

Impact of Social Network on Y-Generation In NCR

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ABSTRACT

In this work we study how youths aged 18 to 25 years use social networking websites and the effect of social media and digital marketing on them. We use empirical research and collect primary data through a questionnaire which was filled by graduate and postgraduate students in various institutions in NCR.

We analyze the collected data to answer questions like: what is the penetration of various social networks like Facebook, Google+, LinkedIn, YouTube etc. among the youths in NCR; how much time they spend online everyday on social networking websites; what are most frequent means of accessing social networks (laptop/desktop, Smartphone's, tablets). Behavioral questions like: How likely one is to accept friend requests from complete strangers, friends of friends etc.; what fraction of youths feel they are addicted to social networks; how frequently they change the password; what kind of information they are likely to share in their profile; how much effect friends on social networks have on ones decision to adopt new products; does this influence change if one has not interacted face-to-face with the social network friend. What fractions of users face problems like cyber-bulling; etc. What fraction of youths use social media for educational purposes and various uses that social network offers to them.

The outcome of our analysis can be used to design effective marketing strategies by companies for marketing their products; and political parties for election campaigns. It can also be used by governments to educate youths of various social issues.

INTRODUCTION

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Social Media and its effects on youth

Technology such as social media websites have become prominent parts of life for many young people today .First of all let us all understand what is social media? Social media refers to interaction among people in which they create, share, and/or exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks. The purpose of using social media can be many some of which are checking facebook/twitter, finding information relevant to research , sending and receiving e-mail, downloading music and other things, listening to music, shopping (E-commerce), chatting etc.

In many cases it is clearly seen that social media has become not only part of people's lives but the thing their life revolves around. We see people on smart phones every two minutes looking for the newest Tweet or status updates from friends. We find that being "Facebook official" brings validity to things in our lives and the list of examples goes on. It's important to realize that this great tool is just that, a tool, not a lifestyle.

In this day and age we are pressured ten different ways as far as our beliefs and opinions are concerned; are we standing up for what we believe in our lives and having our own thoughts or are we so influenced by this phenomenon that we mistake what we have seen for our own opinions? Social media sites can, not only help us become more socially able but, also make us inept as well. We sometimes share too much with too many people and we have to also be conscience of that. Overall, we have to be careful and caution when approaching these things.

Research shows that engaging in various forms of social media is a routine activity that children and adolescents are doing .This has provided an opportunity to the youth in enhancing communication, social connection, and even technical skills. Social media sites such as Facebook and MySpace offer multiple daily opportunities for connecting with friends, classmates, and people with shared interests. . According to a recent poll conducted by a pediatrics publication ,in US 22% of teenagers log on to their favorite social media site more than 10 times a day, and more than half of adolescents log on to a social media site more than once a day. Seventy-five percent of teenagers now own cell phones, and 25% use them for social media, 54% use them for texting, and 24% use them for instant messaging. Thus, a large part of

this generation's social and emotional development is occurring while on the Internet and on cell phones. Because of the limited capacity for self-regulation and peer pressure, children and adolescents are navigating and experimenting with social media. Recent research in the US indicates that there are frequent online expressions of offline behaviors, such as bullying, clique-forming, and sexual abuse that have introduced problems such as cyber bullying, privacy issues, and “sexting.” Other problems that occur include Internet addiction and concurrent sleep deprivation. Many parent now a day’s use technology well and feel comfortable with the programs and online venues that their children and adolescents are using. Nevertheless, some parents may find it difficult to relate to their digitally savvy youngsters online for several reasons. Such parents may lack a basic understanding of these new forms of socialization, which are integral to their children's lives. They frequently do not have the technical abilities or time needed to keep pace with their children in the ever-changing digital world. In addition, these parents often lack a basic understanding that kids' online lives are an extension of their offline lives. The end result is often a knowledge and technical skill gap between parents and youth.

Benefits of social media on youth

Social media sites allow youth to fulfill online many of the tasks that are important to them offline: staying connected with friends and family, making new friends, sharing pictures, and exchanging ideas. Engagement in social media also can offer youth deeper benefits that extend into their view of self, community, and the world. Their world on the social media is not only limited to sharing status or pictures, these youth are using it to enhance their learning too. Now day’s students are using social media to connect with one another on homework and group projects. For example, Face book and similar social media programs allow students to gather outside of class to collaborate and exchange ideas about assignments. Some institutions are successfully using blogs as teaching tools, which has the benefit of reinforcing skills in English, written expression, and creativity. Youth today are also using digital media to know more about their health. They are using various search engines which gives them information according to their age, health and mental status.

