

Social Media and Its Effects on Society

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ABSTRACT: Social media are interactive technologies that facilitate the creation and sharing of information, ideas, interests, and other forms of expression through virtual communities and networks.^{[1][2]} While challenges to the definition of social media arise^{[3][4]} due to the variety of stand-alone and built-in social media services currently available, there are some common features:^[2]

1. Social media are interactive Web 2.0 Internet-based applications.^{[2][5]}
2. User-generated content—such as text posts or comments, digital photos or videos, and data generated through all online interactions—is the lifeblood of social media.^{[2][5]}
3. Users create service-specific profiles for the website or app that are designed and maintained by the social media organization.^{[2][6]}
4. Social media helps the development of online social networks by connecting a user's profile with those of other individuals or groups.^{[2][6]}

The term social in regard to media suggests that platforms are user-centric and enable communal activity. As such, social media can be viewed as online facilitators or enhancers of human networks—webs of individuals who enhance social connectivity.^[7]

KEYWORDS: social media, society, effects, networks, connectivity, webs, internet, communities, website, app

I.INTRODUCTION

Users usually access social media services through web-based apps on desktops or download services that offer social media functionality to their mobile devices (e.g. smartphones and tablets). As users engage with these electronic services, they create highly interactive platforms in which individuals, communities, and organizations can share, co-create, discuss, participate, and modify user-generated or self-curated content posted online.^{[8][6][1]} Additionally, social media are used to document memories, learn about and explore things, advertise oneself, and form friendships along with the growth of ideas from the creation of blogs, podcasts, videos, and gaming sites.^[9] This changing relationship between humans and technology is the focus of the emerging field of technological self-studies.^[10] Some of the most popular social media websites, with more than 100 million registered users, include Twitter, Facebook (and its associated Messenger), WeChat, ShareChat, Instagram, QZone, Weibo, VK, Tumblr, Baidu Tieba, and LinkedIn. Depending on interpretation, other popular platforms that are sometimes referred to as social media services include YouTube, QQ, Quora, Telegram, WhatsApp, Signal, LINE, Snapchat, Pinterest, Viber, Reddit, Discord, TikTok, Microsoft Teams, and more. Wikis are examples of collaborative content creation.

Social media outlets differ from traditional media (e.g. print magazines and newspapers, TV, and radio broadcasting) in many ways, including quality,^[11] reach, frequency, usability, relevancy, and permanence.^[12] Additionally, social media outlets operate in a dialogic transmission system (i.e., many sources to many receivers) while traditional media outlets operate under a monologic transmission model (i.e., one source to many receivers). For instance, a newspaper is delivered to many subscribers, and a radio station broadcasts the same programs to an entire city.^[13]

Since the dramatic expansion of the Internet, digital media or digital rhetoric can be used to represent or identify a culture. Studying the rhetoric that exists in the digital environment has become a crucial new process for many scholars.

Observers have noted a wide range of positive and negative impacts when it comes to the use of social media. Social media can help to improve an individual's sense of connectedness with real or online communities and can be an effective communication (or marketing) tool for corporations, entrepreneurs, non-profit organizations, advocacy

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groups, political parties, and governments. Observers have also seen that there has been a rise in social movements using social media as a tool for communicating and organizing in times of political unrest.

Social media can also be used to read or share news, whether it is true or false.

Mobile social media refers to the use of social media on mobile devices such as smartphones and tablet computers. Mobile social media are useful applications of mobile marketing because the creation, exchange, and circulation of user-generated content can assist companies with marketing research, communication, and relationship development.^[31] Mobile social media differ from others because they incorporate the current location of the user (location-sensitivity) or the time delay between sending and receiving messages.

Social media promotes users to share content with others and display content in order to enhance a particular brand or product.^[32] Social media allows people to be creative and share interesting ideas with their followers or fans. Certain social media applications such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram are places where users share specific political or sports content. Many reporters and journalists produce updates and information on sports and political news. It can truly give users pertinent and necessary information to stay up to date on relevant news stories and topics. However, there is a downside to it. Users are advised to exercise due diligence when they are using social media platforms.

According to Andreas Kaplan, mobile social media applications can be differentiated among four types:^[31]

1. Space-timers (location and time-sensitive): Exchange of messages with relevance mostly for one specific location at one specific point in time (e.g. Facebook Places, WhatsApp, Telegram, Foursquare)
2. Space-locators (only location sensitive): Exchange of messages with relevance for one specific location, which is tagged to a certain place and read later by others (e.g. Yelp, Qype, Tumblr, Fishbrain)
3. Quick-timers (only time sensitive): Transfer of traditional social media mobile apps to increase immediacy (e.g. posting on Twitter or status updates on Facebook)
4. Slow-timers (neither location nor time sensitive): Transfer of traditional social media applications to mobile devices (e.g. watching a YouTube video)

