

THE ACCIDENTAL NATURE OF YOUTUBE FOR FILM ARCHIVING IN 21ST CENTURY NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the nature of accidental archiving and the role of YouTube as a platform for film storage within the Nigerian film industry, addressing the associated challenges and opportunities. Using platform capitalism as a foundational theoretical framework, the research employs a mixed-methods approach to assess the implications of leveraging YouTube as an alternative to traditional archival systems. The findings indicate that YouTube serves as a "democratic digital archive," facilitating greater access to content for Nigerian filmmakers and enabling them to engage directly with global audiences while bypassing conventional distribution channels. However, this platform presents significant challenges, including copyright infringement, piracy, content oversaturation, and quality control concerns. The analysis highlights the dual nature of YouTube's influence in Nollywood. On one hand, it promotes accessibility and enhances cultural representation; on the other hand, it raises concerns about the dilution of industry standards due to the proliferation of low-quality productions. To address these issues, the study recommends establishing voluntary quality benchmarks, improving digital infrastructure, and taking proactive measures to tackle intellectual property challenges. These steps will help ensure that YouTube's repository potential aligns with Nollywood's aspirations for global recognition and cultural preservation. In conclusion, the paper provides valuable insights into the ongoing discourse surrounding digital media, archiving practices, and creative industries in the Global South.

KEYWORDS: Accidental Nature, YouTube, Film Archiving, Nigeria, and Nollywood.

INTRODUCTION

Film archiving is a deliberate act; it involves systematically collecting, preserving, and organising films for long-term preservation and access. The preservation and maintenance of film records is a vital aspect of film cultural heritage; however, accidental film archivists often emerge when individuals, not initially trained as archivists, find themselves needing to manage and preserve film materials. This can happen in various settings, such as academic institutions, government agencies, or community archives, where individuals may have to handle film materials without formal archival training. In the 21st century, digital technology has profoundly transformed the realm of film preservation and archiving. Traditional film archives, which depend on physical storage media like celluloid, videotapes, and DVDs, are increasingly being replaced by digital repositories. However, in Nigeria's growing film industry, film preservation and archiving face significant obstacles due to inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, and a lack of policy frameworks, because of institutional failure in the Nigerian video and sound archive. Consequently, the YouTube platform has unexpectedly emerged as a platform for film preservation. This unintended role of YouTube in film archiving highlights the unstructured yet effective contribution the platform makes to ensuring the preservation of Nigeria's cinematic heritage.

Historically, Film archiving in Nigeria has been managed by government organisations such as the Nigerian Film Corporation (NFC) and the National Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB). However, the lack of a comprehensive national preservation strategy has gradually led to the loss of many classic films. In this context, the emergence of digital platforms has inadvertently addressed some of these challenges, with YouTube becoming a prominent platform. Informally, users, film enthusiasts, and independent filmmakers upload, share, and store audiovisual content on the platform. Unlike conventional archives, which emphasise metadata, cataloguing, and systematic restoration, YouTube's approach to archiving is spontaneous, user-driven, and vulnerable to copyright issues and content removals. Thus, this paper tries to explore the accidental nature of YouTube as a film archive in Nigeria, examining its role, challenges, and implications for preserving the nation's cinematic heritage. It analyses how YouTube serves as a bridge between digital accessibility and the loss of traditional archiving methods. It assesses whether the platform can be leveraged as a sustainable archival tool or if a more structured national approach to film preservation is required.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: PLATFORM CAPITALISM

The concept of platform capitalism is primarily attributed to Nick Srnicek's scholarship. Srnicek's 2016 publication, *Platform Capitalism*, stands as a noteworthy contribution to this domain, offering a critical evaluation of the transformative impact of platform enterprises on capitalism's functionality. While existing literature has touched upon facets of the digital economy and the involvement of technology firms, Srnicek's research presents a comprehensive framework that delves into the economic power dynamics and distinctive characteristics of platform-centred businesses. Platform capitalism represents an emerging economic model centred around digital platforms, serving as intermediaries that facilitate financial transactions among diverse participant cohorts (Konietzko et al. 16). Noteworthy platforms such as Uber, Airbnb, and Amazon play a pivotal role in connecting buyers with sellers as well as service providers with consumers, thereby disrupting traditional industries and business frameworks (Łobejko and Bartczak 10). These platforms have revolutionised the exchange of goods and services, elevating levels of convenience, accessibility, and efficacy. Furthermore, these platforms amass and analyse extensive user interaction data, generating insights that enhance targeting, customisation, and the overall user journey.

