

# Need and Significance of a Content Code for Media: A study Focused on Social Media

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## Abstract

Media simply means various channels of communication. Communication channels are used to disseminate the news, entertainment, education, data and promotional messages. Media includes every broadcasting and narrowcasting medium such as newspapers, magazines, television, radio and social media etc. The main focus of this paper is on the need and significance of a content code for social media. Social media is a type of online media for social interaction where people participate in talks, share their views, network and bookmark. Social media is a form of electronic communication (as websites, social networking sites and micro blogging) to which users create online communities to share information, ideas, thoughts, personal messages and other content such as text, audio, videos, images and podcasts. Social media also includes the various online technological tools that enable people to share information and to communicate easily via internet. In the present scenario social media plays a key role in communication field. Social media in any democratic system or setup reflects the hopes and aspirations of the young generation. It provides a new power to the freedom of speech and expression of views to the common people all over the world. Social media allows their users to share their ideas, opinions, thoughts and information through their various facilities and it becomes a main tool of communication so, we need a content code for social media. Because all mainstream media like newspaper, radio and television have their own content code but at the same time this new social media does not have any of its own content code for their users. It gives the liberty to their users to share any textual or audio-visual materials, which may be violent and against of human right, constitution, laws, parliament and vulgar images, messages, text or offensive to public good taste. In this paper attempt has been made to discuss content code for social media like mainstream media. Through this study researchers also wants to find out whether social media have any of its own content code or not for their users. Content code are necessary for fair and unbiased social media. This research study is a textual research. It is based on primary and

secondary data. New social media's increasing popularity now a days and its attractive and effective mode of communications has resulted it being used by young generation easily and frequently to express and share their ideas, thoughts, and opinions worldwide. Hence we need a powerful and effective content code for new social media, so that, the negative and unwanted effects of these social media on society can be avoided and synchronized.

**Keywords:** Social media, Micro blogging, Social networking sites

## Introduction

Media has always been considered as the fourth pillar and watch dog of democracy. Media plays an important and key role in the promotion of the success of any democracy. It is because that democracy have freedom of speech and expression in their constitution as a cardinal and fundamental right for all citizens. Media has a power of shaping and reinforcing the public opinion. Media can function as a necessary and effective mode of communication, information and entertainment in a successful democracy [1]. The types of media on the basis of technology are described in fig.1.

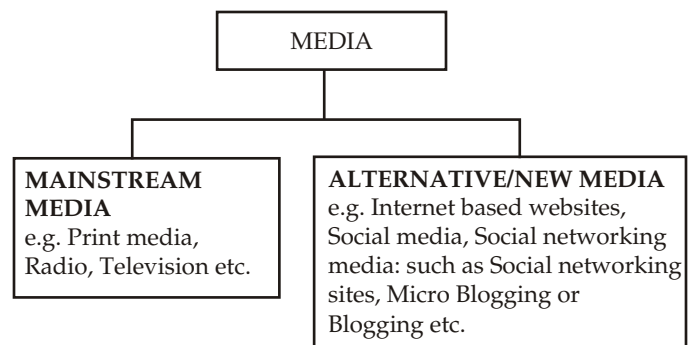


Fig.1. Types of media based on technology

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Authors are grateful to the anonymous referees for comments and suggestions for improving the text and contents of the paper. Authors alone are responsible for any errors/mistakes still remaining in the paper.

The evolution of new social media has changed the way of communication or exchange of information in the new era. Social media is a new medium of communication used by young generation. The one aspect of this new social media that makes it so different from the old media is its non linearity. In the new media, users or content creators participate actively. Social media is a type of online media for social interaction where people participate through talks, share their views, network and bookmark. Social media is a form of electronic communication (as websites, social networking and micro blogging) to which users create online communities to share information, ideas, thoughts, personal messages and other content (as text, audio, videos, images, podcasts). Social media also includes the various online technological tools that enable people to share information and to communicate easily through internet. Social media is also defined as the internet based platform and technologies that permit users interaction, creation and exchange of users generated content[2]. In the present scenario new social media plays a vital and key role in the field of communication. Social media in any democratic system or setup reflects the hopes and aspirations of the young generation. It provides a new power to the freedom of speech and expression of views of common people all over the world. Social media allows their users to share their ideas, opinions, thoughts and information through various facilities. Social media gives the liberty to their users to share any textual or audio-visual materials which may be helpful to create unwanted aspects in the social system such as:-

- Violence and terrorist activities.
- Against human right, constitution, Indian law, parliament and judiciary.
- Inaccurate, baseless, misleading or distorted material.
- Obscene, vulgar or offensive to public good taste.



Fig. 2: Various Social Networking Sites

Though these social media content creator have liberty to produce, create, publish, express and distribute independent content among users. Content creators have important functions in the field of communication, education and entertainment. Content creators such as blogger, video blogger, podcaster, micro blogger or general social media participants are playing a very pivot role in enhancement of the knowledge of common people. All mainstream media like print, radio, television have their own ethics and code for their professionals. For print media, press council has been established to preserve the freedom of the press, to maintain and improve the standards of newspaper and news agencies. Council builds up a code of content for newspapers, news agencies and journalists in accordance with high professional standards. The restrictions imposed on the press are through various articles and acts enshrined in the Constitution. There exists various laws and acts such as Indian Panel code 1860, The Indian Telegraph Act 1885, Indian Post Office Act 1898, The Police Act 1992, Official Secret Acts 1923, The Security and Public Safety Acts, The drugs and Magic Remedies Act 1954, The Criminal Procedure Code 1973, The Young Person (harmful publication) Act 1956, Contempt of Courts Act 1971 and The Copyright Act 1957[3]. The functioning of media can be controlled through these laws and acts. For broadcasting media, there are some ethical norms or a sense of social and moral responsibility introduced by AIR, Doordarshan. Doordarshan has code for commercial advertising and the Advertising Standards Council of India.

