

Digital Media: Opportunities and Challenges

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Abstract

The present study seeks to contribute to the literature on information and news properties on new media in India. Newspapers have now been remodeled to form online news, available in websites. When this revolution began, people were quite dubious about the idea considering that it was not really something that seemed possible. However, times have changed and it is just a matter of a decade that the whole world is reliant on the online business. The online media today stands to be the most popular and widely visited medium for news, views, ideas, technologies and other such resources. When the online news portals are concerned, these websites have facilitated our lives in many ways and has made our job of reading the newspaper much easier as well. There are many popular news channels all over the world that have now opened up their online news portals to help their clients in getting the news while they are on their way to office, work or almost anywhere. It is possible to get the latest news updates of your most preferred sections, such as politics, media, films, geographical areas, technical details etc at the click of a button.

Key Terms: - Online News, e-News, digital media, Internet, news portals

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Introduction

A newspaper plays an important role in disseminating the information and keeps its readers up to date. There are many advantages in switching the content into an electronic format; online versions The Internet today is considered to be a global system of connectivity that has serving people worldwide. The internet is also responsible for the change in the shape of the traditional media, and the online news portals have benefitted a lot from this change. E-newspaper is a self contained, reusable and refreshable version of a traditional newspaper that acquires and holds information electronically. In this, information is retrieved electronically from online databases processed electronically with word processors, desktop publishing packages and a variety of more technical hardware and transmitting it electronically to the users. The shift towards digital consumption is a clearly established trend in the west where many newspapers have shut shop. A similar trend is underway in India, a country with over 900 mn mobile subscribers. With low cost tablets and entry level smartphones beginning to penetrate even second and third tier cities, the trend is

accelerating. This must be particularly worrying to the English dailies and magazines as their readers are the ones most likely to take to the English dominated Internet. At the same time, language dailies do not have much to worry about as content in local languages are yet to go mainstream on the Indian Internet. Another survey, published recently says that nearly 40 % of the mobile internet users in India have already ditched newspapers to consume content on Smartphone². Newspapers, in their own ways, are gearing up to take on the online world. Recently, India's second largest business newspaper, Mint, adopted an online first policy. Stories of importance and urgency go online first and then make their appearance on print. Not too far behind, The Economic Times which already has a massive online presence has also been flexing its muscles, trying to integrate its editorial with its web team. Business standard has begun asking reporters to do "web duty." The Times of India has included web stories in the KRA of reporters and others have also been taking baby steps. However, print publications have huge costs to meet in terms of the real estate, production costs and redundancies in the newsroom.

Literature Review

The introduction of online editions of newspapers and availability of news via 24 hour television channels and Internet has affected the circulation of newspapers in their hard forms and posed an ongoing challenge to the business model. Online newspapers and magazines have brought the whole world in front of a reader's desktop and make him aware of all subject fields Udaya Shankar (2000). There has been an increase in the frequent use of online news among people Annika Bergstrom (2006). There are many advantages in switching the content into an electronic format; online versions offer fast access and more updates compared to the print versions (Li 2006). It is also possible to utilize different technologies such as audio, graphics, video and interactive elements that are not possible to implement in a print version or at least they aren't that common yet. Sander M Schoneville (2007) analyzed the determinants of online newspaper usage and found Habit had a larger effect on use behaviour than intention. For readers, interactive elements mean freedom to filter news according to their own preferences and the opportunity to give feedback on the articles, which creates a feeling of

empowerment (Spyridou & Veglis 2008). Panda and Swain (2011) attempt to make the user community aware of e-news and e-news services accessible by singular e-news channels all around the world. Alice Y.L. Lee (2012) focuses on the changes in online news media when moved from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0. English newspapers in India have a common pattern of contents, coverage, and design Lihitkar et al (2013). Gaur et al (2013) found that because of rapid change in technology and user needs, focus has now been shifted to digital/online news clippings.

Objectives of the study

1. To know the possible advantages of online news.
2. To examine the growing trend in online news readership.
3. To understand the opportunities and challenges in digital media for news.
4. To reveal various possible modes/devices of accessing online news.

Research Methodology

(a) Coverage of the Study: This research paper is confined to study of online news in India

(b) Source of Data: The study is based on secondary data collected through various books, journals, newspapers, internet web sites and research studies.