ACCIDENTAL ARCHIVING AND THE USE OF THE YOUTUBE PLATFORM

Accidental archiving can occur due to a variety of factors, including:

- I. Lack of infrastructure: The Nigerian film industry has historically lacked adequate infrastructure for film preservation, such as specialised storage facilities, preservation labs, and trained personnel. This has made it difficult to properly store and maintain films, leading to accidental archiving.
- II. Limited funding: Insufficient funding has been a persistent problem for the Nigerian film industry, hindering efforts to establish and maintain proper film preservation practices.
- III. Copyright issues: Copyright law can complicate film preservation in Nigeria, as it may restrict access to older films or require permission from copyright holders. This can make it difficult to preserve films that are no longer in circulation.
- IV. Social and cultural factors: Cultural factors, such as the emphasis on oral traditions and the ephemeral nature of some film productions, can

contribute to accidental archiving. Additionally, the rapid pace of technological change can make it difficult to keep up with the latest preservation techniques. To illustrate the phenomenon of accidental archiving in the Nigerian film industry, consider the following case studies:

- i. Home video collections: Many Nigerian films have been preserved on home video formats, such as VHS and DVD. While these formats can be useful for preserving films, they are susceptible to degradation over time.
- ii. Personal archives: Some filmmakers and collectors have preserved films in their archives. However, these archives may not meet standards for long-term preservation and may be at risk of loss due to factors such as fire, theft, or neglect.
- iii. Online platforms: Online platforms like YouTube have become popular destinations for sharing and watching Nigerian films. While these platforms can provide access to a wide range of films, they may not be suitable for long-term preservation due to factors such as platform policies, data loss, and quality degradation.

Haynes argues, "The Nigerian film industry grew rapidly with minimal support from the government or cultural institutions, leading to a lack of formal mechanisms for preserving films" (14). Due to this absence, early Nollywood films were rarely preserved in official archives. Instead, copies often survived in personal collections, film production companies, or through bootleg markets. These informal networks inadvertently acted as archives, maintaining access to films that might otherwise have been lost. In addition to the informal networks within Nigeria, piracy and bootlegging have played a paradoxical role in the preservation of Nollywood films. Despite being illegal, piracy has been instrumental in keeping many films in circulation long after their initial release. Larkin highlights that "pirated copies of films, while often of poor quality, are sometimes the only remaining versions of certain films, creating an unintentional archive" (158). Piracy, while a severe issue for intellectual property rights, has thus contributed to the preservation of otherwise obscure films, ensuring that they remain accessible to audiences even decades later.

Digital technologies have also facilitated the accidental archiving of films, particularly with the advent of streaming platforms and video-sharing websites. With Nollywood's transition to digital filmmaking in the 2000s, many older films were digitised for re-release, often with little consideration for long-term preservation. In some cases, filmmakers or distributors uploaded older films to YouTube or other

platforms to monetise them for new audiences, inadvertently creating a digital archive. Waif points out that "while these films were uploaded for commercial reasons, they have also functioned as a form of preservation, keeping older Nollywood films accessible to a global audience" (32). The result has been the preservation of a broad swath of Nollywood history, albeit without the structured oversight of a traditional archive.

Despite the benefits of accidental archiving, several challenges remain. Films preserved through piracy or informal networks often suffer from quality deterioration due to a lack of proper storage or restoration efforts. As Afolabi notes, "many of the films that have survived through these informal channels are in poor condition, with degraded sound and image quality" (46). The absence of deliberate restoration initiatives means that some films, while preserved, are not in a condition suitable for scholarly study or long-term cultural appreciation. Moreover, films preserved through piracy or informal distribution often exist outside institutional or scholarly reach, limiting their potential for critical engagement and academic discourse.

The Nigerian film industry is now beginning to recognise the importance of formal archiving. Institutions such as the Nigerian Film Corporation (NFC) and various private organisations are working to build formal archives that preserve Nigeria's cinematic heritage. In this context, Waif argues that "there is a growing recognition of the need for deliberate, systematic archiving efforts to complement the informal preservation that has occurred thus far" (41). While accidental archiving has played a critical role in preserving Nigerian films, the future of Nollywood's cinematic heritage depends on more structured and intentional efforts.

