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von Latifa Sonia Rollier

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SPORT
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True Fit, the personalisation platform for apparel and footwear

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Stories

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Pictures of the day
von Latifa Sonia Rollier

KOLUMNE
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Immer mehr Berner entdecken das Biguland
Writs

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Charles Ngueta: Helvetia's Secret
2. Februar - Kellertheater Murten
von Kellertheater Murten

BROCANTE
Kunsthandwerk Brocante Murten-Morat
12. Mai - Altstadt Murten
von Aline Wältli

THEATER
Strohmann-Kauz: Milchbuechli-rächnig
16. März - Kellertheater Murten
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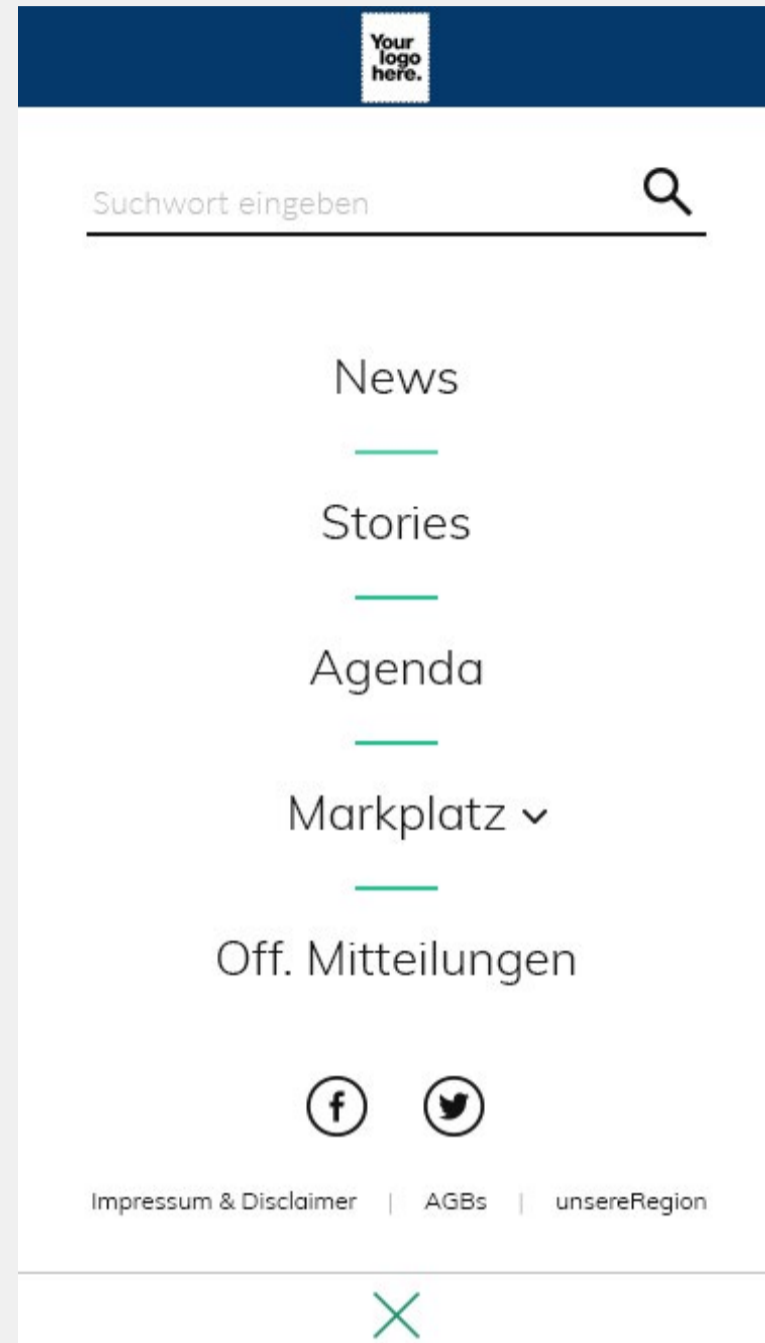
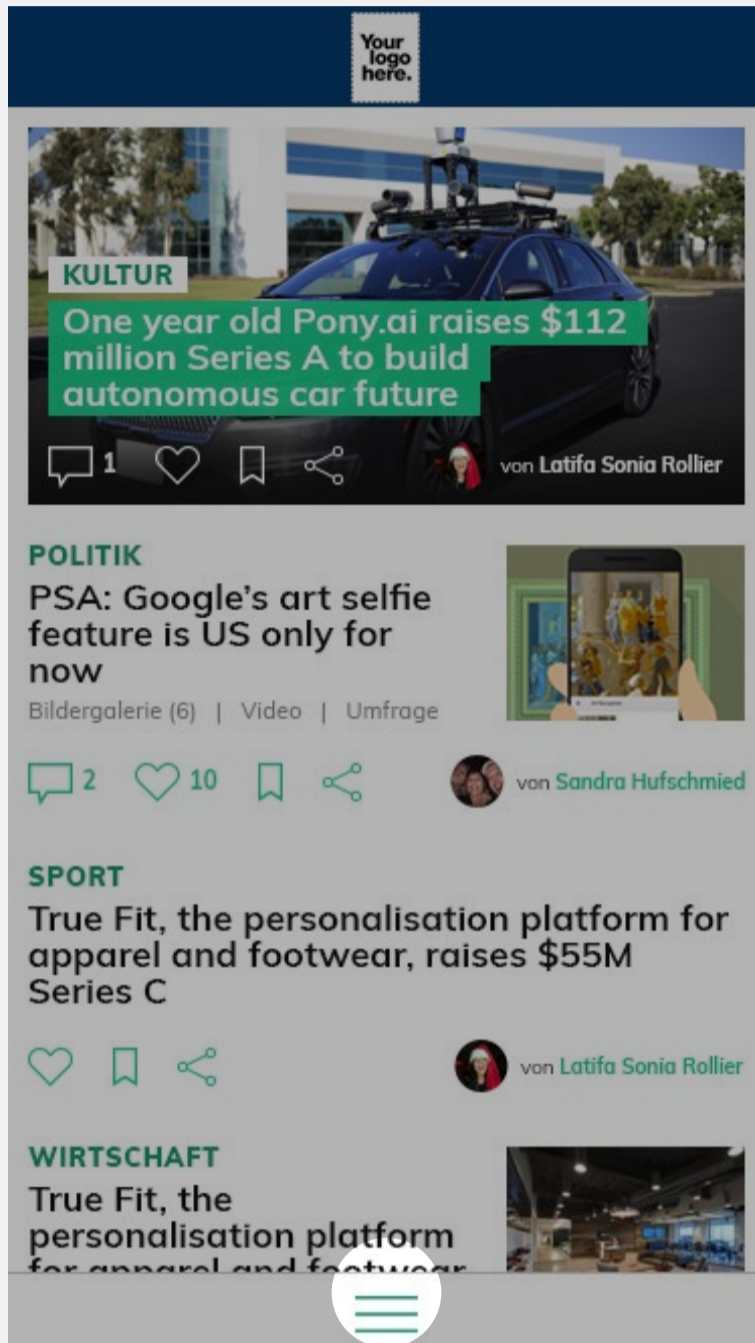
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POLITIK