(c) Data Analysis: Analysis of data and information collected from published sources were made keeping the objectives of the study in mind.

Witnessing Growth

Many analysts will add a third problem to these issues, the dropping time spent on reading and the internet eating away at print revenues. According to Indian Readership

Survey, the time spent reading print fell from 32 minutes in 2000 to 28 minutes in 2012 even as the number of readers grew from 232Mn. to 351Mn. So, more Indians are reading, although for less time. According to ComScore report on online news readership in India there has been a significant growth in Indian daily readership of news and information content in the past year, with an increase of 34% to 9.4 million average daily visitors to the category, among the Indian news websites. The Times of India continues to be the leader in the category.

Table 1: Online News Readership in India

News/Information properties in India	Aug. 2012	Aug. 2013	% Change
Total visits (000)	259,686	364,592	40%
Average Daily Visitors (000)	7042	9,402	34%
Average minutes per visitor	31.6	41.6	31%
Total unique visitors (000)	40,044	45,902	15%

Source: ComScore, Media Matrix (2013)

Table 2: Newspaper Readership Behaviour

Online newspaper reading behaviour	Percent of users					
	India	France	Russia	Germany	Brazil	US
Ever visit a paper site	35.4%	43.5%	33%	43.2%	39.1%	66.9%
Visit a paper site daily	9.9	11.6	7.4	11.7	8.5	17.1
% of paper pages viewed per visitor	2.1	1.6	0.5	1.9	0.6	1.1

Source WAN IFRA/ComScore

Table 3: Time Spent on Media and Reach of Media (Weekdays)

Source	Year(→)	2000	2001	2002	2003-4	2005	2006	2007	2008	2012
Internet	No of user (in millions)	3	5	8	12	12	14	11	14	42
	Time spent in minute. All India 12+	65	65	66	58	61	61	69	68	79

*Source: Hansa Research & IRS (*12+ refers to age group)*

Table 4: Top 20 Information/News Properties in India

Rank	Property	Unique Visitors (000)	Rank	Property	Unique Visitors (000)
1	The Times of India	12,715	11	The Hindu Group	4,201
2	Yahoo!-ABC News Network	10,721	12	IBN Live	4,175
3	HT Media Ltd	8,219	13	The Indian Express Group	3,492
4	India Today Group	7,676	14	Bhaskar.com	2,537
5	India.com Sites	7,188	15	CNN Network	2,171
6	About	7,044	16	BBC	2,113
7	Jagran Sites	6,312	17	Sify News And Information	2,034
8	NDTV	6,258	18	HPMG News	1,965
9	OneIndia.com Sites	6,182	19	Navbharat Times	1,862
10	The Economic Times	4,415	20	FirstPost.com	1,832

Source: Comscore, Media matrix, (2013)

The Times of India continues to be the clear leader in the news category, maintaining its number 1 position since last year with 12.7 million unique visitors in August. India.com

Sites showed 25 percent growth breaking into the Top 10 for the first time with more than 7.1 million unique visitors. In addition to those two properties, 16 of the top 20

news properties are currently local news publishers. Data also suggests reader engagement for the news category has spiked within the past year, with users spending on average 31 percent more time on news sites at 41.6 minutes per visitor. DivyaBhaskar.co.in and Bhaskar.com demonstrated especially strong engagement at 100.3 minutes and 62.1 minutes, respectively. Other niche news sites with more modestly-sized audiences – including Jagbani.com, PunjabKesari.in, and Navbharat Times – Continuing a past trend, many of the top Indian News sites see a significant amount of traffic from abroad. FirstPost.com generated the highest share of its audience from abroad at 51.3 percent, followed by Manorma Sites at 45%. The Times of India, as the most prominent news brand, also successfully extends its audience into other markets with 37.8 percent of its audience coming from abroad. NDTV, India.com Sites, and The Indian Express Group also have more than 30 percent of their respective audiences coming from outside of India.