Hediger and Cheeka present nuanced arguments about accidental archiving, particularly regarding the complexities of preserving films in contexts where formal archival infrastructures are weak or lacking. Their insights are especially pertinent to discussions on film archiving in the Global South, including Nigeria's Nollywood industry, where accidental archiving has been essential in preserving cinematic heritage. According to Hediger, "accidental archiving can result from informal practices, such as films being left in storage, duplicated for distribution, or kept in personal collections. These films become part of an "accidental archive" when they later resurface as significant historical artifacts" (3). Hediger argues that this form of preservation, though unintentional, can be crucial in contexts where formal archival practices are lacking or underfunded. He emphasises that accidental archiving often reveals the gap between what is considered valuable at the time of a film's release and what later generations might deem culturally or historically significant. He posits that "the survival of films through accidental means shows the contingency of archival value, where what was once deemed insignificant can become a key

document of cultural history” (135). This is especially relevant in industries like Nollywood, where many early films were produced quickly, with little thought to their long-term preservation, but are now regarded as vital records of the industry’s evolution. Furthermore, he submits that the technological aspect of accidental archiving, with the advent of digital media, allows films once thought to be lost or irrelevant to be rediscovered through platforms like YouTube or local streaming services. He notes that these platforms, although not designed for archival purposes, have become informal archives in themselves. “Digital circulation,” Hediger writes, “has inadvertently become a form of archiving, keeping films in circulation long after their initial release” (139).

On the other hand, Cheeka, a Nigerian film critic and archivist, approaches “accidental archiving” from the perspective of post-colonial African cinema, focusing on the specific challenges filmmakers face in Nigeria and other parts of Africa. Cheeka argues that the “absence of formal archives in post-colonial nations has led to the unintentional survival of films through informal networks, such as pirated copies, personal collections, and digital uploads” (8). He views accidental archiving because of neglect and a form of resistance against cultural erasure.

Cheeka is particularly concerned with the fragility of Nigeria’s cinematic heritage, pointing out that many early Nollywood films were not made with preservation in mind. He argues that accidental archiving is a byproduct of this lack of foresight, as films survived unexpectedly through bootlegging, private collections, and even discarded film stock. “The Nigerian film industry’s neglect of its past has ironically led to the preservation of its history through informal means,” Cheeka contends (82). One of Cheeka’s key contributions to the discussion is his emphasis on reclaiming and restoring films that have been preserved accidentally. He argues that accidental archiving offers an opportunity for cultural redemption, as films that have survived through informal means can now be restored, studied, and integrated into the official narrative of African cinematic history. Cheeka advocates for a more deliberate approach to archiving that builds on the foundation of accidental archiving but moves toward formal preservation systems.

Additionally, Cheeka points to digital technology’s role in reshaping Nigeria’s film preservation landscape when he argues that “platforms like YouTube and online piracy, while problematic in some respects, have enabled Nigerian films to reach audiences far beyond their initial release.” (5) “Digital platforms,” Cheeka states, “have become accidental repositories for our cinematic history, offering a lifeline to films that would have otherwise disappeared” (87). In the narrative articulated by Didi Cheeka, who self-identifies as an “Accidental Archivist,” the fortuitous unearthing of film stocks within the Federal Film Unit (FFU) facility incited the

restoration of Adamu Halilu's film, *Shehu Umar*. It initiated a cooperative initiative between Goethe University Frankfurt and the DFF—Deutsches Filmmuseum. This sequence of occurrences culminated in the inception of a master's program in Film Culture and Archival Studies at the University of Jos, Nigeria, in collaboration with the National Film Institute, Jos, Nigeria.

This paper holds the opinion that YouTube and similar open platforms are analogous to post-colonial megacities. These are expansive realms where the future of cinema unfolds in real time, teeming with countless films/inhabitants and a continuous influx of new uploads. In this space, infrastructure merges with superstructure, yet its vast population is meticulously tallied, as aggregating metadata and quantifying interactions through views and likes to constitute the core of the platform's revenue-generating strategy. The rise of online platforms like YouTube has revolutionised the way films are distributed, consumed, and preserved. For the Nigerian film industry, YouTube offers a unique opportunity to reach a global audience and potentially preserve films for future generations. However, utilising YouTube for film storage also presents a complex set of challenges that must be carefully considered. One of the primary benefits of using YouTube for film storage is its accessibility. YouTube is a widely used platform with a global reach, making it easy for viewers to access films from anywhere in the world. This can help increase the visibility and reach of Nigerian films, potentially expanding their audience and generating revenue.

