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Facebook as a dependent tool for current affairs

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to show how the youth is dependent on Facebook for news and information on current affairs. It also looks at identifying how Facebook moulds or influences their opinion about a particular issue. Facebook is a major platform of information today. The usage of smart phones and social media among the youth, being extremely high further reduces the need of traditional media as a source of information. The reliability parameter is most often ignored by the youth, or is rather something that they are not really concerned about. News on Facebook is convenient, easily accessible and is also preferred by them.

Introduction

“Social media are computer-mediated tools that allow people or companies to create, share, or exchange information, career interests, ideas, and pictures/videos in virtual communities and networks.” Social Media is something that involves the creation, sharing and exchange of information and ideas. It keeps an individual well connected, informed and also acts as a catalyst in turning the world into a Global village. Social media technologies take on many different forms including blogs, business networks, social networks, forums, social bookmarking, social gaming, video sharing; etc.

Social networking is an extremely integral part of social media. In fact social networks more or less form the base of social media. These networks focus on building online communities and help people in exploring the interests and the activities of others.

Facebook is the world’s largest social network. It was founded by Mark Zuckerberg, with his Harvard College roommates and fellow students on February 4th, 2004. Initially it was accessible only to the students of Harvard University, but two years down the line it spread out its access to the world. Once a profile is created, it enables the user to add friends, exchange messages, post status updates, photos, share videos etc, which serves as an excellent platform to stay connected. But it is not something confined to connectivity alone.

Facebook is continuously growing and there are major developments from time to time. It has evolved from a Harvard University social networking website to a Global internet phenomenon with billions of users. It comes up with the most unique ideas and services that continue to make it sell and never lets it fade in the competitive world.

The most recent feature added is the transportation service on Facebook Messenger, which allows a user to request for a ride from a car service without needing to download any other app or dealing with any other kind of tedious procedure. Facebook always comes up with services that people look forward to. Its multiple benefits and services apart from just social connectivity make people extremely dependent on it.

Facebook has become a nearly ubiquitous part of the digital life of a youth. Over the past decade, it has evolved from a social network for college students to a source of information, connection, entertainment and, sometimes, news for millions of people around the world. It has become much more than a way to connect about personal matters. Like how newspapers have a front page, Facebook has the news feed page which is clearly more interesting to the youth and appeals to them to a much greater extent than what the front page or of a newspaper does. Facebook is a major pathway of news today with its main objective of connecting people with the most important stories that are relevant and hold value.

What makes it even more convenient and popular is that it can be accessed on a smartphone, and it also has an application for smart phones which is actually the preferred choice as of today. Further, Facebook has made its own efforts to stand as a useful and fairly reliable source of information. It ensures that important information is

put up and it has also tied up with internet media companies like Buzzfeed that constantly update Facebook news feed pages with important news.

Not just that, Facebook recently launched the feature of instant articles for Android users on the 17th of December, 2015. This service allows various media organizations to publish their articles directly to the news feed. It involves more than 350 publications, including extremely eminent ones such as the New York Times, The Guardian, Al Jazeera English, etc which eliminates or reduces the chance to question the reliability of the news or the news source.

This same feature/service was launched for iOS users earlier this year. Extending its services to Android users makes it more accessible and valuable. It is often said that social media acts as a “filter bubble” in terms of providing news, but Facebook is a platform that provides diverse news with a variety of opinions.

They also publish News Feed FYI blog posts to explain major updates which are extremely informative. Although Facebook, might use this as just another effective marketing strategy or for people to visit the site more often and stay for a longer period of time in order to increase user engagement, it is still quite evidently working for them. One automatically spends more time on Facebook after the news service has been available because of obvious reasons like there is a lot more to explore than just fun and entertainment. This feature has taken Facebook to a whole new level.

It makes it a platform with multiple uses and benefits that is not only restricted to social connectivity and entertainment, but also on information and current affairs. The dependence of the youth on Facebook for news is incredible. They spend most of their time on their smart phones.

The first thing that used to be read in the morning was the newspaper, but today the first thing that most of the youth read/browses their Facebookpage. If not for Facebook, most of them wouldn't be aware of what is happening around them. They are not in touch with newspapers, news channels or any other form of traditionalmedia. This generation instead spends most of their time, and depend heavily on social media and social networking sites for their day to day news and to get updated on current issues and other important information as well.

