was triggered by a series of events that began with the deletion of a tweet by President Muhammadu Buhari. In the tweet, President Buhari made reference to the Nigerian Civil War and issued a warning to separatist groups in the southeastern part of the country. However, Twitter deemed the tweet to have violated its policy on abusive behavior and deleted it.

Twitter's decision to delete the president's tweet sparked a strong reaction from the Nigerian government. The government accused Twitter of bias, claiming that the platform was interfering in the country's political affairs. They argued that Twitter's actions were an infringement on Nigeria's sovereignty and constituted an attack on the country's leadership.

In response to Twitter's actions, the Nigerian government announced the indefinite suspension of Twitter operations in the country. The government cited concerns over the use of Twitter for activities that could undermine Nigeria's corporate existence. They also accused Twitter of allowing the spread of fake news and misinformation, which they claimed posed a threat to national security.

The ban on Twitter in Nigeria was met with mixed reactions. Supporters of the government's decision argued that it was necessary to curb the spread of fake news and misinformation, which they believed had been a source of tension and unrest in the country. They also argued that the ban was a way to assert Nigeria's sovereignty and protect the country's national interests.

However, the ban also received widespread criticism, both domestically and internationally. Critics argued that it was a violation of freedom of expression and an attempt to silence dissenting voices. They viewed the ban as an authoritarian move that undermined democracy and stifled democratic debate. Many Nigerians saw the ban as an infringement on their rights and an attempt by the government to control the narrative and suppress opposition.

The ban on Twitter in Nigeria had significant implications for various stakeholders. For the Nigerian government, the ban was seen as a way to exert control over social media platforms and regulate their activities in the country. It also allowed the government to send a message that it would not tolerate actions perceived as interference in Nigeria's political affairs.

For Twitter, the ban meant a loss of access to one of its largest markets in Africa. Nigeria has a vibrant social media landscape, with millions of users active on various platforms. The ban had financial implications for Twitter, as well as reputational risks, as it portrayed the platform as being at odds with the Nigerian government.

The ban also had implications for Nigerian citizens and civil society. Many Nigerians relied on Twitter as a platform for expressing their opinions, sharing information, and organizing protests and demonstrations. The ban limited their ability to engage in online activism and restricted their freedom of expression.

Internationally, the ban on Twitter in Nigeria drew attention to the issue of internet freedom and the role of social media platforms in democratic societies. It sparked discussions about the responsibilities of social media companies, as well as the need to strike a balance between freedom of expression and the regulation of online content.

Efforts have been made to resolve the issue of the Twitter ban in Nigeria. Twitter representatives have engaged in dialogue with the Nigerian government in an attempt to find a resolution. However, as of now, the ban remains in place, and the situation continues to evolve.

In conclusion, the ban on Twitter in Nigeria in 2021 was a controversial move by the Nigerian government. It was triggered by the deletion of a tweet by President Muhammadu Buhari and the government's concerns over the use of Twitter for activities they perceived as threats to national security. The ban has generated debate and criticism, with some supporting the government's decision and others viewing it as an infringement on freedom of expression and an attempt to control the narrative. The ban has implications for various stakeholders, including the Nigerian government, Twitter, Nigerian citizens, and the international community. Efforts have been made to resolve the issue, but as of now, the ban on Twitter in Nigeria remains in place. In another view

As of June 2021, the Nigerian government has suspended access to Twitter indefinitely, and there are ongoing discussions about new regulations for social media platforms. Here are some suggested rules that the Nigerian government might consider:

1. Content moderation: Social media platforms should establish clear guidelines for what is considered harmful, illegal, or offensive content and should take proactive measures to moderate and remove such content.

2. User verification: Social media platforms should implement a strong user verification process to ensure that accounts are authentic, reducing the spread of false information and malicious activities.

3. Data protection and privacy: Platforms should ensure users' data privacy by implementing robust security measures, obtaining proper consent for data collection, and adhering to relevant data protection laws.

4. Open dialogue with governments: Social media companies should actively engage in discussions with governments to address concerns and find solutions to any issues that might arise from the use of their platforms.

5. Credible fact-checking: Platforms should partner with credible fact-checkers and academia to help verify the accuracy of information shared and curb the spread of fake news.