Risk of using social media

On the negative side, there are many risks involved with the social media and the internet in general. One of the most common in today's time is "Cyber bullying". Cyber bullying is defined as the use of electronic communication to bully a person, typically by sending messages of an intimidating or threatening nature (google.com). Cyber bullying is deliberately using digital media to communicate false, embarrassing, or hostile information about another person. It is the most common online risk for all teens and is a peer-to-peer risk.

Another very common risk of excessive usage of digital media is "Sexting". Sexting can be defined as "sending, receiving, or forwarding sexually explicit messages, photographs, or images via cell phone, computer, or other digital devices." Many of these images become distributed rapidly via cell phones or the Internet. This phenomenon does occur among the teen population; a recent survey revealed that 20% of teens have sent or posted nude or seminude photographs or videos of themselves. And if we go through the newspaper, news of cyber bullying and sexting can be easily found now. Researchers have proposed a new phenomenon called "Facebook depression," defined as depression that develops when preteens and teens spend a great deal of time on social media sites, such as Facebook, and then begin to exhibit classic symptoms of depression.

PRIVACY CONCERNS AND THE DIGITAL FOOTPRINT

The main risk to the youth using online media today are risks from each other, risks of improper use of technology, lack of privacy, sharing too much information, or posting false information about themselves or others. These types of behavior put their privacy at risk.

When these users visit various Web sites, they can leave behind evidence of which sites they have visited. This collective, ongoing record of one's Web activity is called the "digital footprint." One of the biggest threats to young people on social media sites is to their digital footprint and future reputations. Preadolescents and adolescents who lack an awareness of privacy issues often post inappropriate messages, pictures, and videos without understanding that "what goes online stays online." As a result, future jobs and college acceptance may be put into jeopardy by inexperienced and rash clicks of the mouse. Indiscriminate Internet activity also can make children and teenagers easier for marketers and fraudsters to target.

OBJECTIVE

We mainly aim to analyze the affect of social networking sites on youths. Medium of access, structure of user profile on the different sites, affect of social networking websites on social life of youths, importance on social networking in users opinion and, most important experience about cyber bullying on the personal life. We want to analyze the effect of social and digital marketing of on youths and interpret the data by using different analysis tools. We aim to provide useful conclusion to the advertisers and campaigners using social networks as marketing media.

DATA DESCRIPTION

In this research, primary data are used, all the data necessary for this study was taken through questionnaire which was fill by the youth (age between 18 to 25) form different college/ institute who were either pursuing under graduate or post graduate courses in different stream and specialization. The questionnaire asked various questions regarding user behavior in social networks. We collected data from a total of 83 individuals, of which 60 (72%) were males and 23 females (28%). All the individuals were between 10 and 25 years of age and 77 (93%) of them were single. Also 75 (90%) of the individuals were students and rest were working. 80 of the 83 individuals had an undergraduate degree (and were enrolled in post graduate program in their institute if they were studying).

ANALYSIS

Response from the surveyed participants and data analysis:

The most common social networks, of which participants were members of, are: Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, Google+, LinkedIn, Twitter. Networks like Hi5 and chat messengers like Hike and Wechat made occasional appearance. Surprisingly Twitter was not used among

surveyed participants as much as one may have thought. This shows huge penetration of Facebook in the Indian social network market.

In terms of time spent on these networks, among the survey participants, most of the people preferred to spend majority of their time budget on Facebook. This again shows the importance of Facebook among Indian youths. The next most used network is WhatsApp. For some of the users, time spent on Youtube is very high. This may be because they have subscribed to some specific channels where new videos are added very frequently.

The response to the question about what is the most preferred way to log-in in these social network websites, answers were mixed. 26 out of 83 people showed no preference of logging-in via laptops/PC or smart-phones. They used both kinds of devices to login. However, 28 out of 83 individuals only used smart-phones and 30 out of 83 used only laptops/PC for logging-in. Thus we virtually see no preference among users for a particular type of device used to access social network. Any advertisement made by potential campaigner need to run on both laptops/PCs and smart-phones.

When subjects were asked about the kind of information they put in their social network profile, the most common answers were: Real name, real cell number, pictures, status, interests and hobbies. Of course, as one would expect, some people were more comfortable sharing a lot of information about themselves and some were not. One thing to notice is that almost everyone used their real name in the profile. This shows that people are serious about using their real identity as it helps their friends find them on social networks. Second most common shared entity was pictures. Among the least shared things were the cell numbers.