Most of them get updated about news stories quite incidentally, because it's not that they browse Facebook with the intention of gaining such information, but just for the sole purpose of entertainment or for social reasons. But the news feed on Facebook automatically updates and news crams the page from time to time which is not something that can be erased or removed, this catches their eye and if not the entire article, at least makes them read the headline which gives them a fairly decent insight into the news story.

It is evident that people who access Facebook are well informed compared to the people who do not access Facebook, or do not have access to it. People also tend to get attracted to, or cultivate an interest towards a particular piece of news that they might otherwise have ignored simply because of the popularity of it on their news feed, or on the recommendation of their peers. In fact Facebook also influences opinions on issues. It just does not inform but also creates or influences opinions because of the multipleviewpoints which are shared in the form of comments.

Facebook also tends to expose the youth to more news than what they were seeking initially. Understanding the importance of Social Media and the need for support from the youth, Political leaders make efficient use of this platform to connect to and reach out to the youth. Taking the most recent example of the Cabinet elections of 2014, Narendra Modi, the current Prime Minister of India hired an excellent Public Relations team who did an incredible job on social media.

With the help of Facebook they reached out to the youth. This gained them incredible support and popularity. In fact it was one of the major reasons for his success. Facebook has the power to make a particular story become viral because of the massive amount of active users. The story automatically reaches a much larger population, making more and more people aware. There are incredible amount of stories that actually go viral every week. This makes one come across different opinions which in turn may affect one's own opinion and knowledge about the issue. The power of Facebook is incredible, and so is its power to influence the opinion of an individual.

Many of the research issues, concepts, and frameworks (such as understanding the place of information and communications technologies that we now associate with the social media websites noted above were discussed initially in relation to these older social media precursors.

What the news stories on Facebook look like:



The study aims to prove that there is a significant amount of dependence of the youth on Facebook for information on current affairs.

Research methodology

In the following study, the tool used for the quantitative research methodology is the questionnaire method. A questionnaire is a research instrument consisting of a series of questions and other prompts for the purpose of gathering information from respondents. Although they are often designed for statistical analysis of the responses, this is not always the case. Questionnaires have advantages over some other tools, one of it being that that they are cheap and they often generate standardized answers which makes it easy to compile data. However, such standardized answers may also frustrate users. Questionnaires are also sharply limited by the fact that respondents must be able to read the questions and respond to them. Thus, for some demographic groups conducting a survey by questionnaire may not be concrete. But the overarching aim of a quantitative research study is to classify features, count them, and construct statistical models in an attempt to explain what is observed.

In this research study, the main motive was to select and locate an average of hundred potential respondents from the age group of 18-25. These respondents form the crux of the study where they answer the questions of the designed survey where the responses will be analysed to give the study more weightage. This survey is designed in such a manner that it will give a clear insight into how they use Facebook as a source of information and for current affairs, it will cover why they depend on Facebook and how reliable do they think the information is. It will also cover how much of their information on current affairs depends or arises from their use of Facebook.

The questionnaire comprises of ten simple questions which are extremely direct. They are multiple choice questions where the respondents have been given a number of options to choose from, therefore making it easier and more specific in nature. The questionnaire is taken by the respondents online which further increases the accuracy of the result of the study. The questionnaire designed is closed ended in nature, i.e. the questions that are a part of the questionnaire will be closed ended. "A closed-ended question is a question format that limits respondents with a list of answer choices from which they must choose to answer the question. Commonly these types of questions are in the form of multiple choices, either with one answer or with check-all-that-apply, but also can be in scale format, where respondents should decide to rate the situation in along the scale continuum."

Closed ended questions are just that: direct questions that ask for specific pieces of information from a respondent. Closed ended questions have their greatest value when we need to obtain facts and specific pieces of information. By their nature they limit the respondent's field of choice and length of response. When paired with open invitations, closed questions can help to define a topic and the open question can elicit more information on that topic. For example "Do you have any children?" is a closed question requiring a brief yes-no answer. If it is followed up with "Tell me about them," we have given the respondent an open invitation to start anywhere and say anything they want to about their kids.

Review of literature

1. TITLE: "ARE YOU FACEBOOK DEPENDANT?"

Author/Source: Amber Ferris, University of Akron.

The research paper talks about how people are Facebook dependent and what exactly drives them to Facebook. It looks at different reasons such as games, posts and news as well. In order to identify the various dependency factors, he took into consideration a control group between the ages of 18 and 68, who are fairly active users. They found that people who are dependent on Facebook to get a deeper understanding of them have a low self-esteem compared to the rest. He also found that the fact that they get updated about information, news and local events/festivals drives them to Facebook even more than what it usually does, which increases the online activity.