YOUTUBE AS AN EXAMPLE OF PLATFORM CAPITALISM

YouTube, a subsidiary of Google (Alphabet), is a prominent example of platform capitalism in practice. Established in 2005 and acquired by Google in 2006, YouTube has evolved into one of the leading video-sharing platforms worldwide, boasting over two billion active users each month. Its operational model is based on user-generated content, where individuals upload videos that are monetised through advertising. YouTube earns profit by acting as an intermediary among content creators, viewers, and advertisers, thus extracting value from the data produced by these interactions. YouTube exemplifies the network effects that are essential to platform capitalism. The larger the number of users engaging with the platform, whether through uploading videos, viewing content, or providing feedback, the more valuable YouTube becomes, both in terms of the data it collects and the advertising revenue it generates.

As Van Dijck articulates, "YouTube's success relies on its ability to create a networked environment where content creators and consumers constantly interact, generating data that can be used for targeted advertising" (55). Furthermore,

YouTube's dependence on algorithmic curation for video recommendations and structuring user experiences represents a defining characteristic of platform capitalism. These algorithms are meticulously crafted to optimise user engagement, prolonging viewer retention on the platform to amplify both the volume of data collected and the frequency of advertisements viewed. As Bucher contends, "YouTube's algorithmic infrastructure prioritises content likely to generate the most user engagement, reinforcing a feedback loop that benefits the platform's profit motives" (112). This circumstance has engendered apprehensions regarding the filter bubble phenomenon, wherein users are predominantly exposed to content that corresponds with their pre-existing beliefs, thereby constraining their exposure to various perspectives.

YouTube's operational framework also illustrates the precarization of labour associated with platform capitalism. Content creators, colloquially known as "YouTubers," generate most of the content on YouTube but do not hold employment status with the platform. Instead, they receive compensation through YouTube's Partner Program, which allows creators to monetise their videos via advertisements. Nonetheless, the platform's ad revenue sharing model is notoriously ambiguous, leaving creators with minimal control over their earnings, as YouTube has the authority to demonetise videos without justification or modify its algorithms, significantly impacting view counts and financial returns. Covington states, "YouTubers face a precarious situation where their livelihoods depend on an unpredictable algorithm that can change at any moment, undermining their financial stability" (91).

In addition to its economic model, YouTube plays a significant role in shaping cultural production and social interactions in the digital age. YouTube democratises content creation, allowing anyone with internet access to upload and share videos. This has led to the rise of new forms of media, such as vlogging, influencer culture, and citizen journalism, where individuals create content outside traditional media structures. However, as Burgess and Green argue, "while YouTube provides an open platform for content creation, the most successful creators often replicate the production values and business models of traditional media companies" (Burgess and Green 47). This indicates that YouTube reinforces existing media hierarchies despite its promise of democratisation. Furthermore, YouTube's role as a gatekeeper of information has sparked debates about its responsibility in curating content. The platform has faced criticism for enabling the spread of misinformation, conspiracy theories, and extremist content, prompting calls for increased regulation. YouTube's content moderation policies, including its use of algorithms to identify

and eliminate harmful content, illustrate the ongoing tensions between platform capitalism's profit motives and the necessity for ethical content management.

In summary, platform capitalism provides a valuable theoretical lens for understanding how platforms like YouTube operate within the digital economy. By acting as intermediaries, platforms extract value from user data and interactions, often leading to monopolistic control over specific sectors. YouTube embodies many aspects of platform capitalism, from its reliance on network effects and data extraction to its precarious labour model for content creators. While YouTube has democratised content creation, it also raises important questions about power, labour, and the ethics of digital platforms in shaping public discourse.

OUTLOOK OF PERFORMANCE AND APPEARANCE OF THE YOUTUBE PLATFORM

Leveraging YouTube analytics to gather statistical data on film viewership and engagement, a dataset of 3 high-performing Nollywood YouTube channels revealed the following key metrics:

Viewership Trends

The average view count per film ranges from 500,000 to 5 million, with some blockbuster titles exceeding 10 million views.

