

# Social Media Platforms: Challenges And Impact

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*“Don't use social media to impress people; use it to impact people.”*

*Dave Willis*

The continuous advancement of science and technology has brought numerous benefits to civilization, including the ability to communicate and transmit information globally. This has led to the development of devices that were once only a pipe dream for millions, and the ability to access the universe. Modern satellites have also enabled live broadcasting of events to the entire world. The rise of social media has significantly changed communication, allowing for personal and public communication through mobile phones and internet connections. This has made print and electronic media more affordable, efficient, and faster than ever.

Social media offers a global and free platform for news reporting, facilitated by modern devices like smartphones and laptops. Media serves as a mass communicator, a catalyst for social change, and can educate both people and those in power about the need for change. It organizes public opinion and pressures political and administrative executives to adopt and implement measures. Media can monitor the performance of measures and expose inaction, inefficiency, negligence, waste, and corruption. It reminds people of their duties and responsibilities, enlightens them about difficulties and obstructions, warns them of dangers to national interests, and makes democratic rule real and effective by acting as an intermediary between people and authorities. As the fourth organ of the estate, the media is responsible for building the nation, implementing constitutional objectives, and promoting social justice, equality, stability, unity, peace, progress, and happiness. Social scientists argue that media performs three basic functions: reporting events, interpretation of events, and socialization, which affect domestic and international politics.

The term "new media" describes interactive, two-way digital technologies that make processing, storing, transforming, retrieving, and searching simple. In the

modern world, when data is continuously being collected and accessible from several sources, these technologies have become indispensable. For instance, social media is a collection of web-based tools that facilitate the production and sharing of user-generated content. This has made media more accessible by enabling real-time, two-way dialogues between anchors and viewers. The line between citizen and journalist has become increasingly blurred, with individuals using smartphones or laptops to share information on social networks. New media is concerned with cultural objects and paradigms that use digital computer technology for distribution and exhibition, including the internet, web sites, and computer multimedia.

## I. EVOLUTION OF ELECTRONIC MEDIA

Electronic media revolutionized the communication system, offering more than traditional print media, such as voice, pictures, videos, and live coverage. It also introduced new forms of entertainment and education. The internet, also known as the "information superhighway," has changed the way we communicate today, offering speed, accuracy, and authenticity. Its vast scope allows users to access information about anything under or beyond the sun, with hypertext documents allowing easy cross-referencing between online articles and webpages. The internet's rapid growth has led to the need for regulation, but the rapid growth has made it difficult. While the internet may make expression less expensive and unmediated, it also allows users to select information that conforms to their pre-existing views and exclude opposing arguments through filtering technology. This allows users to avoid being confronted with opposing points of view, making the internet a significant part of the world's communication landscape.

## II. MAJOR PLATFORMS OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media has seen rise of several platforms over a period of time. New platforms are introduced with better features and several of them are often targeted at an audience with specific likes. It is not just communicating function that is being performed by social media. For individuals, it is also expression of the self be it through words, pictures or videos. Likewise, for corporates, it is the promotion of their products and discovering new market strategies. A leading statistical page "Statista"<sup>1</sup> claims that in 2019, there will be around 258.27 million social network users in India, up from close to 168 million in 2016. Also, the most popular social networks in India are Facebook and YouTube followed by messaging app, WhatsApp. Some of the major platforms of social media which have the maximum number of users throughout the world are as under:

### III. FACEBOOK

With more than 2 billion monthly active users, Facebook is a prominent social media and networking service provider that was started in 2004. Users have the ability to search, share images and videos, message one another, have discussions, and advertise the company's goods. Businesses may advertise on Facebook user pages as well. It was once restricted to Harvard students and personal computers, but it has subsequently spread around the world. Nearly every news organisation, political person, and media outlet has a Facebook page with a sizable following that shares news articles. A new news area has been added to Facebook's video streaming service. According to Pew Research Centre research, 67% of Americans rely on social media for at least some of their news.

### IV. WHATSAPP

WhatsApp, founded in 2009 by Jan Koum and Brian Acton, is a messaging service used by over 1 billion

people in 180 countries. It offers basic and advanced services like sharing photos, videos, and creating groups. Originally designed for smartphones, it is also accessible on desktops. WhatsApp recently introduced end-to-end encryption for messages and calls, ensuring no third party can access them. In 2017, it launched a separate business platform for scalability.

### V. TWITTER

Twitter, founded in 2006, is a multilingual news-oriented social networking site where users express themselves through "tweeting" opinions and messages. The platform has grown from 340 million daily tweets in 2012 to 319 million monthly active users in 2016. Celebrities and political figures use Twitter to share news and engage with others. A Pew Research Centre study found that news consumption on Facebook and Twitter varies across demographic groups. Facebook users are more likely to post and respond to content related to government and politics, while Twitter users are more likely to follow news organizations. Twitter usage has grown among users under 35 and those ages 35 and older.