The research goes on to studying the personality and other social traits of the individuals. He found that the people who use Facebook to establish new relationships are generally more extroverted in nature and that they are more open to sharing personal information. They depend on Facebook for connecting with new people and for a better social life and don't really make use of the positive aspects such as an effective information source, etc. It further talks about how people who are low on self-esteem generate negative posts and tend to portray a side that does not really define who they are. But it also looks at how people who are high on self-esteem generate extremely positive posts, have a positive outlook and tend to stay connected only with the people they know and do not really try and establish new relationships with the help of this medium.

It also says how the former set of people are drawn towards Facebook due to their aspirations of establishing relationships and meeting new people and how the latter bunch are dependent on Facebook just to stay connected with their friends, as a source of entertainment and as an important source of news and information on current affairs. They do not really tend to communicate or establish new relationships with the help of Facebook, and in most cases they are more likely to be their true selves simply because they interact and connect only with people they know and not with anyone and everyone at random which may require a false portrayal of one's own self.

2. TITLE: "FACEBOOK CONTINUES TO DOMINATE AMONG YOUTH"

Author: John M. Grohol, Psy.D.

The research paper talks about how most of the teens prefer using Facebook over any other social networking site. It also looks into how the whole idea and the concept of blogging has declined among the youth because of social networking sites and because of the fact that content and information can be generated as well as received through Facebook. Blogging has slashed to half just in a matter of a couple of years. Blogging to early bloggers seems like an extremely easy task and something that is convenient, but after the initial stages it seems like a tedious task to update and maintain a blog with content at regular intervals. In fact most bloggers burn out their content or simply forget about the existence of their blog.

Even when it comes to reading and following up, most of the youth prefers Facebook rather than blogs. Facebook is a much easier platform where you could update content at your own convenience. It is not

necessary to generate content every week or at regular intervals, but whenever you do, it is something that is appreciated and gets enough eyeballs as well. And if you do not update any kind of content even for a long period of time, it does not lead to the loss of readers or viewers or any such thing. It also talks about how Facebook is a more preferred option than blogs to read and get updated about information. Facebook includes different kinds of content with the opinions of different people. It is not confined to the writer's opinion alone, but the comments include different perspectives which could possibly give a larger and a clearer picture to the whole thing. This also enables them in reading only the kind of content they wish to.

A lot of the youth population prefers sharing their opinions and viewpoints on Facebook since there is no fear of being judged. This content reaches a large audience and there is often valuable feedback that is received. In fact, a lot of times the content on Facebook goes viral and reaches people all across the world. A lot of news stories break open on Facebook itself.

Therefore Facebook is considered as an effective means of communication, which these days is also used as a replacement for blogs. The author goes on to say that another reason why Facebook is preferred is because unlike blogs there is a lot more to do than just reading. A user can check out what their friends are up to, they can look up at the new pictures that they have posted, enjoy and make use of the multiple apps, or even play one of the many countless games, which is a major time killer when one is bored and has nothing to do

3. TITLE: "HOW SOCIAL MEDIA IS RESHAPING NEWS"

Authors: Monica Anderson, Andrea Caumont

The research paper addresses 4 different questions which cover various aspects of social media news, mainly the social networking sites like Facebook.

Firstly, the question raised was that how social media do sites stack up on news? When you take into consideration both, the total reach of a site as well as the proportion of users who get news on the same site, Facebook is clearly and quite evidently the news powerhouse among all the other social networking sites. Roughly two-thirds of the adults use Facebook regularly, out of which half of them get news and information there, which is roughly around 30% of the general population.

Secondly, how do social media users participate in news?

In this question they cover how the users participate in a particular news story.

They found that half the users share news stories, images and videos, and a fairly significant number discusses news issues or events. In this study they also found that in the year 2014, 16% of the Facebook users posted their own pictures of news stories to a social networking site, and 14% of the users had posted videos. This practice amongst the users has played a significant role in a number of recent breaking news stories which also includes the Ferguson riots and various other important ones.

Thirdly, the question looked into how do social media users discover news?

They found that even though Facebook is an extremely important source of website referrals for several news outlets, the users generated because of Facebook spend much lesser time and also consume much fewer pages than those who visit the website directly. The same is implied for the users that arrive by search. Their analysis of the data found that the viewers/readers who go to a news media website directly spend around three times as long as compared to those who land up there through a Facebook search, and they also view around five to six times as many pages than the former, every month. The higher intensity of engagement of the direct viewers or readers is quite evident whether a news media website's traffic is generated by search or social sharing. This whole thing has big implications and a really significant impact for news organizations that often experiment with various digital subscriptions with the whole idea or motive to build and create a loyal audience.