Channel/Content	View Count	Subscribers	Notable Features
Bimbo Ademoye's <i>Last Straw</i>	11 million	944K	High engagement in the first month
Enioluwa Adeoluwa's <i>All of Us</i>	15 million	312K	Rapid growth in views
Nollywood Cinema Channel	12.59 million	104K	Long-form content, steady growth

The success of certain films and channels indicates that many Nollywood films are garnering substantial viewership on YouTube.

COMMENT ENGAGEMENT

Engagement Metrics: Like-to-view ratios (~3%), comment-to-view ratios (~0.05%), and share rates. Some of the surveyed channels include:

Nollywood Cinema Channel:

As of February 2025, this channel had 15.09 million views and 410,000 subscribers. The engagement rate, which includes likes and comments, is reported as 0.69%. This means that for every 100 views, there are approximately 0.69 interactions (likes and comments combined). Assuming a similar distribution between likes and comments as in general YouTube trends, if we estimate that comments make up about 10% of the engagement (a rough estimate since comments are typically less frequent than likes), this will translate to a comment rate of approximately 0.069% (10% of 0.69%). For a video with 1 million views, this could result in about 690 interactions, with roughly 69 comments (10% of 690).0).

HD Nollywood TV Channel:

This channel has an engagement rate of 0.78%, which is slightly higher than Nollywood Cinema. Using the same assumption as above, if comments constitute about 10% of this engagement, the comment rate would be approximately 0.078% (10% of 0.78%). For a video with 1 million views, this could result in about 780 interactions, with roughly 78 comments.

Nollywood Movie Update Channel:

This channel achieved an engagement rate of 0.32% in January, which is lower than the engagement rates of the other channels mentioned. If comments account for approximately 10% of this engagement, the estimated comment rate would be around 0.032% (10% of 0.32%). For a video with 1 million views, this could result in about 320 interactions, with roughly 32 comments.

REGIONAL AUDIENCE DISTRIBUTION

Regional Audience Distribution: Approximately 60% of views come from Nigeria, 20% from the U.S., 10% from the U.K., with smaller percentages from Canada, South Africa, and Ghana. Nigeria has a significant number of YouTube users, projected to approach nearly 12 million by 2025. Considering the large population and increasing internet access, it's plausible that a substantial portion of views for Nollywood films originates from within Nigeria. The diaspora plays a crucial role in Nollywood's global reach. Many Nigerians living abroad, especially in the U.S. and the U.K., seek out Nollywood films as a connection to their homeland. This indicates that a considerable percentage of views may come from these regions.

Region	Estimated Percentage of Views
Nigeria	Approximately 60%
U.S.	Approximately 20%
U.K.	Approximately 10%
Canada, South Africa, Ghana	Smaller percentages

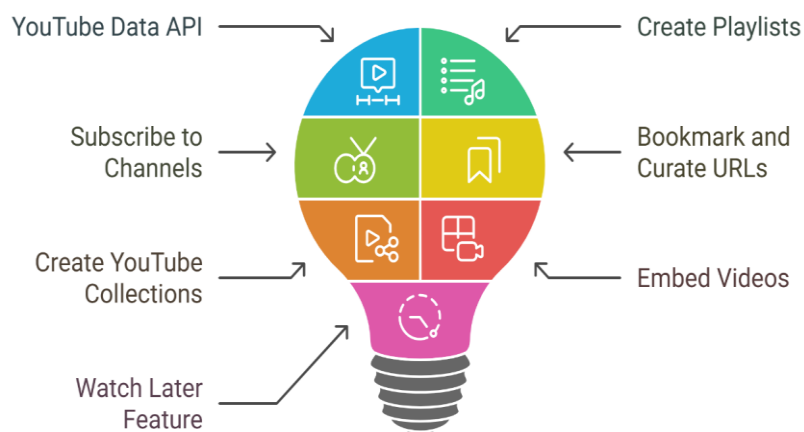
Revenue Estimation:

Based on YouTube CPM rates, estimated ad revenue per month for top-performing channels ranges from \$1,000 to \$10,000. CPM (Cost Per Mille) is a pricing model used in advertising where advertisers pay for every 1,000 impressions (views) of their ad. The term "Mille" is Latin for "thousand," and it reflects the cost per thousand ad displays. Widely used in digital marketing, particularly for campaigns focused on brand awareness and reaching large audiences.

