

Web MediaHabit: An Ethnographic Study of Web Media Usage Patterns among Indian University Students

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Abstract:*The present research is to examining an ethnographic study of web media usage patterns among Indian university students. The study found that the web has become a core part of everyday life of most users and that they have clear habits of usage. Technology has powered an explosion of media usage among university students and youths in the last decade in Indian Universities. These students have spent about as much time consuming web media every day compared to their parents spent with web media. India is considered as one of the most developing countries in terms of web media usage in Asian continent. Since the emergent of the Internet, its use has shown tremendously among youths and students at all levels. Several studies have shown that in developed countries youths and the students for that matter use web media for information and entertainment, academic research and other purposes, however, little is known about the habit of web media use in developing countries. The elements that are forging the new web experience include pervasive access in homes, college and public locations. The habit of consumption and usage of traditional media has been steadily declining for last two decades; mainly adults group has maintained the highest usage and consumption of web based media. The increases in the use of web media habit in India are shown as significant and it is important to do research. In the Indian context research on the cognitive and behavioral effects of web media usage habit among youths and students has been new in nature and largely neglected. The present research is to concentrate an attention on landscape of web media in India and the impact of web media usage habit among students in India and its effects in particular. The 21st century is to witness of web media revolution, and youths and students have looking at the web media as an important source of information and entertainment medium. The present research is to explore ethnographically analyze the web media usage habit and level of access among Bangalore University students*

Key Words:*Media habit, media usage pattern, students, India and Bangalore University.*

I. Introduction

In the universe people communicate with each other with intention or even without intention. Individuals or person cannot live alone without knowing what is happening around him. It is assumed that age is the chief determinant of people's media habits but the new researcher believes that habits are the function of mindset rather than age. In the last decade the use of the web media usage habit in India and the world in general has seen dramatic increase. The web media use habit among youths and students for various purposes, from browsing for pleasure, to finding information. The uses of web media, availability and the numerous needs it can answer immediately, have turned it into a key player in the cultural and social life of the 21st century man. Web or digital technologies are causing vast changes in the way we use media. We are using more and more media ever before. We are creating more media ourselves; and we are doing this on our term: when, where and how we want. With the advancement in the field of communication technologies we experienced a fast moving of life. We are in a media saturated environment. For last several decades, researchers have studied why, how, and the extent to which the public considered classical media platforms to be most credible. Yet, such research must now look into the web media and new information communications platforms are quickly gaining more attention than ever.

The Web is maturing and has become a most and widely used and reached mass medium in many countries. However, the dazzling speeds of technological changes with the Web environment. Web media habit is common behaviors that can lead to some particular outcomes if allowed to dominate the lives of the people involved. Habit as "learned sequences of acts that have become automatic responses to specific cues, and are functional in obtaining certain goals or end states" (Verplanken and Arts, 1999). Researcher feel that a habit is like reading the newspaper or listening to the radio is fairly trivial and harmless; the more immersive electronic media are often thought of in the public eye as having a compelling power over their users. But in television has often been the victim of this negative image, with a great deal of research dedicated to discussing an alleged phenomenon of "television addiction" (Kubey and Csikazentmihalyi, 1999, Mellwraith, 1998 and Winn, 2002).

At present the majority of web media consumer's use for social interaction. Nearly 3 billion people use new media, which is 40% of the world population. Most of the web media users go online to keep in touch with friends, relatives, coworkers, and people they know in the physical world, information and entertainment. It is establish a new relationships with people they have never met in person but with whom they share a common interest. Now user's play games online with each other, chat and exchange information in chat rooms, discussion, forums, and meeting rooms, visit social and professional networking sites, and visit dating and other social networking sites to meet people for exchange information and acquire new culture. Web media is the technical apparatus for communicating with millions of people across the world. The web media is emerging as a so prominent in building a modern state, and their influence extends far beyond local, national boundaries, therefore, it is every much concern about the impact of new media on human attitudes and behavior (Watson, 1998).

Web media usage landscape, not only corporate media an organization have the tools and means to channel content, and to refine and transform it to generate new interpretations and new knowledge. This transformation is largely taking place through affinity space that relate to popular culture in online. New forms of communications have brought new implication to the concept of student community. At present it is becoming difficult to distinguish between strictly virtual communities and face-to-face communities. The expanding of new forms of communication environment revealed unique phenomenon. Web media has become a place where people meet and discuss diverse topics from international issues to daily chores. Large number of the individuals discusses gossips, and talk about their interests. An students community is a group of individuals with common interests who use new communication technologies to communicate and work together, who interact in a virtual environment. They have a purpose, are supported by technology, and are guided by norms and policies (Preece, 2000).

