

Effectiveness of Social Network Sites (SNS)

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ABSTRACT

Two-thirds of the world's Internet population visit a social network or blogging site and the sector now accounts for almost 10% of all internet time. 'SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES' has overtaken personal Email to become the world's fourth most popular online sector after search, portals and PC software applications. Facebook has become the largest player on the global stage, dominant in many countries, yet localised offerings have won the day in many others. However, the growth in popularity of social networks – and the resultant broadening audience – is only half the story. The staggering increase in the amount of time people are spending on these sites is changing the way people spend their time online and has ramifications for how people behave, share and interact within their normal daily lives. Consequently, the global media and advertising industries are faced with new challenges around the opportunities and risks this new consumer medium creates. In this paper, researcher attempts to find the effectiveness of SNS and analyse the experience of users. This paper also throws light on usage pattern of consumers.

Keywords: Facebook, Social networking

Introduction

The first recognizable social network site launched in 1997. SixDegrees.com allowed users to create profiles, list their Friends and, beginning in 1998, surf the Friends lists.

Indian internet users are just hooked to social network sites. What started with the Popularity of Orkut in India is now become a cultural revolution. Most school going teens have an account on some social networking site and almost all IT-Savvy urban Yuppies are on it.

Something which has changed the way people use the internet is the advent of Social Networking sites. Social Networking has beaten e-mailing as the most used feature in the Internet. The rapid growth of social networking that has been observed over the last two to three years is indicative of its entry into mainstream culture and its integration into the daily lives of many people. The debates on Social Networking Sites centers on whether the benefits outweigh

the dangers. Proponents argue that Social Networking Sites promote increased communication with friends and family, familiarize more people with valuable computer skills, and allow contact with people from around the world. Opponents argue that these sites expose children to predators, increase vulnerability to computer viruses, lower worker productivity and promote narcissism and short attention spans.

It also acts as a vehicle for commercial transactions. Since the explosion of the web as a business medium, one of its primary uses has been for marketing. Soon, the web could become a critical distribution channel for the majority of successful enterprises.

What is a social networking site?

At the most basic level Social Networking Sites are sites which allow users to set up online profiles or personal homepages, and develop an online social network. The profile page Functions as the users own webpage and includes profile information ranging from their date of Birth, gender, religion, politics and hometown, to their favorite films, books quotes and what they like doing in their spare time. In addition to profile information, users can design the appearance of their page, and add content such as photos, video clips and music files.

Users are able to build a network of connections that they can display as a list of Friends. These friends may be offline actual friends or acquaintances, or people they only know or have met online, and with whom they have no other link. In both professional and personal life, human beings naturally form Groups based on affinities and expertise. We gravitate to others with whom we share interests. Most of us belong to real world networks that Formed organically. Not surprisingly, these networks rapidly migrated to the online world.

Online social networking has been around in various forms for nearly a decade, and has begun to achieve wide notice in the past few years. Online social networks take many forms, and are created for many Reasons. Despite their differences, online social networks do, however, commonly exhibit a number of the following concepts. Profiles – Each member in a network has an online profile that serves as the individual's identity in the network. In the professional context, Profiles often contain information regarding the individual's experience, Education, interests and affiliations, as well Information about the individual's skills and resources.

Objectives

The main objectives that we are trying to find out through this study are:

1. To understand user preferences with respect to features and user friendliness
2. To know the usage of social networking among people.
3. To understand consumer behavior towards the Social Networking Sites
4. To find the effectiveness of the social networking sites.

Scope & Limitations

The scope of this study is limited to finding out the consumer behavior towards the Social Networking Sites and understanding respondent's experiences with SNS. . The area of study is Yash Paradise with 400 flats in Airoli, Navi Mumbai area only.

The sample size is restricted to 500 respondents only.

Sample Design

Sample technique adopted

The sampling technique used for survey was a non-probabilistic convenience sampling. The respondents in the sample were including merely on account that they stay in Yash Paradise and know about Social Networking sites.

Population

Population included men, women, girls, and boys.

Tools and techniques adopted

Data was collected with the help of questionnaire. The questionnaire is of structured non disguised type. The questions are of mixed type.

Sample Size

Sample size was 500 for survey. Total 700 invitations were send for study. 200 questionnaires were rejected as they were neither using internet nor visit any social networking Sites.

Literature Review

Shih (2009) says that there are hundreds of millions of active users across sites like Face book, Hi5, Orkut and MySpace. 2.6 billion min are spent on Face book each day. These websites are enabling brands to engage the right people in the right conversation at right time.

Zarella (2010) says the roots of online social networking can be traced to the 1980s bulletin board systems (BBS). These systems allowed the users to create personal profiles, helps to share information by sending private messages, public messages and post events at low speed

connectivity. After emanation of social networking technology in the internet world, it grew higher and popular among the internet user.

Lacy and Hernandez (2009) says Twitter gives the ability to share nearly 140- characters thoughts in a split second, where user can easily share links to press releases and stories about their business, service or product. Making tweets interesting and diverse, there is a more possibility of increasing the followers, by consider with news sharing and stories about the industry that they serve.

Stroud (2007) says that the ability of social networking sites to generate these huge volumes of web traffic is proof of their huge popularity. Google, Yahoo and News International have bought themselves a presence in the social networking arena. The detailed rationale for these acquisitions differs but all have a common theme of wanting access to the enormous audiences.

Boyd, D. M., & Ellison, N. (2007) says that Face book is becoming one of the great internet communications of people time now days. Whereas many companies have tried to emulate Face book's success or challenge it in one geography or another, Face book has proven that the core asset on which all of its services are built - the social graph – is much more defensible and powerful than many others once anticipated.

