Analysis of News Consumption through Social Media

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Abstract

In today’s world, social media has permeated communications, and have thus allowed for easy and convenient accessibility of news. Since news media outlets are essentially businesses at fundamental level, this has led to paradigm shift where news industry is increasingly driven by motives such as that of profit. As a consequence of that consequence of that, the news media has become increasingly polar and creating a major chasm between people with different affiliations who through a polarized social media network of gaining news place themselves in a feedback loop. The report delves into the impact of social media in the quality of new being reported, along with the changes in journalism to fit the social media environment. The changes in news media since the rise of social media is analysed in detail and the relationship of it with people is studied. The report further demonstrates the shifting political affiliations to increasingly polarized spheres owing to reinforced predispositions through social media.
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A bridge between News and Audience</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust in News</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyperbole and Feedback loops</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Bubbles</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excess of News</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shift in Traditional Journalism</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

Communication has fundamentally advanced through the span of numerous years, yet the exponential ascent in its proficiency since the advent of internet has been radical and extraordinary. Among the numerous augmentations of the internet is social media. The usage of social media by expansive numbers of individuals is has allowed for its usage in a variety of purposes. Commercial ventures, marketing, entertainment and the dissemination of news are among the striking highlights for which social media is utilized. On the subject of news, a large number of news sources have risen that serve to give news to their endorsers. Social media gives grounds whereupon news sources today maintain their business model, and this has prompted the news media industry transforming its business practices in more extreme routes.

A bridge between News and Audience

Social Media along with visits to the websites operated by news outlets are the usual modes of online news consumption among people. The two fronts are though becoming more intertwined, as social media directs people to a given news story on a particular website. Social media thus functions as a platform that guides internet traffic towards news sources. With a consistently expanding number of individuals veering off far from the customary methods of news sources in states of newspapers or digital TV, the news outlets of today are put in a place of reliance on social media stages to draw in patrons. As contended by Hermida (2010), to effectively interweave the two fronts, news source have needed to reshape their methodology in looking to keep up pertinence in the consistently developing pool of news sources (p.297-308). This has been accomplished through mirroring the mechanics of social media in the dissemination of news. Social media works through curating the input from the screen that keeps him/her focused to it for conceivably long period of time. The feature of pull-to-refresh constitutes a vital segment of the social media mechanics and gives the person a feeling of control and drives him/her to keep on scrolling (Tavakolifard and Gulla, 2013). This component is utilized by news sources, bringing about pre-packaged news stories being scattered over social media stages. As exhibited by Potthast (2018), for the substance of the news to be prominent and garner a following, the practice of click-bait sprouted, which is basically molding the news story in a way that pulls in most viewership or readership. This
has positively prompted an exponential growth for news sources, however it has likewise undermined from the trustworthiness in different ways as well.

If U.S. is to be taken as a sample for the shifting trends in news consumption as a result of social media, the pattern can be seen as more or similar in other similar parts of the world. In U.S., the recent pew survey suggests that 45% of adults in 2017 obtain their news from mobile devices at their disposal, which is hike upward of 36% recorded in 2016, and 21% recorded in 2013. In totality, as much as 85% of adults get their news input from mobile devices. There are a significant percentage of people who use laptop and desktop computers. The high usage of mobile devices however reflects the time people spend online and thus are exposed to news through social media. About 67% of adults report that they get at the very least a portion of their news from social media. It is also recorded that in access of half of the adult population over 50 uses social media for news consumption. The increase is substantial by 10% jump from the previous year (Bialik and Matsa, 2017). It reflects the fact that social media is no more confined to solely young populations and older individuals too are picking up on the trend and using it for consuming news.

Trust in News

The element of trust is considered a bulwark in the relationship between news providers and the subscribers. The increase in the volume of news and other information available online, especially through social media as it allows for interactivity upon news stories, the landscape has been radically shifted. Report survey data from Reuters Institute Digital News conducted across eleven countries gives a succinct impression of the shifting trends in trust, the preferences among people, and the participation in online news, particularly via means of commenting and sharing (Newman et al., 2017). The results of the survey show that people with a lower level of trust in the general overview of news tend to gravitate towards social media platforms, and prefer to engage in forums and blogs relevant to news participation. A drive to seek news outlets that would validate one’s propensities and affiliations tends to be the major catalyst behind the usage of social media, as it gives the person a personalized picture of the news, thereby promoting his/her views and reinforcing them. The lack of trust is exemplified in the Edelman Trust Barometer report of 2018, which shows that a third of Britons are consuming news in a lesser capacity than they used to. Upon being asked the reasons to do so, they cite the news to be "too biased" and "controlled by
hidden agendas”. It was also notable in the survey that only 25% of Britons trusted social media and were inclined towards seeing stringent regulation

**Hyperbole and Feedback Loops**

The hyperbolic tone of news has a tendency to have more sentimentality and less of value substance (Hermida, 2012, p. 815-824). Hyun states that this arrangement is additionally swelled through expanding interest of such substance by individuals that stems from groups of people that harbor comparable world perspectives aligning to a solitary news source and associating with other similarly invested individuals in its space on social media. Individuals as a result get a feeling of reinforcement in their perspectives of reality and subsequently turn out to be more solidified in their positions. News sources blossom with this example and keep on maintaining an unwavering feedback loop, bolstering their base with what they need to hear. It can thus be contended that social media has turned into a stage that whilst offering simple availability to news content, additionally keeps people from basic assessment of the distinctive news content on offer.