II.DISCUSSION

Social media plays a role in communication during COVID-19 pandemic.^[68] In December 2019, during the COVID-19 pandemic, a nationally representative survey by Cartoon Network and the Cyberbullying Research Center surveyed Americans tweens (ages 9–12) found that the most popular overall application in the past year was YouTube (67%).^[69] (In general, as age increased, the tweens were more likely to have used major social media apps and games.) Similarly, a nationally representative survey by Common Sense Media conducted in 2019 of Americans ages 13–18 found that YouTube was also the most popular social media service (used by 86% of 13- to 18-year-old Americans in the past year).^[70] As children grow older, they utilize certain social media services on a frequent basis and often use the application YouTube to consume content. The use of social media certainly increases as people grow older and it has become a customary thing to have an Instagram and Twitter account. While adults were already using social media before the COVID-19 pandemic, more started using it to stay socially connected and to get updates on the pandemic.

"Social media have become popularly use to seek for medical information and have fascinated the general public to collect information regarding corona virus pandemics in various perspectives. During these days, people are forced to stay at home and the social media have connected and supported awareness and pandemic updates."^[71]

This also made healthcare workers and systems more aware of social media as a place people were getting health information about the pandemic:

"During the COVID-19 pandemic, social media use has accelerated to the point of becoming a ubiquitous part of modern healthcare systems."^[72]

Though this also led to the spread of disinformation, indeed, on December 11, 2019, the CDC put out a "Call to Action: Managing the Infodemic".^[73] Some healthcare organizations even used hashtags as interventions and published articles on their Twitter data:^[74]

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"Promotion of the joint usage of #PedsICU and #COVID19 throughout the international pediatric critical care community in tweets relevant to the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic and pediatric critical care."^[74]

However others in the medical community were concerned about social media addiction, due to it as an increasingly important context and therefore "source of social validation and reinforcement" and are unsure if increased social media use is a coping mechanism or harmful.^[75]

Businesses can use social media tools for marketing research, communication, sales promotions/discounts, informal employee-learning/organizational development, relationship development/loyalty programs,^[31] and e-Commerce. Companies are increasingly using social-media monitoring tools to monitor, track, and analyze online conversations on the Web about their brand or products or about related topics of interest. This can prove useful in public relations management and advertising-campaign tracking, allowing analysts to measure return on investment for their social media ad spending, competitor-auditing, and for public engagement. Tools range from free, basic applications to subscription-based, more in-depth tools. Often social media can become a good source of information and explanation of industry trends for a business to embrace change. Within the financial industry, companies can utilize the power of social media as a tool for analyzing the sentiment of financial markets. These range from the marketing of financial products, gaining insights into market sentiment, future market predictions, and as a tool to identify insider trading.^[86]

To properly take advantage of these benefits, businesses need to have a set of guidelines that they can use on different social media platforms.^[5] Social media can enhance a brand through a process called "building social authority".^[87] However, this process can be difficult, because one of the foundational concepts in social media is that one cannot completely control one's message through social media but rather one can simply begin to participate in the "conversation" expecting that one can achieve a significant influence in that conversation.^[88] Because of the wide use of social media by consumers and their own employees, companies use social media^[89] on a customer-organizational level; and an intra-organizational level. Social media, by connecting individuals to new ties via the social network can increase entrepreneurship and innovation, especially for those individuals who lack conventional information channels due to their lower socioeconomic background.^[90]

III.RESULTS

Social media marketing is the use of social media platforms and websites to promote a product or service and also to establish a connection with its customers. Social media marketing has increased due to the growing active user rates on social media sites. Though these numbers are not exponential. For example, as of 2018 Facebook had 2.2 billion users, Twitter had 330 million active users and Instagram had 800 million users.^[91] Then in 2018 Facebook had 2.89 billion users^[92] and Twitter had 206 million users.^[93] Similar to traditional advertising, all of social media marketing can be divided into three types: (1) paid media, (2) earned media, and (3) owned media.^[94] Paid social media is when a firm directly buys advertising on a social media platform. Earned social media is when the firms does something that impresses its consumers or other stakeholders and they spontaneously post their own content about it on social media. Owned social media is when the firm itself owns the social media channel and creates content for its followers.^[95]

One of the main uses is to interact with audiences to create awareness of the company or organization, with the main idea of creating a two-way communication system where the audience and customers can interact. (e.g., customers can provide feedback on the firm's products.)^[96] However, since social media allows consumers to spread opinions and share experiences in a peer-to-peer fashion, this has shifted some of the power from the organization to consumers, since these messages can be transparent and honest.^[97] Or at least appear so (more on this at influencers).

