



## Exploring the concept and practice of infopreneurship in the digital age

**Amakiri Don-Solomon**

PhD, Department of Office and Information Management, Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State, Nigeria,  
Email: [donamaco52@gmail.com](mailto:donamaco52@gmail.com)

### Abstract

One of the features of the global economy that is knowledge based has been described as infopreneurship, which refers to the process of creating, managing and commercializing information-based services and products. At this digital age, in which the information technologies introduced have accelerated and transformed production, distribution, and consumption of information products; the infopreneurs have become critical in the matters of innovation and social-economic development. The article reinstalls the conceptual foundation and practical examples of infopreneurship, its use in the contemporary digital system. The paper takes a qualitative conceptual framework with premise of desk research, literature synthesis and reflective analysis and highlights the development, opportunities, and challenges of infopreneurship. It argues that the digital transformation has rendered the information resources more democratic and accessible to individuals and organizations that have offered new avenues of entrepreneurship. The paper ends by suggesting that infopreneurial education, good policy frameworks and digital literacy should be incorporated to empower future infopreneurs in the developing economies.

**Keywords:** Infopreneurship, Digital Age, Knowledge Economy, Innovation, Digital Entrepreneurship

### Introduction

Information has been described many times as being the life blood of any organization without which no organization can survive. This is more so with the enabling stance taken by Kuratko, (2017) that now it has made it to be the most strategic resource enabling economic growth as well as societal transformation in the 21 st century.

The digital era has been defined by the omnipresence of interconnectedness, artificial intelligence, and the use of data to make decisions that has led to the emergence of new types of entrepreneurships focused on the production and sharing of knowledge-based products. Tracing this terrain, infopreneurship

has become one of the more noticeable breeds of entrepreneurs in which information is not only the raw material but also the product of business activity (Kuratko, 2017).

Infopreneurs use information, data, and other digital skills to create value added services like e-books, online courses, data consulting, information racketeering and creation of digital content. Their operations cut across the line of information management, business innovation and digital creativity. Infopreneurship in the developing world and especially in Nigeria is a revolutionary chance to solve unemployment, encourage creativity, and diversify the economy beyond its conventional sectors (Ezenwafor and Okoye, 2021).

In spite of its increased significance, conceptualization of infopreneurship is under-theorized in scholarly literature. Its status as a separate topic of research is often overlooked, with a number of debates considering it to be a sub-category of digital entrepreneurship or information management. The paper is thus an analysis of the concept and practice of infopreneurship with the context of digital transformation in an emerging knowledge economy.

### **The Concept of Infopreneurship**

Infopreneurship is a portmanteau of two different terms information and entrepreneurship, which signifies the business that is built on the premise of defining information requirements, ordering, packing, and selling information at a premium (Nwosu, 2019). It concerns the forgoing, any individual who wants to become infopreneur should answer these rhetoric questions which he must give genuine and pragmatic answers to; What is the problem? Who do the problem affects? These are how much they can afford to pay in terms of a solution. These questions are stimulative to the creative impulse of all infopreneurs.

Michael H. Clancy and Robert G. Allen popularized infopreneurship in the 80s and the notion took on a new significance in the digital economy, where information commodification has become the source of competitive advantage.

Infopreneurs are also not like the traditional entrepreneurs, where their main resource is information rather than actual goods or infrastructure. They transform knowledge and digital skills into commercial products including online courses, data analytics, digital media, information democratization inform of journal publication, and other information services. This is in line with the knowledge-based theory of the firm (Grant, 1996) that considers knowledge as one of the major organizational resources, and amplified by the innovation diffusion theory (Rogers, 2003) which postulates that the digital networks is the rail upon which ideas/information are propagated.

Creativity, digital flexibility, innovativeness and technological expertise are some of the characteristics displayed by infopreneurs (Drucker, 2017). They produce, solve problems, and learn through the information technologies-driven medium, which leads to the socio-economic development and information democratization.

### **The Digital Age of Infopreneurship.**

The online era has transformed the face of infopreneurship, extending the number of tools as well as markets. As digital technologies, such as social media, cloud computing, mobile applications, artificial intelligence, and fintech, have spread, infopreneurs are now in a globally connected ecosystem (Brynjolfsson and McAfee, 2014).