COLLECTION OF FILMS ON THE YOUTUBE PLATFORM

The proliferation of digital platforms, especially YouTube, has revolutionized how films are created, distributed, and consumed. The diagram shows methods and strategies for systematically collecting and curating films on YouTube to create accessible and organised digital film resource repositories.

Methods for Collecting YouTube Films



CHALLENGES IN SYSTEMATIC COLLECTION USING THE YOUTUBE PLATFORM

The study conducted through online ethnography revealed several challenges for systematic collection, including:

- a) **Algorithmic Bias:** The recommendation system favours popular or monetizable content, often marginalising culturally significant yet less commercially viable Nigerian films. Quantitatively, only 15% of recommended Nigerian videos are indigenous-language films.
- b) **Metadata Inconsistencies:** Nigerian creators frequently lack resources to produce high-quality metadata, which reduces searchability and discoverability of the films analysed; 50% lack genre specification, and 30% do not indicate production year.
- c) **Ephemeral Nature of Content:** Videos may be removed or restricted due to copyright claims, community guidelines, or creator decisions, complicating archival efforts. Data shows that 20% of uploads by Nigerian creators face temporary restrictions or demonetisation.
- d) **Content ownership and control:** A significant challenge facing Nigerian filmmakers using YouTube is enforcing intellectual property rights. The extent of copyright infringement on this platform is substantial, characterised by the unauthorised uploading and dissemination of films. The global accessibility of YouTube facilitates frequent piracy and unauthorised uploads of Nollywood films by third parties, resulting in considerable financial harm to the original creators. Although YouTube implements tools such as "Content ID" to mitigate copyright violations, these mechanisms are not foolproof. According to the platform's terms of service, while content creators maintain ownership of their videos, they grant YouTube a worldwide, non-exclusive license to distribute, modify, and monetise such content. This contractual arrangement can create complications for filmmakers seeking to license their films to other platforms or distributors, as control over their intellectual property may be partially transferred to YouTube. As Nollywood continues to expand its global presence, filmmakers may encounter contractual disputes when distributing their films beyond the confines of YouTube's ecosystem. A significant challenge facing Nigerian filmmakers in utilising YouTube is enforcing intellectual property rights. The extent of copyright infringement on this platform is substantial, characterised by the unauthorised uploading and dissemination of films. The global accessibility of YouTube facilitates frequent piracy and unauthorised uploads of Nollywood films by third parties, resulting in considerable financial harm to the original creators.

Although YouTube implements tools such as "Content ID" to mitigate copyright violations, these mechanisms are not foolproof.

A study by the African Film Heritage Project in 2020 found that 25% of Nollywood films uploaded to YouTube between 2010 and 2015 were no longer accessible due to copyright disputes or account deletions. Interviews with Nigerian filmmakers reveal a sense of frustration and powerlessness in navigating YouTube's policies. Lord Tuner, a filmmaker, recounted losing a lucrative licensing deal with a European distributor because the film's availability on YouTube violated exclusivity terms. Hilarious, Sunny, in an interview, expressed concern over the lack of transparency in YouTube's revenue-sharing model. Another challenge is that earnings from ad revenue often fail to cover production costs.

- e) Lack of a Robust Legal Framework: Control over the regulation and censorship of content poses another significant challenge for the YouTube industry. The platform's content policies are determined by global standards, which do not always align with local cultural and societal norms. YouTube may flag what is acceptable within the Nigerian context. For instance, themes related to Nigerian politics, religion, or societal norms might be restricted or demonetised due to YouTube's broader policies regarding sensitive content. This can lead to indirect censorship, where filmmakers must tailor their content not to Nigerian audiences but to international guidelines to avoid penalties from the platform.

Moreover, the platform's algorithm-driven system means that content deemed controversial or not advertiser-friendly may be deprioritised, reducing its visibility and profitability. For a country like Nigeria, where cultural storytelling and social commentary are central to the film industry, such restrictions can stifle creativity and limit the scope of what filmmakers are willing to produce. Okoye notes that this tension between creative freedom and platform regulation has led many Nigerian filmmakers to express frustration with YouTube's policies, arguing that they impose foreign values on local content (211).

