J. Law Epistemic Stud. (2026) 4: e208
https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.24235294
ISSN 3091-1575

JLES
JOURNAL OF LAW AND EPISTEMIC STUDIES

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

The right to information and citizen participation in the digital transformation of public radio: the case of Rádio Bié, Angola

Derecho a la información y participación ciudadana en la transformación digital de la radio pública: el caso de Rádio Bié, Angola

Dislayne González-Morales[1] • **Flavia M. Vargas-Mursulí**[2*]
Ivandra A. Agria-Paulo[1]

Received: 10 August 2026 / Accepted: 10 September 2026 / Published online: 18 October 2026
© The Author(s) 2026

Abstract Local radio stations face the challenge of adopting digital news practices without weakening their community role. This study characterized digital dissemination at Rádio Bié, a provincial broadcaster in Angola, and formulated a strategy to strengthen audience engagement. A descriptive, non-experimental case study combined documentary review, observation of digital content, interviews with 10 staff members, and questionnaires completed by 100 audience members in 2025. The diagnosis identified irregular posting, limited audiovisual formats, and insufficient online interaction. Eight staff members (80%) considered the existing digital strategy insufficient and nine (90%) reported a need for training. Among audience respondents, 72% used social networks daily for news, 38% followed the station's digital posts regularly, 84% wanted audiovisual content, and 79% considered its information reliable. A five-component proposal addresses editorial planning, accessible multimedia, audience dialogue, training, and evaluation. The findings support the design of this strategy, but its effectiveness remains untested.

Keywords local radio; digital transformation; audience engagement; public-service broadcasting; Angola.

Resumen Las radios locales afrontan el desafío de incorporar prácticas digitales de información sin debilitar su función comunitaria. Este estudio caracterizó la divulgación digital de Rádio Bié, emisora provincial de Angola, y formuló una estrategia para fortalecer la participación de la audiencia. Mediante un estudio de caso descriptivo y no experimental, se combinaron revisión documental, observación de contenidos digitales, entrevistas a 10 trabajadores y cuestionarios a 100 integrantes de la audiencia en 2025. El diagnóstico identificó publicaciones irregulares, formatos audiovisuales limitados y escasa interacción en línea. Ocho trabajadores (80 %) consideraron insuficiente la estrategia digital y nueve (90 %) manifestaron necesidades de capacitación. Entre las personas encuestadas, el 72 % utilizaba diariamente las redes sociales para informarse; el 38 % seguía habitualmente las publicaciones de la emisora; el 84 % deseaba contenidos audiovisuales; y el 79 % consideraba fiable la información. Se formuló una propuesta de cinco componentes: planificación editorial, producción multimedia accesible, diálogo con audiencias, formación y evaluación. Su eficacia no se ha comprobado y requiere implementación y seguimiento.

Palabras clave radio local; transformación digital; participación de audiencias; radiodifusión pública; Angola.

How to cite

González-Morales, D., Vargas-Mursulí, F. M., & Agria-Paulo, I. A. (2026). Audience engagement and digital transformation in local radio: evidence from Rádio Bié, Angola. *Journal of Law and Epistemic Studies*, *4*, e208. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.24235294

Flavia M. Vargas-Mursulí
flaviarenier@gmail.com

[1] Universidade Internacional do Cuanza, Cuito, Bié, Angola.
[2] Universidade de Aveiro, Aveiro, Portugal.

PUBLIS EDITORIAL

CC BY NC SA

Introduction

Digital transformation has altered the production, circulation, and reception of news. Radio stations now distribute audio alongside text, video, live streams, and messages across external digital platforms. Yet using multiple channels does not, by itself, guarantee that public-interest information is accessible, credible, or open to meaningful audience participation (Salaverría, 2019; Kristensen & Bro, 2024). This distinction is particularly important for provincial broadcasters whose social role extends beyond attracting online traffic.

The relationship between media convergence and participation is multidimensional. Exposure to content, following a platform account, commenting on a post, contributing information, and trusting a source describe different behaviors or perceptions; they should not be treated as interchangeable measures of engagement. Research on digital participation emphasizes both possibilities for inclusion and the organizational conditions that shape citizens' influence (Lin & Kant, 2021; Wu & Fitzgerald, 2025). Likewise, mobile devices can facilitate audience interaction while leaving connectivity costs and uneven access unresolved (Abubakar, 2024).

