Adoption of social media by online newspapers of Kashmir

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The sites of online newspapers in Kashmir were surveyed individually and the social media tools available on their websites were studied. It was found that vernacular online newspapers of Kashmir are more in need of evolving and existing media structures and practices. Incorporating social media in the newspapers will help to facilitate conversations across a vast geographical expanse.

Introduction

The arrival of internet has brought promising avenues for the information sector. Newspaper publishing is one of the sectors that has seen a notable transformation after the development of the internet. Media companies including newspapers have taken the advantage of internet technology which has converged all forms of mediated communication including audio, video, data, text, still photo and graphic art to reach audiences[1]. Online newspapers have helped in the development of more open and creative platform for sharing information more quickly across globe. They have helped to bring the people together in a more dynamic and interactive space. There are approximately 4,900 online newspapers available throughout the world[2]. Paperboy (2012) alone lists 6,170 online newspapers which clearly reflects a growing trend in the online newspaper domain (as of September 08, 2012)[3]. Internet Public Library (IPL) indexes a total of 3,774 online newspapers (as of September 19, 2012)[4]. The online newspapers are experimenting with new and emerging technologies that have the attributes to eradicate the *"philosophy of ownership"* and pave a new way to the *"philosophy of access",* and social media is one such platform on which newspapers are presently trying to work with. Most social media technologies have reached the sites of online newspapers. The potential implications of online technologies and the World Wide Web (WWW) for mass media in general and online newspapers in particular has brought about a new medium embracing many different forms of human communication in digital format[5]. With the development of social media technologies, many newspaper readers are turning to alternate media which has changed the forms, practices and audiences of online newspapers. With the ever growing interactive features associated with social media, user's thirst for up to date information is ever growing and the new innovative technologies-social media are predating the online newspapers. Many news organizations have recognized the potential of social media as a journalistic tool and have used social media marketing to attract online audiences[6]. With the rise of the blogosphere, and more recently of social networking, most press companies have become aware and have taken advantage of the potential and attractiveness of these and other social media tools to develop and shape independent spaces for collective participation[7].

Evolution of newspaper began in the 15th century from Corantos- papers printed in Northern Germany. Thereafter newspapers were published from various parts of the world. In India, the first newspaper came from Bengal with the publication of Hickey's Bengal Gazette by James Augustus Hickey on 29 January 1780. The culture of newspaper reading did not exist in J&K as the majority could neither read nor write during the major portion of the 18th century and well up to the middle of the 19th century. The print journalism in J&K state marked its appearance with

the publication of an Urdu periodical named *"Budiablas"* by an autocratic ruler Maharaja Ranbir Singh. The origin and evolution of press in J&K provides one of the most insightful windows into the social, religious, political and economic progress of the state. After the debut of the newspapers in Kashmir, their growth as important information sources continued. The technological reconfiguration in the Web era has changed the looks of information sources in general and newspapers in particular. First online newspapers, then newspapers with social media inclusion, newspapers have travelled a long way. All over the globe, online newspapers are testing new waters of the ever growing and dynamic social media technologies. Online newspapers in Kashmir are also introducing social media technologies. Despite the newspaper industry's rapidly growing use of social media, thus far, very few studies have discussed the impact of social media in the context of the online news industry. Only a small number of studies have been conducted on use of social media by online newspapers[6]. The current study is an attempt to evaluate the occurrence of social media tools in newspapers of Kashmir.

Review of literature

There are evidently different ways for online newspapers (and other websites) to use social media technologies. National dailies show spontaneous growth in adopting new technologies including use of discussion forums, links to related information, video, audio, electronic mail, search engines, consumer services, sign-up for personal delivery, and instantaneous updates. Many online newspapers apply new technologies and platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Digg etc. as supplementary media channels[8]. Many news organizations and community newspapers are rapidly adopting a variety of new approaches like social media (RSS, Twitter, Facebook, and text alerts) available to them in order to reach new audiences, to drive traffic to their sites and to extract information about their consumers[9]. These tools help newspapers in reflecting and serving the interests of their readers[10].