Socio-Technical Advantages determining Adoption and Usage of digital News ⁶

1. In e -newspapers, readers scroll the front page to get an overview of the contents of the news site which is not possible through the printed news.
2. There are user friendly easy options for turning the pages, linking to dynamic indexes, personal preferences can be set.
3. Multimedia and hyperlink facilities are available.
4. Style and presentation of e-newspapers are much better than the printed equivalents.
5. Links to available sections and references to other relevant supplementary information details
6. E newsgroups act like international bulletin boards.
7. A subscriber can post questions or answers
8. Specific groups can use their relevant news pertaining to their respective fields in a comprehensive and appropriate way
9. The different features and tools like online voting, polls, email, alerts and many more.
10. Personalized or customizes news feature.
11. 24x7x365 updates

12. Ability to discuss the news with peers
13. Videos are also available on the websites.
14. All categories of news at one place.
15. Time and money saving

The Rise of E- reading

Today's reading experience differs quite a lot from the times when there was only printed text. Readers in the twenty-first century use an increasing amount of electronic text – e-mails, web pages, text-messages, online catalogues and databases, e-newspapers and e-books. Now that the e reading devices have grown in number readers are facing again a new presentation of electronic text changing the venues of their reading experiences (Brown 2001). Some of devices also offers customizing abilities (filtering news, changing font type and size), quick downloads and updates, search functions and great storage abilities (Burk 2001). Buying content into an e-reading device is immediate; the product moves immediately to the device and the readers get to use the content straight away. The devices using e-ink are eye-friendly and enable a similar reading experience than reading a printed-

paper in terms of the text. Also the possibility to customize fonts and their sizes makes the reading process pleasant. In several e reading devices there already is a function that reads any text aloud in English (Lahtinen 2010). As the devices become more common it will surely possible to hear news read. There are several different e-reading devices available at the moment in the market. The most convenient devices for reading newspapers are the ones with big screens such as Apple's iPad, Skiff reader and LG's e-reader specially designed for reading newspapers. Some of the devices also offer customization facility. The devices that use Wi-Fi network can basically utilize all the services available on the Internet such as information services Google and Wikipedia, blogs, quick messages, games and other entertainment applications. Other more essential services in regard to e-reading devices are among others bookmarking, font sizing, full text search, note taking possibilities and library services.

Modes of Accessing E-News

- **PC:** Although PCs are suitable to read longer texts, the main

disadvantage is that a PC is not portable, such as a newspaper.

- **Netbook:** A netbook is a laptop of limited size with limited performance. The number of netbooks exploded in 2008. The Asus EEE with a 7 inch screen and a Linux operating system was one of the first commercial models. Netbook specifications are varied, but most have either Linux or Windows XP as their operating system. It seems only a matter of time before the netbooks also be equipped with a touchscreen. The device will then be much more suitable as a newspaper reader. Many of the current netbooks which use Linux or Windows XP are not optimized for use with touchscreens. The successor of Windows Vista, Windows 7, will have touchscreen functionality. Microsoft will provide a special edition of Windows 7 for netbooks.

- **Tablet PCs:** A tablet PC is a laptop without a keyboard. The orientation of the screen both horizontally and

vertically. For reading purposes, the use of a tablet PC in a vertical position is preferable. These products combine the advantages of a compact size with the advantage of a tablet PC and would be very suitable as mobile reader.

- **Mobile phones:** Newspapers can be read on mobile phones either as a webpage, made suitable for the limited size of the screen of a mobile phone, in a web browser, or with the use of a specially designed application. The possibilities to run an application on a mobile phone depend on the operating system of the phone. Most phones run on Symbian. Other operating systems are Windows Mobile, i Phone, Android, RIM and Palm OS. Some of these platforms are open to external developers, others are semi-open or closed. PressDisplay.com created an application to read newspapers on the i Phone. The New York Times has also a special application fit for the iPhone and iPod Touch.

- **E-readers:** An e-reader is a device with a screen that is optimized for reading text. Most e-readers use e paper technology for display. The market for these devices is heavily in development. Although Apple Inc. has succeeded to be successfully market a product with only one function – the iPod for playing music – the question is whether consumers will be prepared to buy a device with which only text can be read.

- **i Liad:** The iLiad is an electronic handheld device, or e-book device, which can be used for document reading and editing. The iLiad is capable of displaying document files in a number of formats, including PDF, Mobipocket, XHTML and plain text. It can also display JPEG, BMP and PNG images, but not in color. The most advanced e-reader range of iRex is the 1000 series. This series has a display of 10.2 inches (almost the size of an A4) and a resolution of 1024 x 1280 pixels. The device has a mini USB port for communication with the PC and the

possibility of SD cards in the stabbing. The 1000 series supports PDG, TXT and HTML and graphics formats JPEG, PNG, POISON, TIFF and BMP. The most advanced version supports Bluetooth and Wi-Fi. It is possible to (limited) to surf with this device.