Web media habit have paved the way to revolutionize all that we thought was either hidden or inaccessible. The key debate about the web media of new media in the contemporary time centers on whether to classify this relatively as a new medium for the information and entertainment forms of communication of new generation. The way in which communication happens through web media, however, is not the same as with traditional mass media such as newspaper, radio, and television. As successive web media of new media have come into being, ordinary people have enjoying on expanded quantity, range and choice of entertainment and information content. The prevalence of web media habit is not just a result of its open and dynamic nature, its rapid spread has been facilitated by its increased users. The advent of WWW and the free distribution have made web media as a source of information and entertainment medium for student's younger generation. Web media usage habit has made it possible to contact others worldwide, nationally and locally, to send mails and be a part of chat rooms and conferences, blogging with discussion boards, opinion pools and forums, sending and receiving images and files and lots more with every teenager, adult and even senior owning either a personal computer or mobile phones with Internet connection. The web media revolution has made it easier for students to get in touch for their needy information and entertainment. The convergence of new media technology have made impossible has become possible. People virtually get information and entertainment through this web media in a short period.

Media habit

Media use is often said to be a 'habit', especially when people use media repeatedly or in similar situations every time. Many peoples have shown interest in habits. Skillful programming is supposed to synchronize daily habit and media habits of the recipients. This is expected to positively influence consistent media usage and to guarantee permanent television rating, steady sales numbers, and a continuous and predictable audience (Cooper, 1996). The term habit also attracted scientific interest over the years. The question if media selection processes are performed thoughtfully and with higher reflection or habitually and automatically touches upon one of the most discussed topics in audience effect studies.

Web media usage have become a highly popular online activity in recent years with more than 75% youths will be use web media and have profiles different social network sites. These social work sites have become such an obsession with some that they raise concerns about the potential harmful effects of their repeated use. Web media use has perhaps indeed become a media habit. Although the theoretical concepts and empirical measurement of habit differs among scholars, most agree on the main elements adding to the concept. Habits are characterized by repetition. According to Verplanken and Aarts (1999) "learned sequences of acts that have become automatic responses to specific cues and are functional in obtaining certain goals or end states". The trigger for this automatic behavior pattern is often believed to be cues from the external environment, a legacy from the behaviorist perspective. According to behaviorist, habits are conditioned responses to stimuli intended to resolve a need presented by the stimulus (Dewey, 1922 and Watson 1924). Behavior is driven by intention rather than by simple stimulus-response relationships. Intention shall regulate how likely the behavior is to occur so long as the behavior is under the actual, volitional control of the person.

The environment has an important role in this control over one's actions, which can determine how difficult it is to complete a behavior. If the environment is not favorable, the behavior is more likely to be completed than if the environment is not favorable. The importance of the environment in enacting behavior, especially habitual behavior, has been a part of the academic literature of many years.

Habits are defined here as the behavioral response of script-based processing (Arts, Verplanken 1999). Having learnt a behavior in previous performances, processing is simplified by reliance on scripts, and habit strength increases (Friedrichs 2002). A simplified processing strategy vice versa leads to the repetition of the learnt habit. In the absence of the opportunity and motivation to reflect on a decision making situation people tend to use habitual responses (Fazio 1990). Recent situation does not need to perfectly match its mental representation to cue a habit. A habit can be performed even if the present situation deviates to some extent from the circumstance during habit formation (Kashy, 2002). We can be differentiating between habit that refer to specific situation and call for specific behavior and habitual behavior at a more general level. Whereas some people habitually watch a specific soap opera on television every evening after work, others habitually switch on the television set in various situations because television is broad solution for many needs like entertainment as well as information search. Both specific and general habits are characterized by situational constancy.

Web media use habits engage their users actively. The initial online behavior is promoted by a reasoned process of analysis and execution that allows for the mastery of the behavior that meets the relevant goals most efficiently. A person uses active agency in choosing what web media sites to view, even if this agency is only employed in selecting which links from web portal to click rather than through a diligent process of focused searching or unfocused 'web surfing'. As the web media rises in prominence, similar fears have arisen about 'web addiction' (Young, 1998), with controversy in the literature as whether there is an addition or some other psychological process at work or college. Many scholars have argue that there are still learning about the long-term ramifications of web surfing on individuals, there often appears to be a native assumption that web media usage is as inherently bad or worse for people as television. A great deal of concern has been focused on the potential dangers of youths and students use of the web media.