Studies of African radio illustrate the need to connect technological change with editorial practice. Maina and Simiyu (2024) examine opportunities for social inclusion associated with digital transformation in a Kenyan community radio station; Mathe and Motsaathebe (2024) address the possibilities and limitations of indigenous-language content in community radio's Facebook communication; and Bosch (2024) examines how public-service radio relates to citizenship and the public sphere. These studies provide useful analytical comparisons, although their institutional contexts are not identical to provincial public broadcasting in Angola.

Rádio Bié operates in Cuito, Bié Province, as one of the provincial services of Rádio Nacional de Angola (Rádio Nacional de Angola, n.d.). The institutional diagnosis identified irregular publication of digital news, limited audiovisual formats, and weak response mechanisms for audience messages. Within this provincial broadcasting context, digital transformation is not limited to technical adaptation: it also concerns verifiable information, responsiveness, and opportunities for the community to contribute to public dialogue.

This study pursued two objectives: (1) to characterize Rádio Bié's digital dissemination practices and the preferences of its participating audience; and (2) to design a feasible strategy to strengthen interaction. The guiding research question was: How can a provincial radio service organize digital dissemination of news to improve access and interaction? Its contribution is an empirical diagnosis linked to an operational proposal, without assuming that the proposed actions have produced measurable effects.

Materials and Methods

Design and setting. A descriptive, non-experimental, cross-sectional case-study design combined quantitative and qualitative techniques to examine Rádio Bié's digital news dissemination during 2025. Descriptive frequencies from staff and audience responses were considered alongside documentary material and observation of digital communication. No intervention, comparison group, or repeated measurement was included. This design supports a situated diagnosis and the formulation of a strategy, but not causal inference.

Participants and selection. The study involved 10 station staff members and 100 audience respondents, selected purposively because of their experience with producing, distributing, or consuming the broadcaster's news. A probability-based sampling frame was not used. The recruitment procedure, characteristics of nonrespondents, and territorial distribution of the audience sample were not documented in the study record. Accordingly, the reported percentages describe the participants and cannot be generalized statistically to the population of Bié Province.

Data collection. Four techniques were employed: documentary review of institutional and digital publications; direct observation of posting regularity, formats, integration among platforms, visual identity, and response practices; semi-structured staff interviews on opportunities and constraints; and an audience questionnaire concerning consumption habits, channel preferences, credibility, and perceived representation. The study documentation does not provide the exact observation dates, total number of posts reviewed, complete questionnaire, or interview guide. These gaps limit independent replication and are recognized among the limitations of the study.

Variables and analysis. Digital dissemination was characterized through publication regularity, format diversity, platform integration, and audience response practices. Audience measures covered daily news use on social networks, following the station's posts, content preferences, perceived credibility, representation of community interests, and preferred platforms. Absolute frequencies and percentages were used to summarize responses. Percentages in Tables 2 and 3 correspond to each item's frequency divided by its respective sample size ($n = 10$ and $n = 100$). Interview and observation findings were organized descriptively; no validated qualitative rating scale, inferential tests, or causal effect estimates were reported.

Ethical considerations. Participation was described as voluntary and the information as confidential. The research record available for this manuscript does not state the ethics committee's approval or exemption decision, the form of informed consent, or the institutional authorization for data collection. These particulars require

documentary confirmation before submission. No identifiable participant quotations or personal data are reproduced.

Results and Discussion

Digital dissemination practices. Observation identified irregular posting patterns and a predominance of short text with static images. Publications were estimated at approximately two or three per week, although the precise observation window was not reported. Videos, live streaming, and interactive formats were uncommon, and the response to audience comments was limited. Table 1 summarizes the observational descriptors. Its qualitative categories reflect assessments made during the diagnosis rather than thresholds established by a validated measurement scale.