Newspapers in Kuwait are perceived as the first sector to adopt the social media applications on their websites[11]. Findings of Andersen, Rasmussen and Rasmussen (2009) in a survey on the adoption of social media technologies and services by traditional Danish news media reveal that RSS feeds and newsletters are the most common features used by

them and some sites also offer other forms of personal delivery such as podcasts allowing users to share visual/audio content. Most sites allow users to participate by commenting and blogging and other interactive features such as votes, competitions and tips[12]. The adoption of social media tools by thirteen main Danish online newspapers over a period of 2008-2009 clearly reveal that new changes are on the way in the online newspapers and they are related to recent developments including Facebook, Google ads, mash-ups and mobile apps[13]. Teljas evaluated five Swedish newspaper's web 2.0 utility. The study concluded that all five newspapers offer buttons for sharing articles via Facebook. Content sharing was also offered for social media services such as Twitter, social bookmarking service and del.icio.us[14]. Belam (2007) reviewed eight British newspaper web sites *(Daily Express, Daily Mirror, Daily Mail, Guardian, Independent, The Sun, The Telegraph* and *The Times)* in depth to identify where and how they are using the social media and found that most of the sites have adopted such technologies though there are still some areas where sites are very much Print 1.0 rather than Web 2.0[15]. In a study by Brick Factory (2006), a Washington, DC-based digital agency, top 100 most circulated newspapers in the United States embrace a variety of social media tools, including RSS feeds, online videos, podcasts, blogs, and others in an effort to maintain current audiences, as well as to reach out to new groups of people via the Internet. By including such interactive features on their websites, and by making content available via RSS, many of America's newspapers have made a powerful effort to reach Web-focused audiences with media that are relevant to today's virtual society[16]. Besides, Brick Factory (2006 a) reviewed the websites of the top 50 most circulated magazines in the United States and evaluated them based on the presence or absence of various Web 2.0 features. The findings reveal that magazines are not making full use of Web 2.0. The most common online feature offered by magazines are RSS feeds (48%), message boards/forums (46%) and videos (34%). Just 14% of websites use podcasts and bookmarking, 8% allow comments on articles and 6% use tags[17]. Erdelez and Rioux (2000) while examining the design and functional features of sharing tools on a sample of 11 US newspaper websites found many websites include buttons or links (sharing tools) that allow users to conveniently share news stories and other information

with friends, family and colleagues[18]. Nigam (2008) analyzed the adoption of internet by women's fashion and beauty magazines in UK and analyzed that 81.8% websites have blogs, 54.5% websites allow users to save stories to profile and have video and 45.5% websites have RSS feeds[19]. Mariano (2010) analyzed the extent Metro Manila newspapers have undergone a transformation from pulp to digital. Metro Manila newspapers fail to exploit the power of web technology as they remain text-heavy, are low on interactivity, and play a back-up role to the print version though Social networking and bookmarking (social media) were prevalent in three newspaper sites only [20]. Presence of Web 2.0 tools in the online newspapers is studied by a number of researchers[21,22,23]. Social media sites provide a platform for news organizations to reach out to their audiences and Hong (2012) suggests that newspapers' adoption of social media is positively associated with an increase in their online readership, and this association increases in the size of the newspapers' social media networks[6]. Existing newspapers are facing the online challenge of content dissemination and survival in social media, as their paper editions are threatened by a decreasing number of readers and announcers[24]. Singer et al (2011) have also studied the Web 2.0 interactivity in online newspapers and comment on the current online newspapers in the interactive world as participatory journalism[25]. Many news organizations have recognized the potential of social media as a journalistic tool and have used social media marketing to attract online audiences[6]. While some online newspapers have embellished their online presence with a variety of interactive features, most online newspapers still appear to take on the role of cautious traditionalists, adopting a mostly conservative stance toward the new medium[26]. Sánchez-González & Alonso (2012) have also studied Web 2.0 technologies in the websites of newspapers and visualize them as a current trend in the user participation[7]. Many news organizations have recognized the potential of social media as a journalistic tool and have used social media marketing to attract online audiences[6]. As there is no study on the use of social media in the online newspapers of Kashmir, the present study has been undertaken.