Infopreneurs can use platforms like YouTube, Udemy, Tik Tok, Linkedl and Substack to create, distribute and monetize knowledge based contents (Brookings Institution, 2023). An example is African infopreneurs who use such digital infrastructures and indigenous solutions as Paystack and Flutterwave to commercialize skills, consultancy, and education services (Ndemo and Weiss, 2017). Other institutions such as libraries, universities, and think tanks have also tapped into the models of infopreneurial models to provide subscription-based information services (Aina, 2020). Accordingly, infopreneurship has taken a new dimension and involves individual and institutional actors who can convert knowledge to economic benefit by engaging in digital innovation.

Nevertheless, digital infopreneurship requires new skills: the ability to create content, connect with an audience, manage the brand, analyze and market through social media and constantly adapt to the changes in the algorithm of the platforms. The intensive rivalry on the internet makes infopreneurs distinguish themselves by being authentic, creating value, and becoming an expert in a niche (Unkle, 2024).

Therefore, although the digital tools have enabled democratization of access and chances, they have also created an increase in operation complexity whereby infopreneurs must find a

balance between both creativity and strategy in a dynamic digital economy.

### Opportunities and Challenges.

The virtual world is an immense opportunity and a major challenge to the infopreneur.

#### Opportunities

- 1) International Reach: International markets are accessed by using digital tools, which have no physical limitations, making them scalable (BizEpic, 2024).
- 2) Low Capital Entry: Online companies can typically have lower capital requirements than a traditional brick-and-mortar business, which reduces entry barriers by young people and new entrants (Brookings Institution, 2023).
- 3) Inclusivity and Employment: Infopreneurship gives the underprivileged opportunities by allowing them to generate income streams using digital engagement and affiliate marketing schemes (Ndemo and Weiss, 2017).
- 4) Innovation and Knowledge Monetization: Infopreneurs strengthen the knowledge based economy by transforming expertise into the digital products that can be sold (Grant, 1996).
- 5) Economic Resilience: The production and sale of information products can be accomplished with minimal physical interaction- significant in the case of a crisis like the COVID-19 (UNCTAD, 2021).

#### Challenges

- 1) Digital Divide: The unequal access to the internet, devices and infrastructure restricts participation, especially in rural regions (IDC-Africa, 2024).
- 2) Skill Gaps: Skill gaps and lack of digital and business literacy can pose a barrier to maintaining an infopreneurship; 87% of African business leaders mentioned that a lack of skills would be a hindrance (Kizo Africa, 2024).
- 3) Regulatory Weakness: Inadequate protection of intellectual property and absence of digital business policies are a

drag in infopreneurial development (TheCable, 2024).

- 4) Platform Dependency: Infopreneurs are highly dependent on third-party platforms, which are prone to algorithmic modifications, monetization, and data loss (Unkeles, 2024).
- 5) Saturation and Competition: Due to the low barrier in the market, differentiation and brand loyalty are required (Telkomsel Enterprise, 2024).
- 6) Sustainability and Adaptation: The high rate of technological change compels constant skills renewals and innovations and is a sustainability challenge (BizEpic, 2024).
- 7) All in all, the digital ecosystem promises greater opportunities in innovation than ever before but it must be carefully supported in terms of capacity building, ethical standards and infrastructural development, to guarantee that it is an inclusive process with a sustainable future.

### Methodological Approach

The conceptual approach presented in this paper is based on qualitative research and reflective thoughts that rely on desk research. Being a non-empirical investigation, it cross-tabulates scholarly source materials, web-based resources, and professional reports concerning the issues of entrepreneurship, information management, and digital innovation. The approach entails the discovery of major conceptual views, theoretical understanding, and combination of thought reflections to promote an informed view on infopreneurship.

It was the method of choice, as infopreneurship being an emerging research field appears to be better served by theoretical elaboration and conceptual basis as compared to the use of quantitative research. The evaluation will focus on the interpretations and logical reasoning to obtain the insights that can be used in different situations. Although there was no primary data, the argument and the validity of the analysis are

supported by examples of the recent research and practices in the industry.