Lastly, the researchers looked at what exactly is the news experience like on Facebook? In this study of news consumption on Facebook, the researchers found that Facebook users often experience a diverse and a mix of different kinds of news stories on the website. And approximately half of the Facebook users come across six different genres or areas of news. Out of which the most common news they are quite evidently entertainment news.

Sites like Facebook play a significant role in keeping them informed but cannot be looked at as an ultimate destination for news. The availability of news, entertainment as well as social connectivity in a single platform drives them to it further and even if their mere reason is not news, they automatically get updated since news

forms an integral part of the social sites these days. The study clearly states that journalists are responsible for reshaping the news and for the kind of content they deliver or create for the audience/public on social networking sites.

It also states that traditional media is definitely more reliable, since journalists do not really have enough freedom and at the same time there is enough fact-checking rather than just crowd checking. This is something that can be looked at with an extremely positive approach since it engages them in something that is productive. It gives them a platform to express themselves and share a lot of thoughts that they wish to which they probably cannot or are not able to do outside the social network. It also helps them communicate in different styles with different people from across the world.

The news articles that are published or posted on these internet platforms, in most cases are opinionated more than being objective. The writers tend to give one side, or rather their own opinion than just the piece of news as it is. The news article either heavily or to an extent reflects the perspective of the writer. This is extremely common on Facebook, and the whole idea of a blog is to pen down your individual thoughts and opinions. So, for obvious reasons blogs are highly opinionated and not objective in nature.

4. TITLE: SOCIAL NETWORKS AND THEIR ROLE IN NEWS

Author: Unknown (University of Oxford)

In this study, the most popular social networks and the most popular one for news was tracked. The data that was gathered shows that Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, WhatsApp, and Google+ (in order) are the most integral networks for news that the youth is highly dependent upon. Younger users around the ages of 16 to 24 prefer sites like Instagram and Snapchat, and to an extent Tumblr also comes into the picture.

The study basically looks at how the youth, particularly between the age group of 18 to 24 depend on a lot of social networking sites in order to get updated about news and information on current affairs. These sites play a significant role in informing them and keeping them informed. The availability of news, entertainment as well as social connectivity in a single platform drives them to it further and even if their mere reason is not news, they automatically get updated since news forms an extremely integral and an important part of the social networking sites these days.

According to this report, roughly around two-thirds of the Facebook users in their sample/control group use Facebook for finding information/content, reading different things, discussing and stating their view points, or even for sharing news. There has also been an increase in the number of people using Facebook from the age group of 18-24. And at the same time they have also started using various other social networks more intensively. The biggest and the fastest growing social networks amongst the 18-24 age groups have quite evidently been Instagram and Snapchat. They are used by a large amount of people for various purposes. Although these are still confined to being effective platforms of communication and social connectivity, there has also been a significant amount of targeting for the purpose of seeking information, content and Snapchat is also considered or looked upon as an effective news source. Snapchat Discover, which is a new feature created for various brands and news organizations including CNN, BuzzFeed, MTV, etc was recently launched in the US. It got great popularity and fanfare just before this particular study was conducted.

This study further goes on to saying that although large numbers of people use Facebook, they are not really seen as news destinations in a lot of countries.

5. TITLE: "IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON NEWS"

Author/Source: PR professionals, ING.

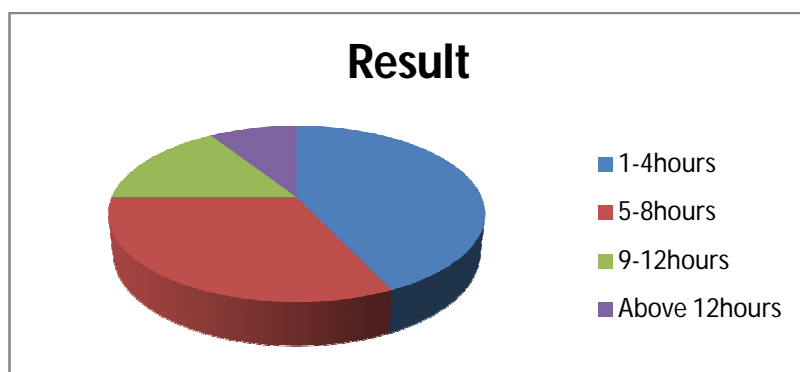
In this study, the researchers found that Social Media news involves more crowd-checking than fact-checking. The study shows how journalists extensively use social media posts even after being sceptical about their reliability. At the same time it also looks at how PR professionals believe that news these days is comparatively less reliable since journalists do less fact checking than what is required. The ING survey also revealed that a majority of journalists do not really adhere to the journalistic rules when it comes to social media. The fact that Social Media is often considered as a platform where an individual does not have to be extremely conscious, unlike how one has to be when it comes to news reporting or content generation for the traditional media often leads to journalists generating content or reporting news that may not be completely authentic and reliable.