Objective of the study
- To examine the degree of social media technologies adoption by online newspapers of Kashmir.

Methodology

A list of 58 daily newspapers of Kashmir obtained from CNS Directory[27] (Appendix I) were surveyed. Out of 58 newspapers only 21 (36.20%) were found online. Among the 21 online newspapers, 10 (47.61%) were in English language; 10 (47.61%) in Urdu and 1(4.76%) newspaper was in Kashmiri.

The ten English online dailies include *Greater Kashmir, Kashmir Dispatch, Kashmir Horizon, Kashmir Images, Kashmir Monitor, Kashmir Observer, Kashmir Times, Rising Kashmir, The Mirror of Kashmir* and *Trade and Jobs* and eleven vernacular dailies include *Aftab, Etalaat, Gadyal, Kashmir Uzma, Kashur Akhbar, Khidmat, Roshni, Srinagar Times, Mashriq-e-Kashmir, Uqab* and *Wadi ki Awaz*. Each newspaper was manually checked on its respective website to find out the adoption of the selected social media tools on their sites. Various statistical tests were carried out using Minitab statistical software package.

The study is confined to the adoption of five social media tools, Facebook, Twitter, Reddit, Digg and LinkedIn, by the online newspapers of Kashmir.

Results
Social media adoption

Figure 1 gives the extent of adoption of social media tools by the newspapers of Kashmir and most of them have launched social media tools on their sites (12; 57.14%). 42.85% provide tweeting option on their sites. One of the most popular networking sites, Facebook is also found among newspapers of Kashmir with 38.09% of the newspapers providing the option to share news through Facebook. Digg and Reddit account for 23.8% and LinkedIn accounts for only 19.04%.

Social media in English vs Vernacular newspapers

Comparing the English newspapers with the vernacular ones, it is evident that Twitter is used by 7 English newspapers while as only 2 vernacular newspapers adhere to Twitter. Facebook finds its adoption in 6 English newspapers and 2 vernacular ones. Reditt has been adopted only in 5 English newspapers. Digg and LinkedIn share a ratio of 4:1 and 3:1 on English: Vernacular platform (Fig 2).