Social media can also be used to directly advertise; placing an advert on Facebook's Newsfeed, for example, can provide exposure of the brand to a large number of people. Social media platforms also enable targeting specific audiences with advertising. Users of social media are then able to like, share, and comment on the advert; this turns the passive advertising consumers into active advertising producers since they can pass the advert's message on to their friends.^[98] Companies using social media marketing have to keep up with the different social media platforms and stay on top of ongoing trends. Since the different platforms and trends attract different audiences, firms must be strategic about their use of social media to attract the right audience.^[5] Moreover, the tone of the content can affect the efficacy of social media marketing. Companies such as fast food franchise Wendy's have used humor (such as shitposting) to advertise their products by poking fun at competitors such as McDonald's and Burger King.^[99] This particular example spawned a lot of fanart of the Wendy's mascot which circulated widely online, (particularly on sites

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like DeviantArt)^[100] increasing the effect of the marketing campaign. Other companies such as Juul have used hashtags (such as #ejuice and #eliquid) to promote themselves and their products.^[101]

Social media personalities, often referred to as "influencers", who are internet celebrities who have been employed or sponsored by marketers to promote products online. Research shows that digital endorsements seem to be successfully attracting social media users,^[102] especially younger consumers who have grown up in the digital age.^[103] In 2013, the United Kingdom Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) began to advise celebrities and sports stars to make it clear if they had been paid to tweet about a product or service by using the hashtag #spon or #ad within tweets containing endorsements, and the US Federal Trade Commission has issued similar guidelines.^[104] The practice of harnessing social media personalities to market or promote a product or service to their following is commonly referred to as Influencer Marketing. In 2019 The Cambridge Dictionary defines an "influencer" as any person (personality, blogger, journalist, celebrity) who has the ability to affect the opinions, behaviors, or purchases of others through the use of social media.^[105]

Marketing efforts can also take advantage of the peer effects in social media. Consumers tend to treat content on social media differently from traditional advertising (such as print ads), but these messages may be part of an interactive marketing strategy involving modeling, reinforcement, and social interaction mechanisms. A 2012 study focused on this communication described how communication between peers through social media can affect purchase intentions: a direct impact through conformity, and an indirect impact by stressing product engagement. This study indicated that social media communication between peers about a product had a positive relationship with product engagement.^[106]

It is not only an issue in the workplace but an issue in post-secondary school admissions as well. There have been situations where students have been forced to give up their social media passwords to school administrators.^[138] There are inadequate laws to protect a student's social media privacy, and organizations such as the ACLU are pushing for more privacy protection, as it is an invasion. They urge students who are pressured to give up their account information to tell the administrators to contact a parent or lawyer before they take the matter any further. Although they are students, they still have the right to keep their password-protected information private.^[139]

According to a 2007 journal, before social media^[140] admissions officials in the United States used SAT and other standardized test scores, extra-curricular activities, letters of recommendation, and high school report cards to determine whether to accept or deny an applicant. In the 2010s, while colleges and universities still used these traditional methods to evaluate applicants, these institutions were increasingly accessing applicants' social media profiles to learn about their character and activities. According to Kaplan, Inc, a corporation that provides higher education preparation, in 2012 27% of admissions officers used Google to learn more about an applicant, with 26% checking Facebook.^[141] Students whose social media pages include offensive jokes or photos, racist or homophobic comments, photos depicting the applicant engaging in illegal drug use or drunkenness, and so on, may be screened out from admission processes.

IV.CONCLUSIONS

Deplatforming is a form of Internet censorship in which controversial speakers or speech are suspended, banned, or otherwise shut down by social media platforms and other service providers that normally provide a venue for free expression. These kinds of actions are similar to alternative dispute resolution. As early as 2015, platforms such as Reddit began to enforce selective bans based, for example, on terms of service that prohibit "hate speech". According to technology journalist Declan McCullagh, "Silicon Valley's efforts to pull the plug on dissenting opinions" have included, as of 2018, Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube "devising excuses to suspend ideologically disfavored accounts".

Most people see social media platforms as censoring objectionable political views

Guidelines for users who have died, by platform	
Platform	Guideline
Twitter	If a user has died, the company will work with an immediate family member to deactivate the account. Additionally, Twitter will not give the account to any person, regardless of the relationship.
Facebook	Facebook provides users the option of having their account permanently deleted when one dies. There is also an option for 'legacy contact' which means that the Facebook user can have a family member or friend

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	take over the account once the person has died. The 'legacy contact' option is under the security tab at the bottom of the page.
Instagram	There are two options for people who have died. Similar to Facebook, the user can have the account memorialized with proof of death. The other option is to have the account deleted.
LinkedIn ¹	A family member can request that the account be shut down. The family member must provide the URL to the account, proof of relationship, the account user's email address, date of death, a link to the obituary, and the name of the last company the deceased worked for.
Pinterest	To delete the account of someone who has died, one must email the company with the URL of the account. One must also provide a death certificate or provide a link to the obituary as well as proof of relationship to the deceased.
YouTube	YouTube provides three capabilities for a deceased user's account: they can close the account, they can transfer payments from the account to an immediate family member and legal representative of the user's estate, and they can provide the data in the account to a family member. All three capabilities require the requestor's government-issued ID or driver's license, the decedent's death certificate, and additional supporting documentation.

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