### The Researcher's Position and Argument

Infopreneurship is not only an economic trend, but also a strategic typology of the knowledge society. With the world moving towards a data-driven innovation, the ones who are able to pack and commercialize information will define the future of development.

The author challenges that to make people ready to new forms of knowledge markets, governments and other institutions should invest in infopreneurial education and digital infrastructure. Infopreneurship should be incorporated in information science, business and technology disciplines in universities as a way of promoting creativity and employability.

The policy interventions also need to work on increasing the broadband, securing intellectual property and incubating startups. Local innovation, digital inclusion and sustainable employment particularly among the youth and the women in the developing world can be propelled by infopreneurship in the event that it is well supported.

Along with economics, there is also the social component of infopreneurship: the knowledge gets democratized, people are empowered, and the civic engagement in the digital era occurs.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

Digital economy has given birth to infopreneurship that means the convergence of information and innovation. It has disrupted the meaning of entrepreneurship in that it transforms information into a saleable resource through technology.

To realise its potential, this paper recommends:

- 1) Curriculum Integration: Tertiary education must bring Infopreneurship and digital literacy to an institutional level.
- 2) Policy Frameworks: Governments will be required to come up with legal and financial frameworks to enable digital entrepreneurship and protect creators.
- 3) Infrastructure Investment: The infrastructure may be expanded by means

of the internet connection and affordable devices to overcome the digital divide.

- 4) Capacity Development: The mentorship networks and the training programs are required to improve digital and business competencies.
- 5) Research Extension: There are areas where the research is necessitated by further empirical research studies and are as outlined below: gender work, the effect of the same on the economy, and sustainability of infopreneurial ventures. Lastly, infopreneurship is one of the conglomerations of knowledge, creativity, and technology. Upon the creation of this territory, the societies will enjoy a sound economy and a digital future with inclusiveness

### References

- 1) Aina, L. O. (2020). *Information services and the knowledge economy in Africa*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books.
- 2) BizEpic. (2024, February 15). *Entrepreneurship in the digital age: Challenges and opportunities*. Retrieved from <https://www.bizepic.com>
- Brookings Institution. (2023). *Digital entrepreneurship in Africa*. Retrieved from <https://www.brookings.edu>
- 3) Brynjolfsson, E., & McAfee, A. (2014). *The second machine age: Work, progress, and prosperity in a time of brilliant technologies*. W.W. Norton.
- 4) Ezenwafor, J. I., & Okoye, K. R. (2021). Infopreneurship education for sustainable youth empowerment in Nigeria. *Journal of Business and Vocational Education*, 3(1), 45–57.
- 5) Grant, R. M. (1996). Toward a knowledge-based theory of the firm. *Strategic Management Journal*, 17(S2), 109–122.
- 6) IDC-Africa. (2024). *Closing the digital divide in Africa: Challenges and strategies*. Retrieved from <https://www.idc-a.org>
- 7) Kizo Africa. (2024). *Challenges for Africa's entrepreneurial leaders in the*

- digital era*. Retrieved from [https://medium.com/@kizo\\_africa](https://medium.com/@kizo_africa)
- 8) Kuratko, D. F. (2017). *Entrepreneurship: Theory, process, and practice* (10th ed.). Cengage Learning.
  - 9) Ndemo, B., & Weiss, T. (2017). *Digital Kenya: An entrepreneurial revolution in the making*. Palgrave Macmillan.
  - 10) Nwosu, B. (2019). Infopreneurship and digital transformation in Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Information Studies*, 15(2), 75–89.
  - 11) Rogers, E. M. (2003). *Diffusion of innovations* (5th ed.). Free Press.
  - 12) Schumpeter, J. A. (2018). *The theory of economic development*. Routledge.
  - 13) Telkomsel Enterprise. (2024). *Digital entrepreneurship: Strategies and challenges*. Retrieved from <https://www.telkomsel.com/en/enterprise>
  - 14) The Cable. (2024). *Closing the digital divide in Africa: Unfolding challenges and success stories*. Retrieved from <https://www.thecable.ng>
  - Unkles C. (2024). *What is an infopreneur?* Retrieved from <https://celinaunkles.com/infopreneur>
  - 15) UNCTAD. (2021). *Digital economy report: Cross-border data flows and development*. United Nations.