II. The Study

The present research is to examine the web media usage patterns among university students in Bangalore. How students will access web media, what purposes they use web media and how web media will be useful their daily lives. The study will mainly focus how the web fits into the social and education context of students' lives. The study is used on ethnographic methodology of in-depth interviews with web media users and observations of their behavior in the natural settings where they go online, for what purpose they go for online. The study further observes the behavior in a central feature of media usage in ethnographically. Ethnography is suited to discovering new patterns of behavior and generating hypotheses which can then be tested in surveys or follow-up field studies. Ethnography is also useful tool for exploring in natural settings issues that have been identified in quantitative research such as laboratory studies.

Ethnographic research is an attempt to observe a holistic picture as possible of a particular society, group, institution, setting or situation. There are a variety of approaches used in this type of research. The key tools are all ethnographic studies are in-depth interviewing an on-going participant observation of a situation. The emphasis is on documenting and portraying the individual experiences of individuals by observing them or by interviewing in order to get the whole picture. Ethnography has been mainly associated with qualitative research but can also employ a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. Ethnographers may refer to these debates to make an argument for employing this form of research. They may present an ethnographic approach as a practical choice from one out of several alternatives.

Ethnography is a systematic approach to learning about the social and cultural life of communities, institutions, and other settings. Ethnography takes the position that human behavior and other ways in which construct and make meaning of their worlds and their lives are highly variable and locally specific. The basic tools of ethnography use the researcher's eyes and ears as the primary modes for data collection. Much like naturalists ethnographic researcher learn through systematic observation in the field by interviewing and carefully recording that they hear and observe people doing while also learning the meanings that people attribute to what they do and the things they make. Ultimately ethnographic research is to systematically collect the information or data for research by carefully observing and hearing. Using an ethnographic research technique, within an interpretive framework, the present study sought to understand the relations of student's web media habit in their daily lives.

Using interviews and observation, the research was carried out continuously over a period of six full days in Bangalore University post graduate study departments. The study structure of each day was determined by the accordance with the time table of each department. During the general observation in each department the actions, behaviors or incidents that were deemed to be linked gender were noted. Wherever possible, the researcher's interpretation of the issue was discussed with respondents at the time or soon after the observation.

At the end of the each day, the field notes were completed and interview notes was categorized. The collected data, in the form of field notes and interview notes were analyzed in interpretative methodical manner.

The study involved 250 students form 50 post graduate study departments, ranging in the age of 21 to the 23 and 156 male students and 94 female students. All these students were belonging to different postgraduate departments of Bangalore University. The interviews and observation took place in department laboratory and university computer lab in library. This was not a study of early adopters this is the study of newly adopters. The intent is to why and what purposes they use web media in their daily lives. The present study is qualitative in nature and no conclusion can be drawn about the percentage of students or adults in the general population who may follow the pattern that were identified. Lastly the study concludes the percentage of students among gender wise use web media in day-today lives and effects were drawn. In-depth interviews are an outstanding method for program planning and evaluation. They are best suited for obtaining comprehensive information from the respondents. A number of essential characteristics of in-depth interviews can be identified including, open-ended questions, semi-structured formats, goal-seeking for understanding and interpretation and interviews conducted in a relaxed conversational style.

To address the issues of web usage pattern among University students in India, the first question is raised in this study is for what purpose is this student's use web media? Based on this question the present research start to reveal web media usage pattern and how web media is the part of their lives and how they use web media and habit of web media. Thus the objective of this study is to explore the usage pattern, effects and web media habit among university students with in the country. The present ethnographic research is to examine that how the individual students use the web and habit of web media in conjunction with conventional media. The study is to examine the relationship between web media habit among University students and its effects on students is to understand the following research questions were proposed.

RQ1: How does a University student use web media?

RQ2: What amount of time spends by the University students on web?

RQ3: For what purposes the University students depending web?

RQ4: What is the usage pattern of web media by University students?