Table 1. Observed digital communication practices at Rádio Bié

Indicator	Recorded observation	Assessment
Publication frequency	Irregular; approximately 2–3 posts a week	Low
Images	Frequently used	Medium
Video	Used occasionally	Low
Live streaming	Rare	Low
Replies to user comments	Limited	Low
Hashtags	Not systematic	Low
Content updating	Moderate	Medium
Format diversity	Limited	Low
Platform integration	Insufficient	Low
Institutional visual identity	Partially consistent	Medium

Note. Based on the reported diagnostic observation (2025). “Low” and “medium” are descriptive assessments, not validated scale categories.

Staff perceptions. Eight of the ten staff participants (80%) considered the digital strategy insufficient, whereas two (20%) considered it adequate. Nine (90%) identified training needs and nine (90%) were willing to participate in training. Eight (80%) prioritized more consistent social media management, and seven (70%) considered multimedia production necessary (Table 2). The percentages use the ten participants as their denominator; responses to different statements may overlap.

Table 2. Staff perceptions of digital news management (n = 10)

Statement	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Considers the digital strategy insufficient	8	80
Considers the digital strategy adequate	2	20
Needs training in digital communication	9	90
Prioritizes more consistent social media management	8	80
Considers multimedia production necessary	7	70
Willing to participate in training	9	90

Note. Based on staff interviews (2025). Percentages use n = 10; responses to different statements may overlap.

Audience consumption, trust, and preferences. Of the 100 participants, 72% reported using social networks daily to obtain news and 38% regularly followed Rádio Bié’s digital posts. These are different behaviors; their 34-percentage-point difference is descriptive, not a measure of lost followers or the effect of a campaign. Eighty-four per cent expressed interest in audiovisual news. Furthermore, 79% considered the station’s information reliable and 74% believed its coverage reflected community interests (Table 3).

Table 3. Audience news use, preferences, and perceptions (n = 100)

Indicator	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Uses social media daily to obtain news	72	72
Regularly follows Rádio Bié’s digital posts	38	38
Would like audiovisual news content	84	84
Considers Rádio Bié information reliable	79	79
Believes the station reflects community interests	74	74
Prefers Facebook to access news	68	68
Prefers WhatsApp to receive information	61	61
Prefers YouTube for news content	47	47
Prefers Instagram for news content	35	35

Note. Based on the audience questionnaires (2025). Platform preferences were not mutually exclusive.

Three findings are especially relevant to the design of a digital strategy. First, the observed weaknesses are organizational as well as technological. An inconsistent editorial calendar and limited response to messages

cannot be corrected merely by opening more accounts. Comparable research shows that digital convergence requires editorial routines tailored to different platforms, as well as staff capacity to maintain them (Caicedo et al., 2023; Tenku et al., 2025; Yang, 2024).

Second, the results indicate an audience already familiar with digital news use but not necessarily connected to the station's own profiles. Facebook (68%) and WhatsApp (61%) were the most frequently selected channels, with YouTube (47%) and Instagram (35%) also reported. Because respondents could prefer more than one channel, these percentages should not be added together. Choosing a channel should depend on its role: short verified updates, portable audio, longer video segments, or moderated feedback. The use of low-bandwidth formats is particularly relevant where data costs or service quality may affect access (Abubakar, 2024).

Third, the credibility attributed to Rádio Bié by 79% of respondents offers a potentially valuable basis for participatory communication, but credibility is not the same as participation. A trustworthy source may still offer few mechanisms for citizens to ask questions, correct information, or propose topics. The relationship between radio, digital discussion, and civic life documented in other contexts (Bosch, 2024; Zondi & Muringa, 2024) supports the need to evaluate both editorial performance and the substantive quality of interaction. Findings from commercial and community radio cannot, however, be transferred mechanically to Angola's provincial broadcasting system.

The results also raise questions about the quality of knowledge circulating through digital networks. Verification practices, transparent corrections, accessible formats, and accountable moderation matter when public-interest news moves between broadcast and online channels (Izzatli, 2025; Salaverría, 2019). Evidence from television and radio in other settings likewise indicates that adopting digital channels does not automatically lead to substantive audience participation (Apuke & Felix, 2024; Fraser & Restrepo-Estrada, 2002; Newman et al., 2024). In this sense, the study differentiates between reaching a digital audience and creating conditions for reciprocal public communication.

