

## **Mainstream Media, Social Media and Peace-Building in Nigeria: Old Challenges, New Opportunities?**

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### **Abstract**

Nigeria has had an interesting and significant conflict and crisis trajectory over the course of its existence. This is not far removed from the multi-ethnic, multi-religious, multicultural and multi-political features of the country. While there is no argument about the importance of the media in peace-building, their role has often remained contentious among scholars and this centres around whether the media escalate or de-escalate conflicts and crises. This paper demonstrates that the mainstream media seem not to be living up to the bill of performing its expected role in peace-building. It suggests a number of ways in which the new media might be opening up opportunities that make it possible to manage and resolve conflicts, including the diffusion of information and communication technologies (ICTs) that can substantially alter the contours of collective violence in developing nations. The study is situated within the Habermasian framework of the public sphere and interrogates the essence of the new media as a critical sphere in the digital age and in dealing with the question of conflict. The paper calls for peace education imperative and complementarity of both mainstream and alternative media in bridging the media-society-conflict gap.

**Keywords:** Mainstream Media, Social Media, New Media Technologies, Public Sphere, Conflict Resolution, Nigeria