They often post content or news stories without fact checking and without complete information. This leads to a news source that is not entirely authentic and the reliability is often questioned. On these lines, traditional media, like print, television and radio delivers information that is authentic and reliable as compared to social networking sites. However, PR professionals continue to question the authenticity and reliability since they are well aware about the entire process as well as about the attitude of journalists towards these social networking sites.

With the whole idea of ING's motive to be at the forefront of development in terms of social media, they concluded their first study into social media use by journalists and PR professionals. The survey showed that social media has revolutionised and reshaped the media landscape. Further, their study into the role of social media among PR professionals and journalists has been conducted all over again with the whole idea of gaining an idea of the impact of social media on the professional behaviour and on the content generation by PR professionals as well as journalists. It also looks at how Social media and these journalists have influenced news and information and also at the kind of news is delivered to the public.

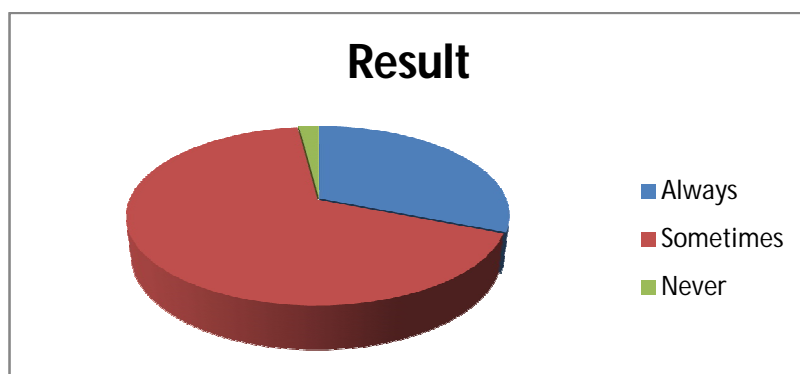
Research analysis

Q2. On an average how many hours per week do you spend on Facebook?



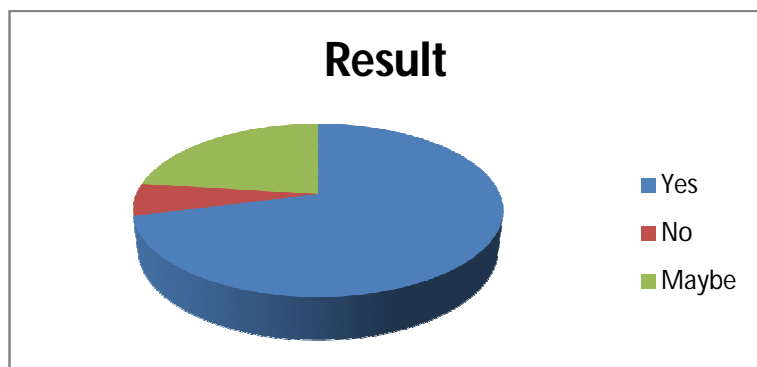
The question was answered by hundred respondents, out of which 43% of the respondents access Facebook for about 1-4 hours in a week, 32% of the respondents access it for 5-8 hours a week. 16% and 9% of the respondents access Facebook for 9-12 hours and 12 plus hours respectively. The graph, quite evidently depicts that the major chunk of the respondents fall in the category of 1-8 hours of accessing Facebook in a week.

Q3. Do you consider the news of Facebook to be reliable?