Using Comedy to Strengthen Nigeria's Democracy

von **Sandra Hufschmied**
am 21. Januar 2018



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A news-satire series modelled on "The Daily Show" aims to empower viewers. Will the joke get lost in translation?

One day last July, the five writers of "The Other News," Nigeria's first prime-time political-satire show, sat in an office in Lagos, trying to figure out how to make fun of a king. The Ooni of Ife, the traditional ruler of the

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A news-satire series modelled on "The Daily Show" aims to empower viewers. Will the joke get lost in translation?

One day last July, the five writers of "The Other News," Nigeria's first prime-time political-satire show, sat in an office in Lagos, trying to figure out how to make fun of a king. The Ooni of Ife, the traditional ruler of the Yoruba people, had recently made headlines for an incident that occurred on a flight to Ontario. As the Ooni's entourage boarded, one of his aides, dressed in a flowing white robe, blessed the plane by rattling a couple of shakers above his head. A passenger caught the rite on his phone and posted a video to YouTube, where it quickly went viral. The writers were working on the pilot episode of the show and hoped to begin with a few jokes about recent news items; the clip, some of them thought, would make perfect fodder.

Werbung



Rice reminded the writers that comedy necessarily offends some people. "If you do a comedy show, you're going to step on toes," he said. In Nigeria, there are a lot of toes to step on. The country has three major religions and more than two hundred and fifty ethnic groups, which sometimes coexist uneasily. During the colonial era, ethnic tensions were exacerbated by the British practice of indirect rule, in which traditional leaders were pitted against one another for resources and political power. Since the country's independence, in 1960, its leaders have continued to exploit these rivalries.