Proposed Digital Dissemination Strategy

Drawing on the diagnostic findings, a five-component digital dissemination strategy is proposed as a 12-week pilot. The plan has not been implemented or evaluated. Its execution would require approval by station management, allocation of editorial responsibilities, staff time, appropriate recording equipment, and initial measurements of digital activity. The positions named in Table 4 describe suggested responsibilities rather than appointments already made.

Table 4. Suggested 12-week implementation plan and prospective indicators

Pilot phase	Responsible role and proposed actions	Monitoring indicator
Weeks 1–2: planning	Editorial lead: audit channels, assign approval roles, and schedule cross-platform posts.	Published posts / scheduled posts.
Weeks 3–6: accessible formats	News and digital teams: prepare verified short audio, captioned video, and mobile-friendly text.	Format diversity; share of accessible posts.
Weeks 3–8: audience dialogue	Community liaison: reply protocol, listener questions, and consent for contributions.	Replies / eligible enquiries.
Weeks 2–10: staff training	Training lead and editors: verification, mobile production, privacy, moderation, and access.	Attendance; practice tasks; quality review.
Weeks 1–12: learning cycle	Editors and analytics lead: baseline, monthly review, adjustment log, and endline.	Regularity; meaningful interactions; actions logged.

Note. Twelve-week operational proposal based on the diagnosis. No pilot implementation or outcome measurement was conducted.

The monitoring framework separates implementation indicators from audience outcomes. Implementation indicators include publication compliance (posts published divided by posts scheduled), the proportion of accessible multimedia posts, and response rate (eligible enquiries answered divided by eligible enquiries received). Subsequent outcome evaluation should examine meaningful interactions, repeat participation, and changes in perceived usefulness or trust. All measures require clearly defined denominators and equivalent observation periods. Numeric improvement targets should be established after measuring a baseline rather than assumed in advance.

Implementation also requires safeguards for informational quality and participation. Audience submissions should be verified before use, comments moderated through consistent standards, privacy protected, and editorial independence maintained across third-party platforms. Content formats should consider data costs, connectivity constraints, and the languages used by local audiences. Periodic consultation with staff and listeners would support iterative adjustments to the pilot.

Conclusions

The Rádio Bié case reveals a contrast between the credibility attributed to the broadcaster and the limited regularity of its digital dissemination. The diagnosis identified irregular posting, insufficient diversification of formats, and weak response mechanisms. Of the ten participating staff members, 80% regarded the digital strategy as insufficient and 90% identified a need for training. Among the 100 audience respondents, 84% wanted audiovisual news and 79% considered the station's information reliable.

A five-component strategy was formulated to link editorial planning, accessible multimedia production, audience dialogue, professional training, and performance monitoring. Its contribution lies in specifying responsibilities and prospective measures for a provincial public-service broadcasting context, while distinguishing exposure to information, direct participation, and confidence in the source.

The single-station design and non-probabilistic sample restrict the transferability of the findings. The lack of exact observation dates, full research instruments, and raw records available for review also limits replicability. Because the proposal was neither implemented nor evaluated, its effectiveness remains unknown. Future research should pilot the strategy using documented baselines, consistent follow-up periods, and measures of the quality and accessibility of audience interaction.

References

Abubakar, A. T. (2024). Mobile telephony and changing patterns of audiences' engagement with global media in Africa. *Global Media and Communication*, 20(1), 71–89. https://doi.org/10.1177/17427665241235481

Apuke, O. D., & Felix, D. (2024). Television broadcast media adoption of digital platforms and audience engagement within the Jalingo metropolis. *Journal of Multidisciplinary Science: MIKAILALSYS*, 2(3), 306–318. https://doi.org/10.58578/mikailalsys.v2i3.3700

Bosch, T. (2024). PSB radio and the public sphere in South Africa: #SAfmSunrise, radio, and citizenship. *Communicatio*, 50(3), 26–43. https://doi.org/10.1080/02500167.2023.2296642

Caicedo, F., Alpúsig, S., Remache, M., & Lara, O. (2023). Diagnosis and proposal for the modernization of community radio: Case study Radio Latacunga. 2023 IEEE Seventh Ecuador Technical Chapters Meeting (ECTM), 1–6. https://doi.org/10.1109/ETCM58927.2023.10309031