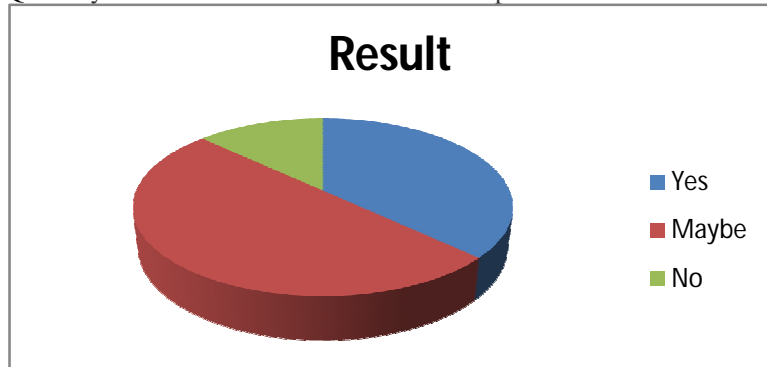
On questioning the reliability of Facebook, most of the respondents gave a balanced answer that it is reliable, but not always. Sixty seven percent of the respondents said that it is reliable "sometimes". Thirty one percent of the respondents said that news on Facebook is always reliable and a more or less negligible number of 2 people or rather 2 percent said that it is never reliable. The graph clearly depicts that the youth believe that the news on Facebook is more or less reliable, or rather in most cases is.

Q4. Does Facebook influence your knowledge on current affairs?



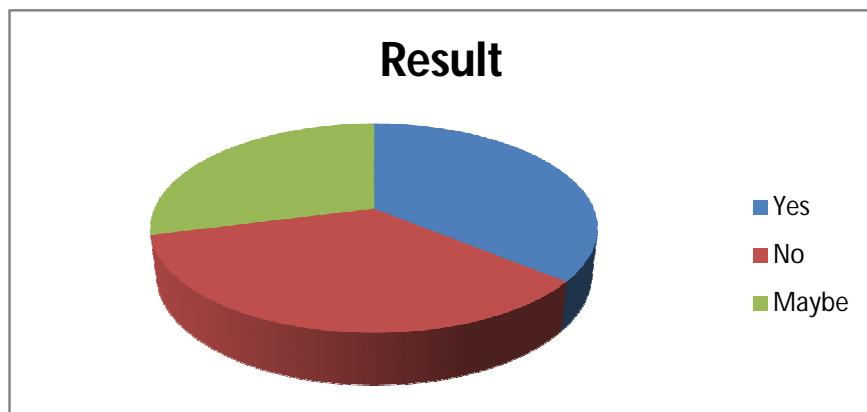
This question forms the core of the research study. It directly focuses on whether or not the knowledge of the youth on current affairs is influenced by Facebook. The major chunk of the respondents said that Facebook does influence their knowledge on current affairs. Seventy one percent of the respondents fall into that major chunk. Twenty three percent of the respondents said “maybe” which probably indicates that they aren’t too sure about its influence or they believe that it does to a small extent or in some cases. A very small percentage of the respondents (6%) said that Facebook does not influence their knowledge on current affairs

Q5. Do you think current affairs have a fair representation on Facebook?



Not all the people who access Facebook believe that current affairs have a fair representation on Facebook. Based on the survey, out of hundred respondents, thirty seven of them believe that it does, but fifty percent of the respondents said “maybe” and thirteen percent of the respondents believe that current affairs does not have a fair representation on Facebook. This could indicate that most of the youth is looking for more material or rather more news and current affairs on the social networking site.

Q6. Do you think news on Facebook covers all arenas?



This question generated a mixed response. Unlike the other questions, this particular question lacked a majority. According to thirty six percent of the respondents, news on Facebook covers all arenas, followed by thirty five percent of the respondents who believe that news on Facebook does not cover all arenas and clearly there is a

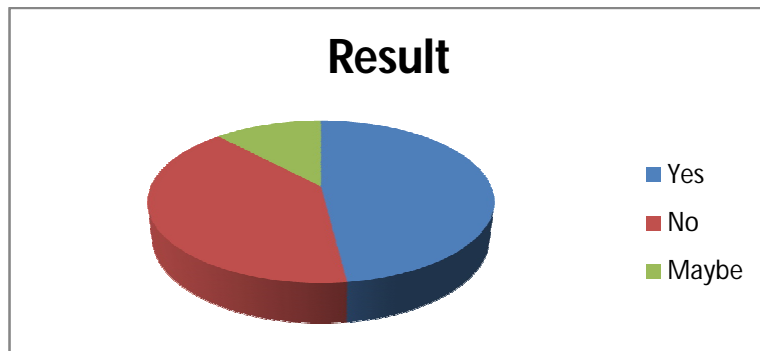
need for it to start focusing and including information and news of different kinds and from different arenas. Twenty nine percent of the respondents said “maybe” the news on Facebook covers all arenas.