The web as a core part of everyday life

The use of web has become one of the most famous and important features among University students. It is acts as a platform for the people over the world to explore inform and to communicate with each other. University is the first place where students gain their independence. Web addiction is the loss of control over web. For many students is the first place where they gain their independence. Moving away from home means no curfew, no more asking for permission and no parents look over them. In such environment, web connection allows students to access web. The students web surfing is escaping from problems and pressure of everyday life, emotional relaxing, to evaluating social events, to provide inner relief by reinforcing values and to get informed about events and products makes web is ore attractable than other mass mediums.

In the last few decades the use of web in India and the world in general has seen a dramatic increase. The web is used for various purposes, from surfing for pleasure, to finding information. Its use varies from user to user but all geared towards one aim, to fulfill a personal use and gratification. The availability of the web, its ease of use and numerous needs it can answer immediately, have turned it into a key player in the cultural and social life of the 21st century man. An understanding of web usage assumes considerable importance as society encounters problematic form of online behavior. These include both instances of excessive use, in the form of what scholar's term web and underutilization by disadvantaged groups also generally termed the Digital Divide. The web is a global linking of computers that allows information transfer.

Web intertwines with our daily work and personal lives. The proliferation of web based application; e-mail, social networking sites and the on-demand viewing of television shows and videos have literally changed the way we perform our jobs, interact with others and spend our leisure time. These changes have made high speed service a ubiquitous commodity akin to electricity and have given birth to web business. The web is a useful tool for hundreds of millions of people literally from around the world. It is a part of everyday life we couldn't live without. This is especially true for university students who have grown up with the web being readily available for information, entertainment, academic assignments and for many reasons.

In discussing the role of the web in everyday life, all but a few of the study participants described it as core to their everyday lives, not an occasional of infrequently used medium. They used expressions such as I use it for everything or I couldn't get along without it. Most of the respondents they said using it in multiple locations such as home college and public locations and in multiple sessions throughout the day, some of which were long and some of which were short. Some web usage can be characterized as a session of several minutes to an hour or more, and some is better characterized as dropping in for less than a minute. Further, the study participants described a broad range of activities on the web including information gathering, communication,

and growing use for entertainment. Some of this usage is important, directed activities such as gathering information about a several issue. Ultimately it was the latter activities that cemented the web as a core component of everyday life of the University students.

Lifestyles and web use

Life styles of students in the study group had a strong impact on how and when they use the web. Students appear to be using the web for social communication with increasing frequency. With the advent of social networking sites and chat technologies like instant messaging, many University students build and form social relationship in online. Nearly all students in our observation reposted accessing the web several times in a day. Overall students indicated they spend more than twice the time online, using web for communicative purposes that for non-communicative purposes. In the observation of the study, instant messaging has proven to be very popular with students. Most of the students spent an hour or more to messaging. Instant messaging was more commonly used than e-mail, phone and even face-to-face communication for social relationships on campus and to communicate with other contacts in a close geographic proximity.

College students are frequent users of social networking sites compared to the general population. In the present study observation we found that the large majority of students used one or more social networking sites. Facebook, they noted was used most heavily. The use and access of web shows that the University students use web for not only personal communication and also learn more and more in their lifestyle. Surfing the web allows the students to lean information about almost any topic they care to research, and to communicate with or learn about future romantic partners.

Internet allows individuals to learn information about almost any topic they care to research, and to communicate with or learn about future romantic partners, an understanding of web media usage assumes considerable importance as society encounters problematic forms of online behavior. Web use is a staple of college student's educational experience. They use the web to communicate with their professor and classmates, to do research, and to access library materials. For most University students the web is a functional tool, one that has greatly changed the way they interact with others and with information as they go about their studies. The University experience is not only about learning in the classroom, it is also about encountering new social situations and gaining new social skills. University students use web nearly as much as for social communication as they do for their education. But just as they sue the web to supplement the formal parts of their education, they go online to enhance their social lives.

III. Web Media Usage Pattern of University Students

The web media is an electronic mass medium that has attributes of many of th mass media that have come before it. Like radio, it can convey audio, and like television, it can convey video. It has similar attributes to newspapers and other print media, allowing for pictures and text to be used together to convey information. The primary difference that sets the web apart of is its ability to provide an interactive experience that other types of mass media cannot easily replicate. Users have the capability to consume and create content easily, which has created a media environment that is unlike any that has some before it. Almost past two decades of Indian students and adults are in online in the sense use web and now over 80 percent University and college students go online. While most web media access continues to occur either at home or college or University of these individuals, most of them use web from more than one place and almost majority of them go online in either University of public locations.

