

Social Media Impact on Sourcing News and Mainstream Media

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Abstract

The principal objective of the study is to assess and analyze the ways in which the arrival and expansion of social media (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Blogs etc) has influenced mainstream media in India—television and print media. The aim is to find out the impact of social media on journalistic practices and the mainstream media in India. To assess and analyze the influence, in-depth interviews with newspersons working with electronic and print media in the National Capital Region (NCR) and Dehradun city were conducted. Analysis of transcripts was done through thematic analysis.

Journalists interviewed admitted to the power of social media saying it cannot be ignored in the present era. They were positive about its use as they mentioned that it is the power of social media that local and hyper-local issues are getting coverage like never before. They univocally agreed that verification of news is paramount for them while citing the incidents of fake news broadcast in the recent past. They didn't agree that mainstream media is becoming completely dependent on social media for content as when it comes to issues of policy, parliamentary reporting, and foreign affairs etc., field reporting still holds the ground. The study suggests that the presence of social media may not be ignored while deciding and disseminating news by mainstream media. However, added caution and validation exercise by newspersons working in mainstream media

are needed while sourcing news from social media where technology-assisted fake news is very much rampant.

Introduction

Using social media as a source of information, harnessing its power for the dissemination of news, at times falling for fake news, and spreading misinformation – the rise of social media seem to have affected mainstream media world over in multiple ways. With the rise of social media, since 2009 in particular, a major shift has been observed in journalistic practices worldwide. The upsurge and use of social media has redefined the frontiers of journalism (Newman, 2009). Print and electronic media organizations can be seen using social media content in their everyday publications and broadcasts. A journalist keeping a tab on social media throughout a day and editors discussing it in newsrooms is a norm nowadays. Editors are asking their reporters to gauge social media for news stories, develop and promote them on several social media platforms. Are mainstream media world over witnessing a major shift in journalistic practices and principles with the arrival of social media? Franklin (2014) writes that this is undoubtedly a significant time in the history of journalism when almost every aspect of the production, reporting, and reception of news is changing. Newman (2009) argues that in future, news organizations are going to need to get used to the fact that they will always be lagging behind the social networks. Social media evangelists will need to recognize that there will always be a deficit of trust, context, and perspective within these networks.

Literature Review

Adornato (2016) in his paper 'Forces at the Gate' declares that 'the forces at the gate'—referring to active audience—have altered newsrooms' traditional gatekeeping role. Gathering content and finding story ideas from social media is no longer a novelty. This practice has become standard. Major organizations like CNN, have added an extension to their website (CNNi report) where citizens can directly post photos, videos, articles, podcasts; the content is not subjected to editorial editing unless it crosses any line of decency. Other websites like the Huffington Post edits the content before

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