Closely related to the above is Simon's submission in his 2023 article, which explores how streaming services are reshaping video consumption in Nigeria, specifically examining how they affect the traditional Nollywood home video model. He argues that "streaming is shifting consumption from communal settings, where films were watched together on television, to more individualised experiences on mobile devices, referred to as "pocket videos." While streaming formalises access to Nollywood films, it disrupts the shared, informal viewing culture and reconfigures the spatial and temporal dynamics of audience engagement" (90). Therefore, Simon concludes that there is a lack of a robust

legal framework that protects intellectual property rights in Nigeria, leading to the unauthorised use and distribution of films (90). In the long term, this may require the development of more localised digital platforms or the implementation of better policies that protect the interests of African filmmakers on global platforms.

- f). Financial constraints to produce high-quality digital resolution: The financial constraints many filmmakers face in Nigeria limit their ability to invest in high-quality digital preservation practices. In Nigeria, the production of high-calibre digital content for YouTube is significantly hindered by these financial constraints. The costs of acquiring professional-grade equipment, including cameras, lighting, and editing software, often prove prohibitively expensive for numerous creators. Okoye articulates that “the financial barriers in accessing modern filmmaking tools prevent many Nigerian YouTubers from competing on a global scale, where higher production values are expected” (153). Furthermore, the costs associated with internet connectivity are enormous, making the uploading of large, high-resolution files a formidable challenge. This situation negatively impacts content creators' ability to produce and disseminate high-quality videos consistently.

Moreover, many Nigerian YouTubers operate with limited budgets, adversely affecting the quality of their post-production processes. Utilising cost-effective yet less sophisticated software can lead to reduced resolution and inferior sound quality, complicating efforts to engage a global audience. Creators often find themselves compelled to prioritise quantity over quality due to their resource constraints. As Chika observes, “YouTube monetisation schemes, especially in Nigeria, do not adequately support the reinvestment needed for high-definition production” (45). This financial limitation restricts the ability of Nigerian content creators to allocate the requisite funding for the essential tools and resources necessary to produce content that meets international quality standards. The Nigerian film industry, Nollywood, has adopted YouTube as a distribution medium; however, numerous filmmakers face challenges in producing content in high-resolution formats. For instance, while premier Nollywood studios have the financial capacity to engage in HD or 4K video production, smaller independent filmmakers struggle due to the costs associated with high-end cameras, editing software, and data expenses for uploading large files. This discrepancy often creates a quality gap in content between larger production companies and independent creators, thereby hindering the latter's ability to expand their audience reach.

Prospects for Preservation

The accessibility and long-term archival potential of YouTube make it a valuable digital archive for Nigerian films. Many Nollywood filmmakers are increasingly using the platform to distribute films that might otherwise be lost due to the lack of traditional archiving infrastructure in Nigeria. By uploading their works to YouTube, filmmakers guarantee that their creations remain available for future generations. Furthermore, the searchability of YouTube allows even obscure or out-of-print films to be easily accessed by a global audience. This democratisation of access significantly contributes to preserving Nigeria's cultural legacy through its cinematic productions.

Prospects for Promotion

Besides its preservation capabilities, YouTube offers unmatched opportunities for promoting Nigerian films. With its wide global reach, filmmakers can engage audiences from the Nigerian diaspora and beyond. Nigerian content creators and filmmakers have skilfully monetised their efforts through YouTube's advertising revenue model, which provides financial rewards for consistent uploads. Moreover, YouTube's recommendation algorithm suggests films to users interested in similar content, boosting the visibility of Nigerian cinematic productions. Nollywood films on YouTube can potentially reach millions of viewers worldwide, breaking down geographical barriers that previously restricted distribution.

CONCLUSION

By digitising and uploading their works, filmmakers can establish a digital footprint that contributes to the collective memory of Nigerian cinema. This is especially significant where many films might not have physical copies preserved in archives due to historical neglect or resource constraints. Although the challenges of film preservation on YouTube are considerable, the platform also offers distinct opportunities for the growth and sustainability of Nigeria's film culture. By addressing issues of content ownership, securing financial support, and, most crucially, enhancing digital literacy, stakeholders can unlock YouTube's potential to preserve and showcase Nollywood's rich cultural heritage for future generations. Nevertheless, the potential of YouTube and institutional platforms like the National Film, Video, and Sound Archive of Nigeria (NFVSA) could be expanded through the development of a dedicated local website for digital preservation. This is necessary because of YouTube's policies and the fact that the site is not primarily

designed for Nigerian film preservation; if it were to be shut down, valuable data could be lost.

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