A core characteristic of many mass media is that they are used in regular routines and become a habit. There has been a good deal of research about University students' habits in using mass media such as newspaper and electronic media. During the observation and interview of the students it is clearly shows that they were describing habits they had formed in using the web. Some of this habitual use of the web media may have surprisingly been classified as searches in earlier research. The study found that information was a core part of Web media usage along with e-mail, information entertainment etc., for the study respondents information took may forms. It included news that they gathered regularly and breaking stories-many believed that web news sites would be updated quicker that television or radio news. It also included everyday information needs such entertainment very useful information. In this study the researcher observed that many respondents said that they used web for their information and entertainment.

To answer research question, how does a University student use web media? University students are unique population, occupying a middle ground between childhood and adulthood, between work and leisure, University students have been at the forefront of social change. They were among to use web media for communication, recreation and file sharing, and the first to have regular web media access. Web media use first become widespread on University campus, in several instance web media usage is direct outcome of University-based research. While the vast majority of University students are simply web media users, as a group they can

be considered pioneers. The study is observed that University students' web media habit can yield insight into future online trends.

The study is observed the students have different reason and duration consumption patterns for various media and also web media, it also seems logical that these two niches are related. For instance, if someone is accessing a web simply to check or connect to friends, it seems reasonable to expect this news use session to last shorter than someone who is reading the newspaper because of several stories which he or she has sought out. As a result the study found that University students use web media with different reason and different duration for information and it is a habit. The goal of this study is to understand the web media habit among University students and its impact on them in their daily lives and determine the impact of that usage on their academic and social routines.

The study found that Bangalore University students are heavy users of web media as a part of daily routine, in part because they have grown up with computers. Majority of the students use computer and Internet to integrate into their daily communication habits and has become a technology as ordinary as the telephone or television. The study is observed nearly 88 percent of Bangalore University students had begun to use computers on daily for their academic purpose. Nearly 85 percent of Bangalore University students use web media for different purposes. Most of them have said they have e-mail id and accounts in different social networking sites. Further the study is observed most of the student use web with in the University to communicate and for conversation of friends and others, even some of them said they were using web media even in home and public locations also. The study observed only few were having their own laptop and computers in their home with Internet connection. Even some of them have expressed they go online just to browse for fun also. The study observed and interviewed the University students regarding use and download of music and other videos majority of them agreed and said they were always download videos and music for their entertainment purposes.

Most of the University students feel that they say web has enhancing their education, web usage is a staple of University student's educational experience. Majority of students express they use web media for communicate classmates, to do research, to search educational information and access library materials. For most University students the web is functional tool, one that has greatly changed the way they interact with others and with information as they go about their studies. Nearly 80 percent students agree and opined that web media use has had a positive impact on their college academic experience. Most of the students use web media for their information rather than library for information searching. Since then the Bangalore University have made the web media widely available to students and it has been implemented in University and educational practices. In lastly the study is come to conclude that the web media is a very powerful tool for students in University.

IV. Conclusion

The purpose of the current study is to provide a description of the web media usage habits among University students. The current study includes limitation of sample size and it is ethnographically observed the web media usage pattern among University students. The study in totally found that there are several key points in the usage of web that University students web media usage might indicate about what future of their life. Scholars have believe that web is a specialized tool that is used for searching information, educational purpose, for entertainment and many other things in students' lives. There are many important components of web usage that they are far from the whole story. Web usage in the study students have very much interested in using web for their daily habits. The study found that the students' usage of web in the entertainment function was described as relatively new and growing. Further the web has become a core part of everyday life and specific routines or habits have developed around web usage, just as with earlier mass media such as newspapers and television. The web was also characterized as convenient, customizable to personal interests, and giving students control over content. Some of the students expressed that it gives us what we want, when we want it. Many college students have learned to live in an environment where they expect to be in touch with other throughout the day, to never be far from web access, not matter that work or social situation they encounter. They could carry those expectations with them after graduation. The observation in the present study is the majority of University students use web for academic purposes while sizeable number of respondents said they use web media for chat with friends and even some times family members and relatives also. Again, this study observed that a significant respondent claimed they don't find it difficult accessing the web media at their University and other designated places. This finding in a plus to the growth of web media usage patterns in India as more and more by University students.

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