**Filter Bubbles**

News sources work upon a connection to shifting ideological and divided fronts, running from conservative to centrist, to progressive, and the many tiers that fall within this spectrum (Barnidge 2017). In spreading a news story, if there is observed to be a convergence between the ideological affiliations of the news source, the account of news stories is moved to line up with the set affiliations. The supporters of the news sources have their own intrinsic inclination toward specific affiliations also, which drives them to news sources that line up with their affiliations and the other way around. Social media assumes a part of strengthening this relationship where the benefit is acquired by the two sides, the news outlet and the subscriber. The filter bubbles social media makes for its subscribers introduces them a customized agreeable encounters (Pentina, 2014, p.211-223), thereby restraining basic idea and rather making an input circle which strengthens the feelings of a person through news sources that line up with one's intrinsic tendencies, which by and large show deeply embedded biases. Google searches according to studies is found to differentiate 11% due to personalisation of content to create filter bubbles, but it is also suggested that there is a lack a clear and fitting threshold to gauge the implications of these findings (Zuiderveen, 2016, p. 07).
Excess of News

A problem that has been created through social media is also the abundance of news availability. People are found to not always be able to ascertain the veracity of the news that they find on social media, and as a result can be misled. A results published by Irish Social Journalism Survey in 2014 demonstrate that about 64% of Irish journalists were of the view that information of social media regarding news cannot be fully trusted (Heravi, Harrower and Boran, 2014). The radical shift in news industry has been palpable in the preference of people in consuming news. Before social media, the name and credentials of the journalist used to hold great value, but now the name of the news publisher overrides all other factors. News outlets are increasingly becoming more focused in marketing and advertising their content to reach wider audience, and in doing so are shifting towards a narrative of news stories that holds greater appeal among the users of social media. Similarly, the rise of live video content too is shaping the production of news stories as well as the spread of them in a completely new way. A viewer of live video feed on social media can see the journalist in real time, which has hampered the practice of editing and regulation. This creates a mechanism of news coverage that is not entirely in the control of editors of the broadcasting platform, and thus can lead to unforeseen eventualities such as audience witnessing traumatizing elements in a live news feed.

Shift in traditional journalism

The changing landscape of news media has a direct impact on journalism. It is the profession of journalism that is entrusted with the task of seeking news stories, to shed light on them and give and objective overviews. With the rise of social media, the foundational principles of journalism continue to be challenged. Objectivity in covering a news story continues to loose appeal and thus fails to garner a healthy following and a loyal base of subscribes. The addition of new outlets, such as buzz feed, that are not strictly founded upon an interest to uphold journalistic values produce news that are rich in content that is stirring and stimulating, but lacking in substance. Social Media has replaced what used to be called “serious news” with “trendy news”. The landscape of news thus becomes compromised. In seeking to compete in such an environment, the more accredited news outlets too become inclined towards shifting their usual practice (Lee, Lindsey and Kim, 2017, p. 254-263). As a result, a pool of news outlets is created that does not follow traditional journalism. According
to Edelman Trust Barometer report of 2018, half of the British population view the shift in journalistic practices a problematic. 64% reported an inability to distinguish legitimate news from the rest.

**Discussion**

Social media in current age penetrates each part of one's life, the utilization of it for removing news has from multiple points of view turn into a device to disseminate information for institutions and bodies that are driven to have an influence upon public opinion and through it direct people a given way (Veil, 2011, p.110-122). Individuals as aforementioned have natural tendencies and are along these lines headed to channel those tendencies through particular news sources. This prompts aversion on part of individuals to be more open towards all news stories and outlets outside of their sphere of association. The tendencies can be opened up or downsized subject to how news sources supporting or countering them. To successfully carry out the spread of desired information, social media turns out to be an imperative machine in the framework. Mehraj and Bhat (2014) assert that since individuals invest a lot of energy in social media and there exists a state where one is constantly exposed to information feeds, it turns into rich grounds to advances and extract data (p. 56-64). This can have major implications in general consensus observed in a society, and can move the course of events, such as political decision making (Sunstein, 2017, p.11-23).

Social media has made news media an acutely competitive frontier. Since individuals end up with decisions of news streams that they never had, news media remains in a constant state of flux to attract more subscription. People though face an issue that while they delight in the broad decisions of news streams accessible on their social media outlets, they likewise face an over-burden of news inputs to choose from. To ease this clashing circumstance, the business model of news sources has changed to offer more customized news to individuals (Lin, 2014. p.1-18). This takes into account individuals with a specific propensity to follow given news sources and satisfy their need to connect with news content. News sources have as a result become more radical in their narratives, and have inclined towards overstatement of events. Such a undertone in news media has been existent since the commencement of news business, however the pattern of social media has put this disturbing practice on a higher apparatus.
Results

The working of the world is an impression of how individuals conduct themselves in different spheres of life, which is further the aftereffect of the mindfulness individuals hold of their general surroundings. The component of mindfulness, of learning and data about various happenings originates from news sources (Shirky 28-41, p. 28-41). It can hence contend that news sources assume a crucial part in the functioning of a society. Social media as showed above presents a skewed world-view to individuals, which therefore translates into an inability to critically think and thus make sound decisions. It makes for less social congruity inferable from the extremity in perspectives people carry and it injects them with a misguided feeling of conviction and rightness in convictions. The facet for social media being a noteworthy part of this process ranges from its utilization by news outlets in spreading their interests to individuals who in-turn have their own often misplaced propensities further solidified.

Conclusion

The conclusion can thus be drawn that social media in today day and age is a mode that is constantly growing and permeating the fabric of society inside out. As a result, the means of news media too have been affected. The dawn of social media has created a frontier concerning how news stories are spread, and how people orient news to their specifications. The personalized nature of social media has as a consequence curated news content in similar lights, allowing people to limit their news input to limited means. This has contained people in comfort zones of what they want to see and hear, through reinforcing their already inherent biases and a lack of challenging input of news. A feedback loop germinates, which is further exemplified in the polarity observed in society.
References