Social media and English Newspapers

Out of 10 English dailies, 9 (90%) have adopted social media in their respective websites. *Greater Kashmir, Rising Kashmir and Kashmir Monitor*
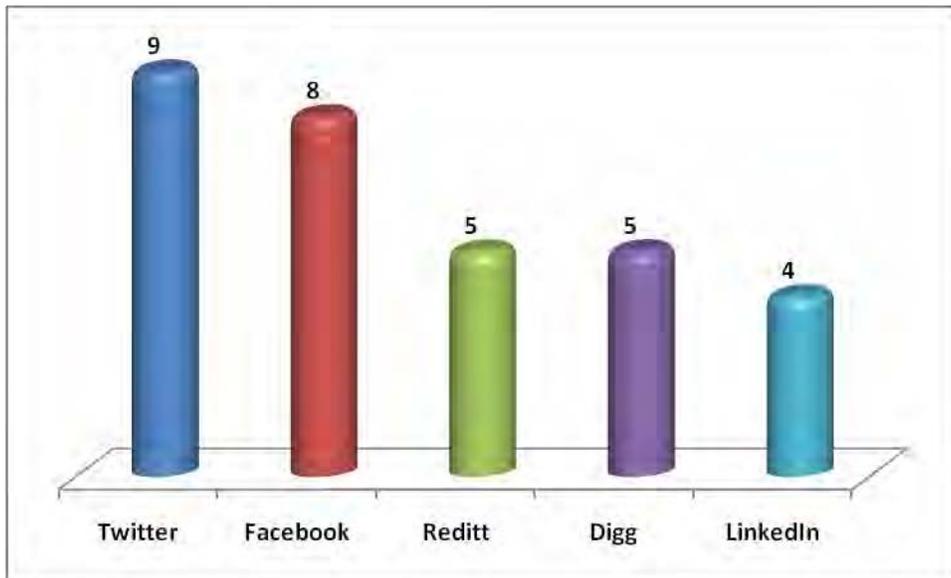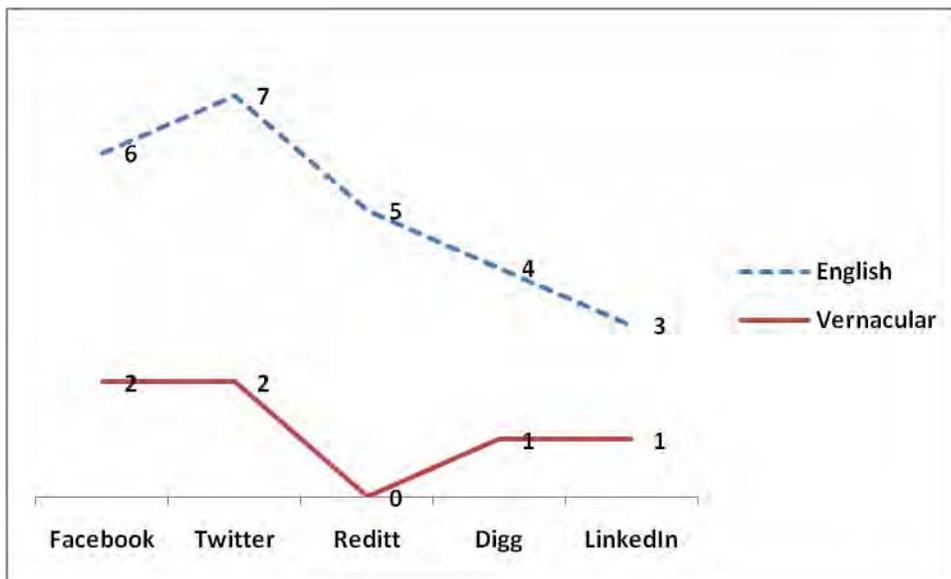
Fig. 1—Social media tools adoption

Fig 2—Social media tools status in English vs Vernacular newspapers

provide their readers an option to share news or article content through all selected sharing tools. *Kashmir Times* shares button of all the selected tools except LinkedIn. *Kashmir Observer* provides links on Facebook and Reddit. *Kashmir Dispatch, Kashmir Horizon and Trade and Jobs* offer tweeting option only. *Kashmir Images* has Facebook button for sharing/bookmarking article content. *The Mirror of Kashmir* shows no adoption of any of the selected social media tools.

Social media and vernacular newspapers

Among the vernacular newspapers including Urdu and Kashmiri, only 3 (2.27%) Urdu newspapers have adopted social media while one Kashmiri newspaper *(Kashur Akhbar)* is yet to introduce social media tools. Among the Urdu newspapers, only *Etalaat, Aftab and Gadyal* offer sharing option of one or more social media tools. *Etalaat* provides links to Facebook, Digg, and Twitter. *Aftab* makes available their readers an option to share news or any content

via Facebook while *Gadyal* provides only tweeting option. On the other hand *Kashmir Uzma, Kashur Akhbar, Khidmat, Roshni, Srinagar Times, Mashriq-e-Kashmir, Uqab and Wadi ki Awaz* do not share button to any of the selected social media tools.