Hargittai (2007) suggests that the choice of social networking site used may increase both digital and social inequality.⁶⁰ Digital inequality is a consideration as those who do not have access to the Internet at a friend's or family members' home are far less likely to use such sites.

Livingstone (2007) interviewed a small number of British teenagers (16 teenagers aged 13- 16) in an ethnographic study, looking at their use of and behavior within social networking sites.⁶⁴ She found that the technologies did not in fact sustain the needs and desires of these teenagers. They had a sophisticated gradation of friendship and this could not be supported by the social networking sites they used, as these generally do not permit distinctions among levels of friendship or intimacy. Each profile gains its meaning from the network to which it is connected and these links provide the basis for trust. Livingstone finds that teenagers present themselves in different ways, based on their ages.

Ellison et al (2007) show that social networking sites in the US are used to develop social relationships and may be a positive force from those who otherwise have weak ties with people on the site they used (in this case the site studied was Facebook).

Boyd and Heer (2006) also conducted ethnographic studies on the profile segment of the social networking sites, Friendster. They found that the presentation of one's self is determined and given structure by the identities of those with whom one is connected.

Results and Findings

Table-1: Demographic Characteristics of respondents

Demographic	Percent
Age	
<18	34%
19-25	22%
26-35	28%
36-45	12%
>45	4%
Gender	
Male	80%
Female	20%
Using SNS	
6 months	36%
1 year	22%
2 year	24%
3 year	18%
Logging period per user wise	
Everyday	42%
Alternate day	28%
Once a week	22%
Once a month	8%
Per visit hrs spend on SNS	
<1	58%
1-5	32%
5-10	4%
>10	6%

Addicted to SNS	
Addicted	68%
Not Addicted	32%
Purpose of SNS Visit	
Communicating	94%
Network	30%
Work	24%
Others	2%
Friendliness of SNS	
Agree	68%
Disagree	18%
Access mode of SNS	
Via mobile	48%
Others	52%
Connection per profile	
<10	18%
10-40	32%
50-99	26%
100-200	10%
>201	14%
Speak with strangers	
Never	80%
Rarely	22%
Fairly often	4%
Nearly Always	0%
Family / Friend Activity response	
Give attention	76%
Does not Give attention	24%
Attended Events after hearing on SNS	
Yes	16%

NO	84%
Check AD'S on SNS	
Yes	20%
No	80%
Not using SNS regularly :- reasons	
No Time	50%
Don't know how to use	2%
Use other communication medium	24%
Not interested	10%
Others	16%
Accept Strangers request as friend	
Yes	22%
No	78%

Testing of Hypothesis

H₀:- People are not addicted to social networking sites.

H₁:- People are addicted to social networking sites.

Table 3 shows that chi-square calculated value is 88.119, which is greater than its tabulated value of 09.49 at 5% level of significance. The null hypothesis is rejected. The result of Chi-square test indicates that people are addicted to social network sites.

Table-2: People addicted to SNS

	Addicted	Not Addicted	Total	Percentage
Age Group	68%	32%		
<18	115.6	54.4	170	34%
19-25	74.8	35.2	110	22%
26-35	95.2	44.8	140	28%
36-45	40.8	19.2	60	12%
>45	13.6	6.4	20	4%
Total	340	160	500	100%

Table-3: Chi-square result

Chi-square calculated value	88.119
Degree of freedom	4
Chi-square table value at 55%	9.49

H₀:-People do not use social networking sites to communicate, network and work, other etc

H₁-. People use social networking sites to communicate, network and work, etc

Table 5 shows that chi-square calculated value is 44.7, which is greater than its tabulated value of 16.92 at 5% level of significance. The null hypothesis is rejected. The result of chi-square test indicates that People use social networking sites to communicate, network, work and other etc.

Table-4: Usages of SNS

Per visit time spend	Communication	Network	Work	Others	Total	Percentage
	94%	30%	24%	2%		
<1	272.6	87	69.6	5.8	435	58%
1-5	150.4	48	38.4	3.2	240	32%
5-10	18.8	6	4.8	0.4	30	4%
>10	28.2	9	7.2	0.6	45	6%
Total	470	150	120	10	750	100%

Table-5: Chi-square result.

Chi-square calculated value	44.7
Degree of freedom	9
Chi-square table value at 5%	16.92

H₀:- Users do not reject strangers on Social Networking Sites.

H₁-. Users reject strangers on Social Networking Sites.

Table 7 shows that chi-square calculated value is 99.75, which is greater than its tabulated value of 16.92 at 5% level of significance. The null hypothesis is rejected. The result of chi-square test indicates that Users reject strangers on Social Networking Sites.

Tabl-6: Relationship with Strangers

Duration of SNS Sites used (in yrs.)	Never	Rarely	Fairly Often	Nearly Always	Total	Percentage
	80%	22%	4%	0%		
06 months	144	39.6	7.2	0	190.8	36%
1 year	88	24.2	4.4	0	116.6	22%
2 year	96	26.4	4.8	0	127.2	24%
3 year	72	19.8	3.6	0	95.4	18%
Total	400	110	20	0	530	100%

Table-7: Chi-square result.

Chi-square calculated value	99.75
Degree of freedom	3
Chi-square table value at 5%	16.92

Summary

Social Networks have undergone a dramatic growth in recent years. Such networks provide an extremely suitable space to instantly share information between individuals and their neighbours in the social graph. Social Networks provide a powerful reflection of the structure and dynamics of the society of the 21st century and the interaction of the Internet generation with both technology and other people.

Social networking Internet services are changing the way we communicate with others, entertain and actually live. Social Networking is one of the primary reasons that many people have become avid internet users.

Moreover, this behavior has formed a new Internet era where sharing through Social Networking Sites (SNS) is an everyday practice. Facebook is ranked as one of the most visited sites in the world.

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