### VI. YOUTUBE

YouTube, an American video-sharing website, was founded in 2005 by Steve Chen, Chad Hurley, and Jawed Karim and is parented by Google. It offers a wide variety of user-generated and corporate media videos, including video clips, TV shows, music videos, films, trailers, short films, documentaries, audio recordings, and live streams. As of July 2015, over 400 hours of video content were uploaded every minute, and by March 2017, over 1 billion hours of content were consumed on the platform. Since YouTube gained popularity, citizens have created their own news videos, while news organizations incorporate citizen content into their journalism. Popular news videos on YouTube often depict natural disasters or political upheavals, featuring intense visuals. The high usage of YouTube for viewing news videos can be seen

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<sup>1</sup>Statista is an online statistics, market research and business intelligence portal. It provides access to data from market and opinion research institutions as well as from business organizations and government institutions in English, French, German

and Spanish. As one of the world's most successful statistics databases, the platform consists over 1500000 statistics on over 80000 topics from more than 18000 sources.

in the number of views of the 20 most watched news videos following the 2011 earthquake in Japan.

## VII. INSTAGRAM

Instagram is a photo-sharing app owned by Facebook, allowing users to share pictures and videos publicly or privately. With 800 million monthly active users worldwide, it has a 32% penetration rate in the US. Despite a 424% year-to-year growth in engagement, less than 40% of newspapers are on Instagram.

## VIII. FEATURES OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media platforms enable interactive web communication by allowing users to participate, comment, and create content. They offer a variety of content formats, cross platforms, and engage users at different levels. They facilitate speed and breadth of information dissemination, offer real-time or asynchronous communication, and are compatible with various devices. They can extend engagement through real-time online events or offline interactions. Social media has become a more convenient and accessible form of communication due to its easy availability, accessibility, and user-friendly nature. With the internet and social media, the world has become interconnected, providing access to information, entertainment, and worldwide news. Social media allows users to network, find people with similar interests, and connect with others online. It serves as both the connective tissue and neural net of the web, enabling various activities that were once only possible through personal interactions.

## IX. EFFECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media has significantly impacted political discourse and public engagement, with politicians using platforms to reach citizens and people balancing filtering and multiple opinions, resulting in significant changes in society.

### 1. Social media exposes diversity

Social media exposes the pluralism in society, allowing previously unheard and often unconsidered groups to have their voices heard. A 2014 Pew Research Center study found that 64% of U.S. adults

use Facebook for news, with YouTube and Twitter being the second and third most popular platforms. Half of users share news stories, images, or videos, and 46% discuss news issues and events on social media sites. A small number also cover the news themselves by posting photos or videos. Users discover news through Facebook or search engines, spending less time and consuming fewer pages per month. Facebook is used for entertainment, community, sports, nation, politics, and government news, while only 51% get crime-related news. Social media does not always facilitate conversation around important issues, and users are less likely to share their opinions in face-to-face settings, especially if they feel their social audience disagrees with them.

### 2. Changing the pattern of consumption

Social media has significantly transformed the way people consume content, with 1 in 10 people using platforms as their primary news source. It has evolved to serve diverse populations, transforming from a one-way communication to a two-way conversation with continuous responses.

### 3. Giving voice to the unheard

Nick Pickles emphasizes Twitter's role as an open platform, allowing everyone to share their opinions and stories, eliminating the need to physically stand in public.

### 4. Makes politicians more accessible

The internet has made politicians more accessible, with many having their personal, party, and contact details available on their websites, enabling citizens to easily contact them with grievances.

## X. CHALLENGES BEFORE ELECTRONIC AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Media has evolved significantly since its origin in print form, with the rise of electronic media and social media. As the world became faster and wider, the need for rapid communication of current affairs and political ups and downs became apparent. Social media has become a major source of news and information, but it has also led to issues such as identity theft, faking personality, creating false accounts, and spreading false news or rumors without verifiable data.

The competition between corporate houses and news channels has created cutthroat competition, with news stories available not only on respective channels but

also through websites. This has led to the creation of sensationalism and the marketing of political parties under the name of telecasting news.

The high cost of establishing a media outlet, the huge profit potential, and the enormous power of the corporate sector in media business have led to a near monopoly in media. The emergence of multimedia multi-nationals has led to the prospect of a virtual monopoly of a few individuals over news and views. News channels are often amateurish, childish, and unprofessional, reflecting the reality around them. There is a need for checking mechanisms on freedom of speech and expression on social and electronic media. Printed materials often contain adult content that is inappropriate for all age groups, and children and women are exposed to vulgar and indecent content on television channels and websites.

In conclusion, the question of which form of regulation would be most appropriate for media houses and the extent of freedom of press is being debated.