- **Kindle:** Amazon Kindle is an e-book reader, an embedded system for reading electronic books (e-books), launched in the United States by online bookseller Amazon.com in November 2007. It uses an electronic paper display and downloads content over Amazon Whispernet using the Sprint EVDO network. The Kindle can be used without a computer, and Whispernet is accessible without any fee. The Kindle DX offers one of the new features of this product is the use of text-to-speech technology to read books out loud.

- **Sony Reader:** The Sony Reader is an e-book reader. It uses an electronic paper display developed by E Ink Corporation that has 166 dpi resolution and four levels of

grayscale. The reader uses an iTunes Store-like interface to purchase books from Sony Connect eBook store. It also can display Adobe PDFs, ePub format, personal documents, blogs, RSS newsfeeds, JPEGs, and Sony's proprietary BBeB ("BroadBand eBook") format.

- **Hanlin e Reader:** The Hanlin eReader v3 is an e-book reader, an electronic book (e-book) reading device by Tianjin Jinke Electronics Co. Ltd. The device, much like others on the market, features a 6" (15 cm), 4-level grayscale electrophoretic display (E Ink material) with a resolution of 600×800 pixels (167 ppi). The Hanlin eReader V3 is sold under various names, such as I Book V3 (Ukraine), Walkbook (Turkey), BEBOOK (Netherlands), and Papyre 6.1 (Spain). It is also supported by the OpenInkpot firmware.
- **Cybook opus:** Cybook Gen3 is a 6 inch e-Reader, specially designed for reading e-Books and e-News, or listening to MP3 music or audio-

books. It is produced by the French company Bookeen.

- **"QUE proReader":** The company Plastic Logic is working on an e-reader. It should be larger, thinner and more flexible compared to the products of Amazon and iRex.

Opportunities and Challenges

As e-news service has offered a handful of opportunities to the users. It has helped to ensure simultaneous access at infinite points by saving of time and money. A user can go through the electronic version of the newspaper (e newspaper) by sitting his/her desktop having internet connectivity at his/her convenience and comfort. Though people are gradually adopting e news services it will not been able to fulfill some other advantages that they have from printed newspaper. Continuity of the news content, scrolling of the pages, interruptions in reading, hyper linking and animations and other issues need not to be taken care of by the e publishers. Electronic media has to make a lot of effort on making e reading enjoyable and providing the readers latest information communication technologies.

Moreover e-media houses and e- publishers should try to find out the ways in all possible means to harness the revelations of information technology for promoting the quality by enriching the contents, coverage and design of e- newspapers that are the biggest challenges that has to resolved for futuristic growth.⁴

Driving future Growth: Road Ahead

The CII-PwC report named 'India Entertainment & Media Outlook 2013' estimates that the Indian M&E industry would exceed Rs 224,500 crore (US\$ 35.8 billion) by 2017, growing at a CAGR of 18 per cent from 2012. The growth would be majorly driven by increasing penetration of The report highlighted that immense use of the internet, high penetration of smart phones; digital advertising, wireless broadband, digital content consumption and supportive regulatory eco-system have had and will continue to have a significant impact on the E&M sector. In India, where Internet penetration is low, traditional media still gets the lion's share of the marketing

budget. However, this only underlines that there is much room for growth in digital. Brands that want to appeal to a younger demographic are starting to see that targeted digital advertisements are more cost effective and are easier to measure. The country is estimated to have over 220 mn internet users by 2015. The Indian government has also announced plans to increase the number of broadband connections to 175 mn by 2015 and 600 mn by 2020. Online news and information sites will continue to boom in India, according to experts. Ralph Simon, CEO of London based Mobilium Global believes that information sites will driven by emerging technologies such as social and mobile. "In this new landscape of mobile internet access, where the same tasks often occur on different devices, online media houses must go for specific design and apps for mobile and a multi-device strategy that can reach both the users of tablets and smartphones," However, if digital marketers and heads of the companies can leverage the full potential of the platform, the online news will have a bright future in India.



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