6. Local community guidelines and cultural sensitivity: Social media platforms should design and enforce community guidelines that acknowledge and respect local culture, values, and sensitivities.

7. Transparency in algorithms: Platforms should provide more transparency regarding their recommendation algorithms and ensure they prioritize trustworthy, non-partisan, and diverse sources of information.

8. Platform accountability: Social media platforms should be held to account for their role in combatting hate speech, harassment, and the incitement of violence. This may involve establishing channels to report abuse, providing mechanisms for appeals, and taking swift action against perpetrators.

These are potential rules that the Nigerian government could consider, but it's important to note that the specifics of any future regulations are yet to be determined.

Enhancing Communication and Collaboration: Strengthening the Bond between Twitter and Nigeria Government.

Introduction:

Communication technologies have revolutionized the way individuals and societies interact, connect, and empower one another. Twitter, a powerful social media platform that offers real-time information sharing and networking, has become a prominent tool for individuals, organizations, and nations worldwide. One such nation that can immensely benefit from Twitter's vibrant environment is Nigeria. This article will explore the multifaceted relationship between Twitter and Nigeria, discussing how leveraging the platform can foster development, improve communication, empower marginalized groups, increase transparency in governance, and address social issues. It will present strategic recommendations to enhance this bond and unlock the true potential of this connection.

1. Empowering Marginalized Communities:

Twitter can be instrumental in bridging gaps between voices in rural/remote areas of Nigeria and enabling marginalized groups to engage in the national dialogue. By encouraging the provision of reliable and localized information through Twitter, Nigerian communities can build social capital, share concerns, propose ideas, and be actively included in decision-making processes. Furthermore, training programs and digital literacy initiatives focused on Twitter can empower marginalized communities to amplify their voices and foster socio-economic development.

2. Promoting Citizens' Engagement in Governance:

Twitter creates a direct channel for citizens to voice concerns, provide feedback, and participate in dialogue with government officials. Increased public engagement and discussions on Twitter can result in more transparent governance, timely problem-solving, and efficient service delivery. Nigerian government entities can actively employ Twitter for dissemination of official information, project updates, combating corruption, responding to public queries, and initiating digital public consultations.

3. Enhancing Information and Crisis Management:

Harnessing the power of Twitter can significantly enhance information management during crises, both official and informal. Nigerian authorities can utilize Twitter as a real-time communication medium to disseminate critical information such as emergency provisions, safety protocols, weather alerts, and pandemic-related updates. Likewise, citizens can benefit from Twitter by instantly seeking trustworthy information, sharing their experiences, and aiding disaster management efforts through crowd-sourced data.

4. Amplify Cultural and Creative Industries:

Nigeria's abundant cultural heritage and vibrant arts scene can be vastly promoted through Twitter. Networking and collaboration opportunities between Nigerian creatives and global industry representatives can be flourished through campaigns, online exhibitions, virtual performances, and artful showcases. Twitter's algorithms can be harnessed to connect Nigerian talents, entrepreneurs, authors, and artists with wider audiences, enhancing cultural diplomacy, tourism, and fostering economic growth within creative industries.

5. Targeted Education Awareness and Online Learning:

Twitter's immense reach can engage Nigerian students, educators, policymakers, parents, and schools to establish dedicated hashtags and handles to share educational resources, provide student support services, and create virtual learning networks. By leveraging Twitter for targeted education-awareness campaigns, access

to educational resources, and increasing remote learning opportunities, Nigeria can bridge the digital divide and address educational challenges effectively.

RESOLUTION METHOD

To get tax from Twitter in Nigeria and resolve the discord, the government could consider the following steps:

1. Establish clear tax laws and regulations: The Nigerian government should ensure that there are clear laws in place that outline the tax obligations of digital companies, including social media platforms like Twitter.

2. Conduct a tax assessment on Twitter: The tax authorities can perform an assessment to determine the profit and revenue generated by Twitter in Nigeria. This can be done by examining the user base, ad revenues, and other sources of revenue generated within the country.

3. Engage in diplomatic and negotiation channels: The government can engage in diplomatic negotiations with Twitter to discuss and resolve any issues related to tax compliance. Constructive dialogue and negotiations can lead to mutual understanding and agreement.