The mainstream media has its own code and ethics for their professionals and content creators. But at present in India new social media does not have any content code for their users, bloggers or content creators. So through this research study researcher wants to find out whether social media have any content code for their users and content creators. In this paper attempt has been made to discuss the content codes for new social media like mainstream media.

### Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to find out whether social media has any of its own content code or not for their content creators such as blogger, video blogger, podcaster, micro blogger or general social media participant and users. Through this research study we may be able to find out the responses on the following questions:-

- Why we need content code for social media?
- Whether social media has any content code for their content creators or users?
- Can Govt. build up the content codes for social media like mainstream media?
- Can we synchronize and avoid the negative effect of social media through content code?

### Research methodology

Social media is a new media and technology. At present many researches about social media are going on or in progress. This research is a textual research. It is based on library and internet. In this research, researcher uses primary and secondary data for data collection and to find out the answer of the study.

## Result and Discussion

This era is a technological era in the field of communication, where all the boundaries of countries and continent are non-existent and world has become a global village. In this situation social media is becoming more and more popular among users to express their views, speech, uploads, discussion and interaction on any public or current issues. Social media gives the liberty to its users to write, post, upload any photos, graphics, videos and audio on these media sites, which may be offensive, illegal, violent etc. for example some sites provide a game of throw shoes on famous leader's face or content creators are also supposed to be free to post anything which may be against democracy or government. Content creators have a right to freedom of speech and expression, but they have social and moral responsibility towards the users of these sites, their fellow members and society. Users play a key role in the creation of public knowledge and opinion through these social media. Now it becomes a main tool of communication, information and as well as entertainment, so it has same importance like mainstream media in public. For the protection of public interest and good taste social media have a necessary need for strong and effective content code, laws or acts for content creators and users.

The present study shows that India does not have any content code for social media. There are no fixed laws and acts on the functioning and use of new social media in our country. Indian IT Act 2000 and its regulation cover only the post publication phase. Pawan Duggal supreme court lawyer & cyber law expert says, "IT Act 2000 is silent on any requirement on the part of social media firms to monitor content in any way"[4]. India has only one law about information technology but this act does not cover these social media. It's only about internet services providers, network services providers, search engines, cyber cafe, web-hosting companies, online auction portals and online payment sites and all these come under the section 79 of the IT Intermediary (Rules & Guidelines) 2011[5]. Social media gives an opportunity to everybody to become a broadcaster so in this situation the risks of defamation may be increased. When anybody found guilty of defamation then under the Indian Penal Code and the Information Technology Act, may be asked to pay a fine and serve upto the three years in the jail. But Indian laws have not any specific provision related to the defamation made by the social media's content creators.

Social media can follow the content code for these new social media like mainstream media. Indian government can establish a council like as press council which build up content code for social media's content creators. Some legal experts advised that another way could be as adopted by the China. The China government tells service providers like Google what all they can show and has a tight grip on what can be accessed. The China government banned some social networking sites such as facebook and orkut in their country. So, Indian government has a second option to direct all social media providers, what their content creators can show, communicate or discuss through these media. Indian government can build up laws for content creators of social media. We say that service providers can monitor the contents, but it is not possible to monitor all contents

because million of users post their contents per day and per second. Thus content creators have a self responsibility that they don't post or upload any illegal, violent, obscene or offensive to the public good taste. Also, Indian government can restrict the kind of contents that can be uploaded on the public forums. Social media providers also frame their own policy and content code for their content creators. Social media companies can setup a team to track comments on these sites. Such teams can also respond to the customer complaints. If the negative comments are at the extreme, companies can refer it to their legal teams. In this context cyber law expert Pawan Duggal is of the view that while codes of conduct by companies and social media platform can help, it is users who must show responsibility.

If social media have own content code then it can synchronize and avoid the negative effect on any democratic system or setup. Content creators also play a key role in this context, therefore, content creators must think about their responsibilities, so that the posts or uploads on these sites may only be truth worthy, credible, transparent, fact based, unbiased, ethical, and accurate. If social media providers can build up their own content code for users and also constitute a team which traces all contents, then most of the negative effect of these social media can be avoided.

## Conclusion

From the above discussion we can conclude that if we want to preserve the freedom of speech and expression of views on these social media, to maintain and improve the standards of this new social media and want to synchronize and avoid the negative effect of these social media the following suggestions must be considered on primary basis :

- a) Indian government should establish a council for new social media who will be responsible to maintain the standards of social media. This council builds up a content code and ethics for content creators of social media. Indian government should made amendments in the IT Act 2000 and should cover the new social media under this act.
- b) Also social media companies should build up their own content codes for their content creators and users. These media can establish a team to check out the daily posts and take necessary action against negative customer complaints.
- c) Last but most important is the self responsibility of the content creators and users about the use of these new social media networking sites for sharing information, interaction communication and entertainment. They should take full responsibility for the posts and uploads on these social media networking sites.

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