Another behavioral question we asked from the subjects was the frequency at which they changed passwords for their social network accounts. As expected, the users segregated into two classes; 38 of the 83 people responded that they do not really bother to change their passwords. However 37 out of 83 responded that they change it once a month. The rest of them changed their passwords even more frequently (6 weekly and 1 fortnightly).

When participants asked about the kinds of friend request accepted from others. We saw a clear preference of people in avoiding complete strangers. While 65 out of 83 said they are comfortable only accepting requests from friends of friends, only 8 of the 83 accepted requests from complete strangers. Rest of the participants did not respond.

Opposite to the popular believe, an overall feeling among the subjects was that they are not addicted to social network. While 10 people did not respond, 54 of the 83 felt that they are not addicted to social networks and only 19 of 83 felt that they are. Of course one could argue that this is a self assessment of the participants and the reality may be different.

The participants of our survey lauded the usefulness of social networks. While 26 out of 83 strongly agreed that social networks are useful; 44 out of 83 agreed to the statement. Combined they form 84% of the sample. 12 of them said that they are neutral and only 1 participant disagreed with the statement (with 0 strongly disagreeing). The strong bias in finding social networks may be because lots of people were found using the social networks for leaning purposes. 75 out of 83 (90%) people said that they use the network for learning purposes. When specifically asked for the uses of social media, the responses of participants were varying. Some said that they use it to practice their English while others said it was useful to connect to long distance friends. Some used it to gather news while some used it to discuss course material. Some said that they use social networks as a blog and for expressing their opinion on internet. A point to note is that improving English was one of the recurrent answers in the response of the participants.

38 of the 46 participants (46%) said that social networks affect their social life a lot, and 24 of the 83 (29%) said that social networks somewhat affected their social life. Only 21 participant among the 83 surveyed (25%) said that they are not affected by social networks in their social life.

It was quite surprising when 71 of the 83 participants (86%) said that their parents are aware of their activities in the social media. 11 (13%) said that they are not aware and 1 did not respond. Such a trend might be because parents in National Capital Region are more internet literate. Also, most of the surveyed participants, even if they were not from NCR and only temporarily

staying there for studies, were from an urban background. This explains why their parents are more internet literate.

One of the common phenomenon found in social networks are the incidents of cyber bullying. Cyber Bullying refers to sending messages and images to someone via either internet or mobile phone to hurt or frighten them. While very common in the Western countries, only 18 (22%) of the 83 participants said that they experienced cyber bullying in the past. 64 (77%) of the participants did not experience any incidents of cyber bullying and 1 participant abstained from responding. This shows that use of social media in Indian context is much cleaner than the West.

Campaigners and product advertisers on social media are often interested in knowing about the effect of word-of-mouth in the decision making of the participants of the network. We found that word-of-mouth effect from the real friends in the network are much more than word-of-mouth effect of only virtual/online friends. While 56 (67%) of the 83 subjects said that they are influenced by their friends preferences in making decisions about which movie to watch, restaurants to visit or even in applying for specific jobs. This number reduced to 23 (28%) of 83 if the friend was only virtual/online friend to whom the participants have not met face-to-face. While 18 (22%) of the 83 participants are not even influenced by their real friends preferences in making their decisions, this number increases to 33 (40%) of 83 in the case of only virtual friends. 9 people did not respond in the first case and 27 abstained from responding in the second case.

A data which might be of interest to political parties who run election campaigns in the social media is that 57 (69%) of the participants agreed that social media affected their decision of which candidate to vote in the past (2014) Indian parliamentary elections. While 25 (30%) said that it did not affect their decision, 1 subject abstained from answering.

CONCLUSIONS

In this work, we studied the behavior and usage pattern of youths from National Capital Region of India in social media. We surveyed 83 participants in the age group of 18 to 25 years who are active in various social media. The participants are mostly students in various institutes in the

NCR studying for their undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. We collected primary data from questionnaire and analyzed it to provide useful insights. We found that Facebook is the most used social network among Indian youths. The participants showed no preference for laptop or desktop in accessing the social networking sites. The users are affected by their friends in the network in making decisions like watching a particular movie, dining in a particular restaurant, applying for a particular job etc. This 'neighbor' effect reduces if the 'friend' is only a virtual friend who the user has not met face-to-face before. A lot of survey participants agreed that social media affected their decision to vote in 2014 Indian Parliamentary elections. We found that lot of users use social media for educational purposes along with recreational use, and for gathering news. Also, the incidents of cyber-bullying are quite less among the participants.

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