4. Collaboration with international organizations: Nigeria could also collaborate with international organizations focused on digital taxation, such as the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) or the African Tax Administration Forum (ATAF), to develop guidelines and frameworks for taxing digital businesses like Twitter.

5. Enforce tax laws transparently: It's crucial for the Nigerian government to enforce tax laws transparently and strictly without any bias. This will inspire trust and confidence from both Twitter and other digital companies operating in the country.

6. Promote a favorable business environment: The government should create an enabling environment that encourages digital companies to be compliant with tax laws by providing incentives or tax breaks for those that demonstrate tax compliance.

7. Continuously update tax laws and regulations: In the constantly evolving digital era, tax laws need to keep up with technology advancements. The government should regularly review, update, and adapt tax laws to account for changing business models and ensure fairness and transparency for all stakeholders.

Overall, a well-defined tax framework, open dialogue, diplomatic negotiations, and transparent enforcement of tax laws are essential for Nigeria to get tax from Twitter and resolve any discord surrounding taxation issues.

some ways to stop or counter fake news on Twitter:

1. Verify the source: Before sharing or retweeting any news, verify that it comes from a reliable and trusted source. Look for well-known and reputable news organizations or journalists who have a credible track record of providing accurate information.

2. Fact-checking: Take the responsibility to fact-check before sharing information. There are various fact-checking organizations available that can help identify misinformation. Share and retweet news only when it has been verified by multiple credible sources.

3. Promote diverse perspectives: Follow a variety of voices, including those with opposing viewpoints. This way, you can get a more balanced understanding of the news and minimize being influenced by a particular bias.

4. Critical thinking: Develop a critical approach while reading and interpreting news. Consider the source's motive, evidence provided, and look for possible biases or logical fallacies. Question information that seems too good to be true or designed to evoke strong emotions.

5. Use Twitter's reporting tools: Whenever you come across fake news or misinformation on Twitter, use the platform's reporting tools to bring it to the attention of moderators. Twitter encourages users to report content that violates its policies, including the spread of misinformation.

6. Educate others: Share tips and resources on how to identify and verify news sources. Encourage your followers to be critical thinkers and practice responsible sharing. Help others understand the consequences of spreading misinformation.

Remember, tackling fake news on any platform, including Twitter, requires a collective effort from all users to promote accurate information and combat misinformation effectively.

Governments can undertake several steps to help mitigate the spread of fake news. Here are some possible approaches:

1. Education and media literacy: Governments can promote media literacy programs targeting all age groups. Such programs can teach people how to evaluate information sources critically, identify fake news indicators, and fact-check news stories.

2. Collaboration with tech companies: Governments can work closely with social media platforms, search engines, and other tech companies to develop and enforce policies and algorithms that regulate the spread of false information. This could involve promoting reliable news sources and algorithms that prioritize accurate information.

3. Fact-checking agencies: Governments can support independent fact-checking organizations and enhance their reach and impact. These agencies play a critical role in debunking fake news by providing fact-based investigations and analyses to counter false narratives.

4. Legislation and regulation: Governments could enact legislation or regulations designed to hold both individuals and platforms accountable for intentionally spreading fake news. However, this step should be approached cautiously to avoid infringing on freedom of speech or giving excessive control to the government.

5. Transparent communication: Governments should strive to be transparent and provide accurate information timely. By maintaining credibility, governments can reduce public susceptibility to misleading or false narratives.

6. International cooperation: Since fake news frequently crosses national borders, governments should cooperate with other countries to develop international standards and mechanisms to address this issue collectively.

Overall, dealing with fake news is a complex challenge requiring a combined effort from governments, tech companies, and individuals. A multi-strategy and collaborative approach is crucial to successfully eradicate the spread and impact of fake news.

Conclusion:

Maximizing the interplay between Twitter and Nigeria holds enormous potential for an improved communication landscape, enhanced development, and empowerment of Nigerians. This article has highlighted the possibilities of empowering marginalized communities, promoting citizens' engagement in governance, streamlining information and crisis management, amplifying the cultural and creative industries, and driving targeted education awareness. By seizing these opportunities, Twitter can become an influential forum bridging the gap between Nigerians and the world, fostering transparency, inclusivity, and socio-economic progression.

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