

Social Media Define the Era in Digital Media

Dr. Kahit Imene

Departement of Siences of Communication and Information University of Badji Mokhtar Annaba, Algeria,
23200

Abstract: A century from now historians may look back on the beginning of the era of ubiquitous computing and note how human behavior fundamentally changed, when access to information and communication became instantaneous for nearly every person across the world.

Keywords: Computing; Information; Communication; Social media

المُلخَص:

في هذا الوقت الراهن يرى المؤرخون أنه منذ بداية عصر الحوسبة تغيّر سلوك الإنسان بشكل جوهري، وذلك راجع إلى إمكانية وصول المعلومات والقيام بالاتصال الفوري لكل شخص تقريبا وفي جميع أنحاء العالم مما سهّل الحياة على البشر أكثر في معرفة الأخبار وما يحدث بالعالم والتفاعل مباشرة وبطريقة أنية مع هذه الأحداث.

الكلمات المفتاح:

الحوسبة، المعلومات، الاتصال، مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي.

I. Introduction

The historian might write; “In 2015, the human race realized the dream of ubiquitous communication via digital means, through computers that everybody carried with them all the time. Barriers were broken and awareness of the global condition was at an all-time high. Most people of the world knew exactly what was happening, almost as soon as it happened. The vehicles for these communications were called smartphones and the information was spread through what they called social media.”[1]

There are many effects that stem from Internet usage. According to Nielsen, Internet users continue to spend more time with social media sites than any other type of site. At the same time, the total time spent on social media in the U.S. across PC and mobile devices increased by 99 percent to 121 billion minutes in July 2012 compared to 66 billion minutes in July 2011.[2] For content contributors, the benefits of participating in social media have gone beyond simply social sharing to building reputation and bringing in career opportunities and monetary income, as discussed in Tang, Gu, and Whinston (2012).[3]

New technology is constantly shaping data collection techniques. Computers and the internet revolutionized how researchers are able to get questions to respondents enabling faster and cheaper survey data collection. Now smartphones and social media are changing how we think about surveys again. These technologies enable data to be captured as the respondent takes actions, an “in-the-moment” data collection process rather than the retrospective process that takes place when respondents answer questions. Since this is a very new area of data collection, this tip sheet focuses on what these technologies can offer rather.

Social media is the collective of online communications channels dedicated to community-based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration. Websites and applications dedicated to forums, micro blogging, social networking, social bookmarking, social curation, and wikis are among the different types of social media.

II. Social Media By The Numbers:

- Social networks and blogs reach 80% of US internet users.
- More time is spent on Facebook than any other site.
- Social network sites account for nearly 25% of the total time individuals spend on the internet.[2]

Facebook is a popular free social networking website that allows registered users to create profiles, upload photos and video, send messages and keep in touch with friends, family and colleagues. According to statistics from the Nielsen Group, Internet users within the United States spend more time on Facebook than any other website.[4]

Facebook Numbers:

- 49.9% of all people age 13 or over log into Facebook at least once per month.
- Only 2.4% of non-Facebook users logged into another social networking site, meaning that any research done using Facebook would miss very few social network users. [5]

Twitter is a free micro blogging service that allows registered members to broadcast short posts called tweets. Twitter members can broadcast tweets and follow other users' tweets by using multiple platforms and devices. Google plus is Google's social networking project, designed to replicate the way people interact offline more closely than is the case in other social networking services. The project's slogan is "Real-life sharing rethought for the web." Wikipedia is a free, open content online encyclopedia created through the collaborative effort of a community of users known as Wikipedians. Anyone registered on the site can create an article for publication; registration is not required to edit articles. Wikipedia was founded in January of 2001.

LinkedIn is a social networking site designed specifically for the business community. The goal of the site is to allow registered members to establish and document networks of people they know and trust professionally. Reddit is a social news website and forum where stories are socially curated and promoted by site members. The site is composed of hundreds of sub-communities, known as "subreddits." Each subreddit has a specific topic such as technology, politics or music. Reddit site members, also known as, "redditors," submit content which is then voted upon by other members. The goal is to send well-regarded stories to the top of the site's main thread page.

Pinterest is a social curation website for sharing and categorizing images found online. Pinterest requires brief descriptions but the main focus of the site is visual. Clicking on an image will take you to the original source, so, for example, if you click on a picture of a pair of shoes, you might be taken to a site where you can purchase them. An image of blueberry pancakes might take you to the recipe; a picture of a whimsical birdhouse might take you to the instructions.