Fraser, C., & Restrepo-Estrada, S. (2002). Community radio for change and development. Development, 45(4), 69–73. https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.development.1110408

Izzatli, S. (2025). The theoretical foundations of interactive journalism in the new media era. *Metafizika*, 8(2), 97–108. https://doi.org/10.33864/2617-751X.2025.v8.i2.97-108

Kristensen, L. M., & Bro, P. (2024). News values in a digital age: Intra-media, inter-media, and extra-media platforms. *Journalism*, 25(4), 819–836. https://doi.org/10.1177/14648849231165855

Lin, Y., & Kant, S. (2021). Using social media for citizen participation: Contexts, empowerment, and inclusion. *Sustainability*, 13(12), Article 6635. https://doi.org/10.3390/su13126635

Maina, S. N., & Simiyu, K. N. (2024). Digital transformation in community radio: Extending the reach of social inclusion efforts at Mathare FM, Nairobi, Kenya. *African Journal of Empirical Research*, 5(4), 934–944. https://doi.org/10.51867/ajernet.5.4.76

Mathe, L., & Motsaathebe, G. (2024). Community radio content in print Facebook posts: Limitations and opportunities for indigenous languages. *Communicatio*, 50(1), 42–67. https://doi.org/10.1080/02500167.2024.2332181

Newman, N., Fletcher, R., Robertson, C. T., Eddy, K., & Nielsen, R. K. (2024). Reuters Institute digital news report 2024. Reuters Institute for the Study of *Journalism*, University of Oxford. https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/digital-news-report/2024

Rádio Nacional de Angola. (n.d.). Rádio Bié [Provincial radio channel]. https://rna.ao/rna.ao/radiochanels/radio-bie/

Salaverría, R. (2019). Digital journalism: 25 years of research. *El Profesional de la Información*, 28(1), e280101. https://doi.org/10.3145/epi.2019.ene.01

Tenku, H. Y., Artuti Erda De, S., & Kurniadi, D. (2025). Konvergensi media digital: Tinjauan kritis dan implementasinya dalam komunikasi massa kontemporer. *Indonesian Journal of Digital Public Relations*, 4(1), 114–121. https://doi.org/10.25124/ijdpr.v4i1.9791

Wu, X., & Fitzgerald, R. (2025). The danmu discourse of user engagement with cross-posted broadcast interviews in Chinese social media. *Journalism*, 26(3), 733–751. https://doi.org/10.1177/14648849241253900

Yang, Y. (2024). The trend of media convergence and its impact in journalism and communication studies. *Transactions on Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*, 7, 250–255. https://doi.org/10.62051/9yd2h686

Zondi, S., & Muringa, T. P. (2024). Influence of digital media on radio's public discourse: A case study of Gagasi FM and Ukhozi FM. *Communicatio*, 50(3), 44–72. https://doi.org/10.1080/02500167.2024.2369505

Funding

Funding information has not yet been confirmed by the authors and must be declared before publication.

Conflicts of interest

Competing-interest declarations remain to be confirmed by all three listed authors. Any financial, institutional, or editorial relationships relevant to this manuscript must be disclosed before publication.

Author contributions

Dislayne González-Morales: investigation, literature review, data interpretation, validation, and writing – review and editing; Flavia M. Vargas-Mursulí: supervision, methodological validation, critical review, scientific editing, and writing – review and editing; Ivandra A. Agria-Paulo: investigation, data collection, methodology, formal analysis, and visualization. The final authorship list, individual contributions, and manuscript approval must be confirmed by the researchers before publication.

Data availability statement

Access conditions for the study's underlying questionnaire, interview, and observation records have not been confirmed. The authors must specify whether de-identified data can be shared, subject to appropriate confidentiality safeguards.

Research ethics

Voluntary participation and confidentiality were reported in the study. The ethics approval or exemption, informed-consent records, and institutional authorization must be documented and verified before submission to the journal.

Statement on the use of AI

Generative AI-assisted tools helped with language editing, manuscript organization, and wording of the proposed strategy, but not with data collection or fabricated findings. The authors remain responsible for the study, interpretations, references, and final manuscript.