Disputes can flare into violence

For the past few months, Igbo separatists in the southeast had been agitating for an independent state, prompting fears of a replay of the Biafran war of the late nineteen-sixties. Judging from the photos of hundreds of members of the Indigenous People of Biafra marching in the street, fists raised, they did not seem inclined to take a joke. "I'm not against starting a crisis," Nwabudike said, laughing. "Just not in the first episode."

"Too many challenges prevented it from reaching its desired output"

One writer suggested that they read the comments on the video of the Ooni to get a better sense of the public's reaction. Rice shot the suggestion down. "Jerry Seinfeld used to say, 'Never read your fan mail—only crazy people write letters!'" he said. The writers decided that they would gently rib the Ooni for the disruption he'd caused on the plane. The brunt of the critique was reserved for Nigerian politicians' obsession with private jets; no ritual would be elaborate enough for them to fly commercial. It was not the most scathing take, but they now had a few minutes in the can, which is about the most a comedy writer can ask of a morning's work.



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Season 2

The third episode of Season 2 was about to air. We sat in his basement and watched it live on the Channels YouTube page. There was a long piece on a new bill to spend a billion dollars fighting Boko Haram; the bill had attracted criticism, because President Buhari had boasted in 2015 that the insurgent group was "technically defeated." Case was impressed. "Man, this is going to go viral," he said, at the end of a segment that made fun of the role that Buhari, a former general, had played in three military coups before being elected President. Afterward, he showed me a rough draft of some surveys indicating that the show was having a positive impact on its viewers' political knowledge. But he seemed more excited by a different sign of success. He had heard a rumor that a rival TV station was creating its own political-satire show. "You know you're onto something hot when people are copying it," he said.