Q7. On a scale of 1-10, how dependent are you on Facebook for information on current affairs?

9	2/23/2016 6:02 PM	View respondent's answers
9	2/22/2016 10:11 PM	View respondent's answers
9	2/22/2016 10:10 PM	View respondent's answers
7	2/22/2016 10:09 PM	View respondent's answers
10	2/22/2016 10:09 PM	View respondent's answers
10	2/22/2016 10:08 PM	View respondent's answers
7	2/22/2016 10:08 PM	View respondent's answers

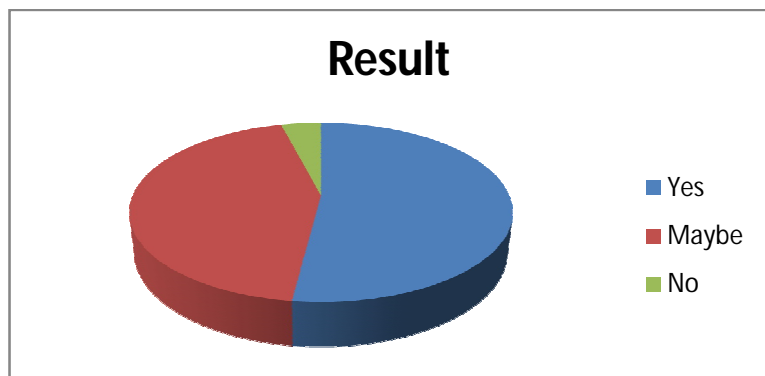
This question records the responses on the basis of how dependant they are on Facebook for information on current affairs. The answers were recorded on a scale of 1-10. According to the responses, seven percent of the respondent’s answers lied between the ranges of 1-4. Forty percent of the respondent’s answers lied between the ranges of 5-7 and more than fifty percent of the respondents, fifty three percent precisely, said that on a scale of 1-10, they depend on Facebook for information on current affairs from 8 to 10.

Q8. Do troll pages help educate you on current affairs in an unconventional manner?



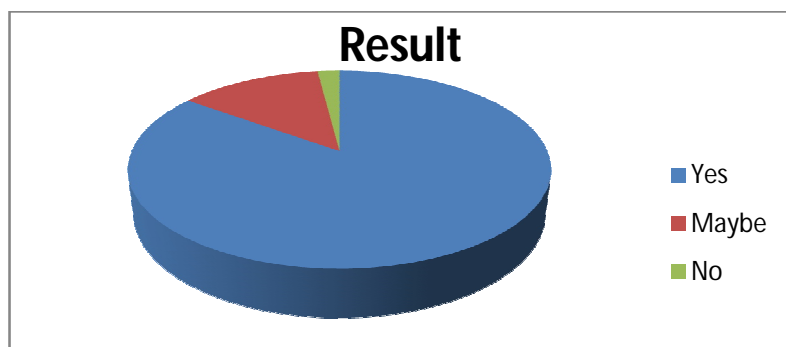
On questioning the role or the significance of troll pages in educating the youth and being informative, forty eight percent of the respondents said that troll pages educate them in an unconventional manner. Forty percent of the respondents said that it educates them “sometimes” since all trolls/troll pages cannot be informative or educate them. However, twelve percent of the respondents also said that troll pages do not educate them in any way.

9. Is the glimpse of news on Facebook intriguing enough to make you read further?



When the respondents were asked if the news on Facebook is intriguing enough to make them read further, fifty two percent of them believe that it is interesting or intriguing enough to make them want to read or know more. Forty four percent said the news is intriguing enough “sometimes”. A small number of 4 respondents (four percent) said that it is not intriguing enough to make them read further, therefore indicating that they are looking for something more.

10. Would you say Facebook is informative?



According to the graph, a majority of the respondents believe that Facebook is informative. They believe that Facebook provides them with some kind of information and also plays a significant role in educating them. They also believe that a lot of their news on current affairs comes from Facebook, or is influenced by Facebook. Eighty five percent of the people said that Facebook is informative. Thirteen percent said “maybe” and two percent of the respondents said that Facebook is not informative. So in conclusion, most of them believe and said that Facebook is informative.