Brian Solis created the following social media chart, known as the conversation prism, to categorize social sites and services into various types of social media. Social media is becoming an integral part of life online as social websites and applications proliferate. Most traditional online media include social components, such as comment fields for users. In business, social media is used to market products, promote brands, connect to current customers and foster new business.

Social media analytics is the practice of gathering data from blogs and social media websites and analyzing that data to make business decisions. The most common use of social media analytics is to mine customer sentiment to support marketing and customer service activities. Social media marketing (SMM) takes advantage of social networking to help a company increase brand exposure and broaden customer reach. The goal is usually to create content compelling enough that users will share it with their social networks.

One of the key components of SMM is social media optimization (SMO). Like search engine optimization (SEO), SMO is a strategy for drawing new and unique visitors to a website. SMO can be done two ways: by adding social media links to content such as RSS feeds and sharing buttons, or by promoting activity through social media via status updates, tweets, or blog posts.

Social customer relationship marketing can be a very powerful business tool. For example, establishing a Facebook page allows people who like your brand and the way you conduct business to Like your page, which creates a venue for communication, marketing and networking. Through social media sites, you can follow conversations about your brand for real-time market data and feedback. [6] From the customer's perspective, social media makes it easy to tell a company and everyone else about their experiences with that company whether those experiences are good or bad. The business can also respond very quickly to both positive and negative feedback, attend to customer problems and maintain, regain or rebuild customer confidence.

Enterprise social networking allows a company to connect individuals who share similar business interests or activities. Internally, social tools can help employees access information and resources they need to work together effectively and solve business problems. Externally, public social media platforms help an organization stay close to their customers and make it easier to conduct research that they can use to improve business processes and operations.

Social media is also often used for crowdsourcing. Customers can use social networking sites to offer ideas for future products or tweaks to current ones. In IT projects, crowdsourcing usually involves engaging and blending business and IT services from a mix of internal and external providers, sometimes with input from customers and/or the general public. [6]

On the other hand, the integration of social media in the business world can also pose challenges. Social media policies are designed to set expectations for appropriate behavior and ensure that an employee's posts will not expose the company to legal problems or public embarrassment. Such policies include directives for when an employee should identify himself as a representative of the company on a social networking website, as well as rules for what types of information can be shared.

III. Smartphones By The Numbers:

- 35% of American adults own a smartphone.
- 25% of all smartphone owners do most of their online browsing on their Smartphone.

- Ownership highest among those in the upper income and education brackets, as well as among 25-34 years olds.
- 30% of all adults use internet or email on a smartphone [7]

Smartphones are the dominant form of access. The comScore report revealed that 57% of Americans use dedicated social media apps to interact. About 47% of users in the U.K. and Canada use social media apps, in Algeria 32%. Tablets, on the other hand, only account for 11% in the U.S, 14% in the U.K and 17% in Canada, while desktop access maxes out at 30% in the U.K. and Canada and 24% in the U.S. [1]

IV. Changes In Digital Media Consumption:

In terms of total content consumed, social media and entertainment lead the way in all three markets. Established mobile categories such as maps, weather and photos all scored highly in the report, but the social companies such as Facebook and Twitter are driving engagement. Away from social media, comScore noted that Americans access maps and health, Canadians like to bank online and the British prefer to read digital newspapers.

It is the younger generation who are leading the charge towards increased mobile penetration and engagement. Nine out of 10 Millennials have a smartphone, often at the expense of the more traditional desktop. An average of 30% to 50% of leading digital media properties are now only visited through mobile, a sign that the landscape increasingly relies on mobile eyeballs.

V. The Desktop Is Alive And Well:

As regards smartphone platforms, Android continues to be the market leader. It has a minimum of 49% penetration across all demographics—with the exception of Canadian Millennials—while the iPhone is the only legitimate challenger in each country. [8]

While many media properties are exhibiting a mobile-first attitude to content, the total hours spent per visitor in each market for desktop access averages between 39 to 46 hours across all three countries in the study and all age ranges. According to the report, desktop visits increase by 30% when part of a multi-platform strategy, another indication that mobile is not the only option on the digital media table. [1]

VI. Conclusion

Finely as with smartphones, using social media to collect data can introduce issues of privacy and confidentiality. Researchers should always consult the privacy agreements that social networking sites maintain with their users as well as their human subjects protection board. Used safely and correctly, with appropriate attention to privacy issues, smartphones and social media can be sources of huge amounts of data at relatively low costs to researchers.

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