Conclusion

Though only 21(36.2%) newspapers of Kashmir are available online, most of them have adopted social media technologies to some extent with *Greater Kashmir, Rising Kashmir* and *Kashmir Monitor* showing full visibility on the selected social media tools. All the three are old and well established newspapers which have added social media to their websites .These newspapers can reach distant Kashmiri readers if social media finds place in these newspapers. Despite the fact that vernacular newspapers seem to be quite at the stages of infancy in implementing these technologies, newspapers of Kashmir have begun to embrace new social media concepts on their sites. Vernacular dailies that can best highlight the picture of Kashmir and reach greater audiences, have necessarily to implement and join hands with the ever growing and accepted Web 2.0 technology-social media. In order to survive in this ever growing and changing technological world, online newspapers, especially the vernacular ones of Kashmir need to focus on the interactive social media cocreation in their websites.

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Appendix I Newspaper web page status with link

Newspaper	Language	Web page	URL
Aaj Ki Jang	Urdu	Absent	×
Afaq	Urdu	Absent	×
Aftab	Urdu	Present	http://www.dailyaftab.com/
Alsafa	English/Urdu	Absent	×
Asian Express	English	Absent	×
Asian Mail	Urdu	Absent	×
Buland Kashmir	Urdu	Absent	×
Etalaat	Urdu	Present	dailyetalaat.com
Fajar	Urdu	Absent	×
Fish Eye	English	Absent	×
Gaash	Kashmiri	Absent	×
Gadyal	Urdu	Present	http://dailygadyal.com/
Gayas	Urdu	Absent	×
Greater Kashmir	English	Present	www.greaterkashmir.com
Imroz-e-Kashmir	Urdu	Absent	×
Indian Times	Urdu	Absent	×
Kashmir Convenor	English	Absent	×
Kashmir Dispatch	English	Present	www.kashmirdispatch.com/
Kashmir Frontier	English	Absent	×
Kashmir Horizon	English	Present	kashmirhorizon.com/
Kashmir Images	English	Present	http://dailykashmirimages.com/
Kashmir Monitor	English	Present	kashmirmonitor.org
Kashmir Observer	English	Present	www.kashmirobserver.net
Kashmir Rays	English	Absent	×
Kashmir Reader	English	Absent	×
Kashmir Times	English	Present	www.kashmirtimes.com/
Kashmir Uzma	Urdu	Present	http://epaper.kashmiruzma.net/
Kashmir Vision	English	Absent	×
Kashur Akhbar	Kashmiri	Present	http://akhbar.neabinternational.org/
Kehwat	Kashmiri	Absent	×
Khidmat	Urdu	Present	http://www.dailykhidmat.com
Khush Haal Kashmir	Urdu	Absent	×
Mission Kashmir	Urdu	Absent	×
Morning Times	English	Absent	×
Muslim Kashmir	English	Absent	×
Nida-i-Mashriq	Urdu	Present	http://www.mashriqkashmir.com/
Nigran	Urdu	Absent	×
Rehmat	English/Urdu	Absent	×
Rising Kashmir	English	Present	www.risingkashmir.com
Roshni	Urdu	Present	www.dailyroshni.com
Sadaqat-e-Rehbar	Urdu	Absent	×
Sahafat	Urdu	Absent	×
Sangarmaal	Kashmiri	Absent	×
Srinagar Mail	English	Absent	×
Srinagar News	Urdu	Absent	×
Srinagar Times	Urdu	Present	www.srinagartimes.net/
State Reporter	English	Absent	×

(Contd.)

Appendix I Newspaper web page status with link—(Contd.)

Newspaper	Language	Web page	URL
Subah Kashmir	Urdu	Absent	×
Tamil-e-Irshad	Urdu	Absent	×
The Mirror of Kashmir	English	Present	www.mirrorofkashmir.com/
Trade and Jobs	English	Present	tradeandjobs.co.in/
Uqaab	Urdu	Present	dailyuqab.com/
Vitasta Times	Urdu	Absent	×
Voice of Valley	English	Absent	×
Wadi-e-Gulposh	Urdu	Absent	×
Wadi ki Awaz	Urdu	Present	www.wadikiawaz.in/
Wyeth	Urdu	Absent	×
Zameendar	Urdu	Absent	×