Conclusion

Facebook is an extremely remarkable medium to gain knowledge and information. Although it is a social networking website, it is not merely restricted to entertainment, connectivity or communication alone. It has a lot more to it than what a regular social networking site is expected to have. Facebook has taken socialmedia, or rather social networking sites to the next level. It is incredible how the medium has multiple things to offer its users with and never stops with the evolution. With almost every Facebook update, there is a new feature introduced and there is always something to look forward to. Talking about Facebook as a medium for news, information and current affairs, it is clearly a medium which provided a significant amount of knowledge and information on various matters and issues of concern. It also covers news and information on different arenas and is not restricted to entertainment and lifestyle alone. In the Facebook news feed you can come across hard news, lifestyle, entertainment, film reviews, fashion, information about celebrities, exotic travel destinations, and a lot of historic information as well. It is not a medium that is confined to one kind of news genre alone. A lot of online portals and newspapers have tied up with Facebook. Their news articles appear on the Facebook news feed which increases the chances of coming across information and a lot of news on current affairs as well. Times of India, The Hindu and ScoopWhoop are examples of popular portals and newspapers that have tied up with Facebook.

On coming to the dependence of the youth on Facebook for information on current affairs, it is extremely significant and remarkable how the youth gets a lot of their information about their surroundings and current affairs just by accessing their Facebook news feed. It is also interesting to know that a lot of times even though they don't really notice or realise that fact that they come across and eventually land up reading a lot of news and information that appears on their news feed. This is more or less a part of their online activity on Facebook which may or may not be done consciously. A lot of times a glimpse of the news story on Facebook are intriguing enough to make the readers want to know more about the story and read further. Facebook is more or less considered as an online newspaper for the youth. It is actually an online newspaper that ever sleeps and always has a lot of stories and information to update its users about. The fact that the articles and the news stories are on a digital platform, attracts the youth even more. This is something that is convenient and something that they can also read at their own convenience. The other benefit is that they can simply scroll up or down and just read the information that they wish to. Another advantage is the fact that Facebook has a feature of saving links, stories, articles and any other piece of information which can be read anytime. All these saved links and articles are saved in a separate page, which appear together and can be viewed at any time even after days or years. So it is also easier to go back to a particular article or a story if one wishes to. What makes it an even better platform is that it is capable of giving rise to citizen journalism.

When the youth comes across multiple news stories and information they also often tend to comment, and voice out their opinion, and a lot of times consciously or unconsciously generate content of their own. This in the long may also encourage them to write regularly and also take a stand in a lot of cases. The extent to which news is now available and generated through Facebook is remarkable. The newsfeed is not only crammed with stories and events about friends but also about different news stories and information from different genres, including current affairs, politics, entertainment, music, fashion, historic information, film reviews and so on. It is a never ending list of how much information and news one comes across even while browsing Facebook for a couple of minutes.

It brings into light different pieces of news from across the world, and what makes it interesting and fascinating is that all of it is available on a single platform. In fact it is not a platform for news, but majorly for social networking and entertainment, but still covers a lot of news and in different arenas. This makes Facebook and extremely informative and effective platform besides just being a source for connectivity and entertainment. Facebook, being linked with multiple online portals and platforms like BuzzFeed, Scoop Whoop and other such platforms increases the content generation and information that one comes across. Once a user follows any of these pages/portals, they tend to get a lot more information, although even if a user does not follow any of the, there is a significant amount of information and news that will reflect on their news feed. The fact that multiple features and efforts are made by the Facebook team to deliver content and information makes it even more remarkable and something that is noteworthy. They aim at making Facebook a base and a platform for news plus entertainment, through multiple ways.

Talking about the new feature again, of publishing instant articles is another way of how news is easily accessible and available and also helps the users in controlling the kind of information they read or come across their news feed. Since most people get their news on mobile devices, the whole point or motive of this new feature was to make their news experience faster and richer on Facebook. People invariably share multiple articles on Facebook, particularly on the mobile app.

However, these stories prior to this feature, used to take about eight to ten seconds to load. This was by far the slowest single content type on Facebook. But the instant articles makes the reading experience as much as ten times faster than any other standard mobile web article, which is extremely impressive and has led to the further evolution of Facebook. These features tend to make it stronger as a platform with a lot more to it than just social connectivity. This feature is also something that is loved and appreciated by multiple Facebook users.

It is evident that people who access Facebook are well informed compared to the people who do not access Facebook, or do not have access to it. People also tend to get attracted to, or cultivate an interest towards a particular piece of news that they might otherwise have ignored simply because of the popularity of it on their news feed, or on the recommendation of their peers. In fact Facebook also influences opinions on issues. It just does not inform but also creates or influences opinions because of the multiple viewpoints which are shared in the form of comments. Facebook also tends to expose the youth to more news than what they were seeking initially.