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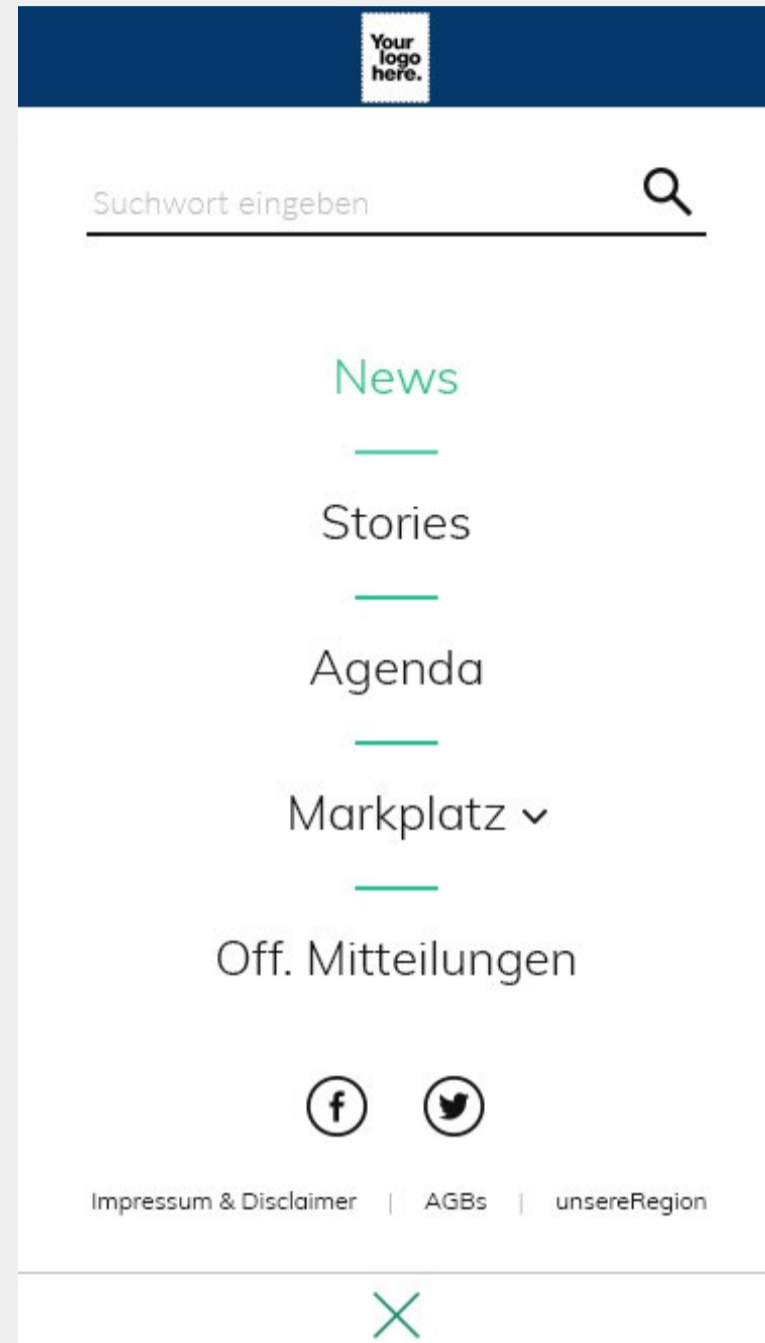
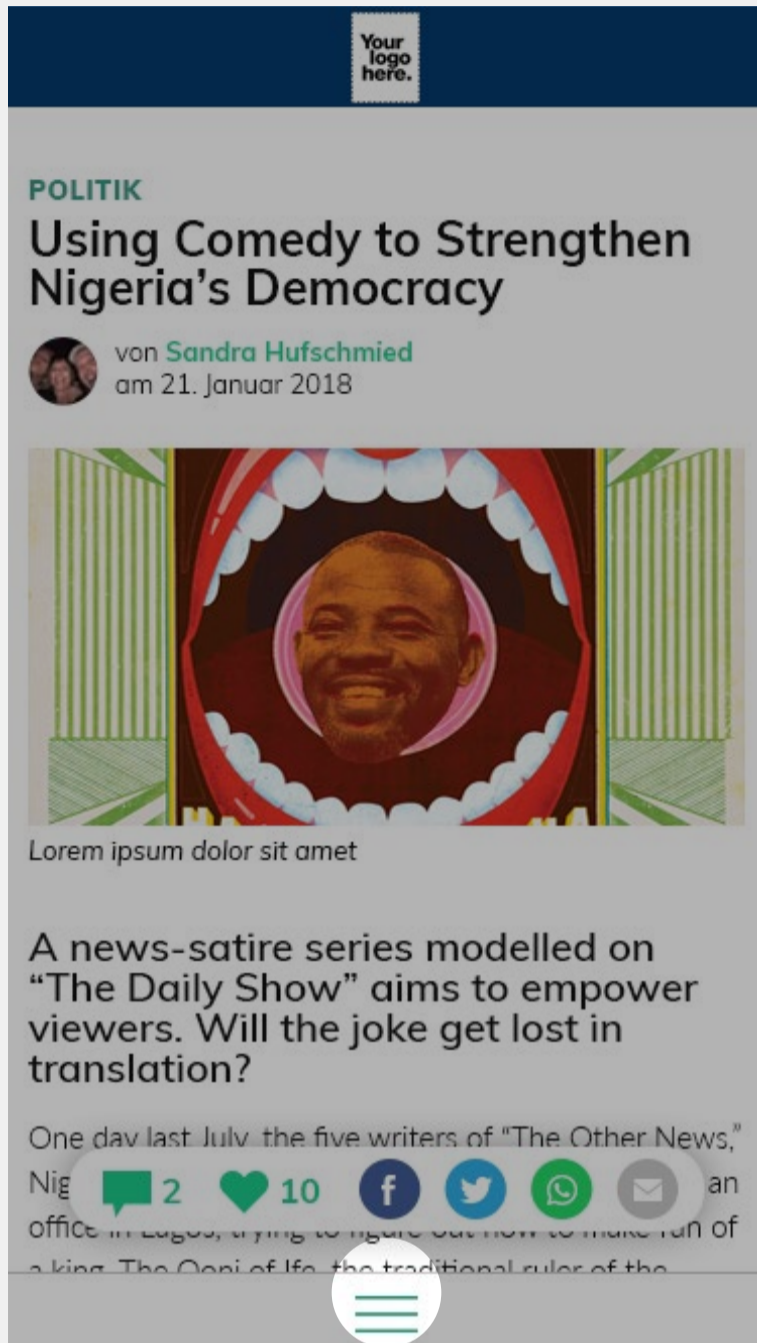
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