

Jahangirnagar University Journal of Journalism and Media Studies
Vol 1 • 2014 • ISSN 2409-479X

The Emergence and Impact of Social Media on the Mainstream Journalism in Bangladesh

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Abstract

The evolution of journalism is concomitant with that of technology. If printing machine was a major breakthrough in the history of journalism, the emergence of the Internet, especially social media, in the last two decades has changed the nature of journalism to a significant extent. In the West, social media like Facebook and Twitter has already had a huge impact on the mainstream journalism in terms of information gathering and the writing and disbursement of news items. The interactivity options of the social media has brought journalists and the mass close and interdependent. Social media has been gradually becoming an alternative source of information. The present article presents and analyses some instances to examine whether Bangladesh news media is being influenced by the information, pictures and videos presented in various social media. However, approaching the potentiality of social media as means of information should be approached with caution; information dissemination through social media is questionable while questions of ethics and professionalism may not always be sufficiently effective to guide the journalists for journalism in the changed reality of internet era. This article will also put forward some recommendations of guidelines regarding role of journalists regarding the use of information in the field of social media to make effective and responsible news reports.

Introduction

With the advent of the Internet, human communication process experienced an unprecedented and revolutionary pace. Internet-blessed electronic mail (e-mail) facilities have beefed up the range and pace of interpersonal and group communication. More importantly, the Internet with its bottom-up, decentralized, networked and interactive characteristics has become a major medium in mass communication. In the last two decades, the Internet has paved way for what is now known as 'social media,' a virtual interactive space where people talk, discuss, lock into altercation, express 'likes' and 'dislikes,' poke friends, upload audio-visual documents, comment, argue, launch campaign for various socio-economic and political purposes, etc. The Internet has thus turned a considerable portion of the human society (who has access to it) into a 'network society.' Because of its recent availability and popularity, social media has been influencing people's personal, familial, national, regional, and international communication as well as shaping and reshaping people's values, ideologies, financial capacities, and exposure.

Moreover, social media has become a new method of research and information dissemination. In the recent years, there has been a rise in popularity of powerful new tools, associated with the improved capacity of the internet to handle two-way interaction; for example, message boards, blogs, wikis and social networks. Presently, 'social media' designates these communication tools which are often associated with Web 2.0 (Newman, 2009). The advent of the new phase of social media has democratized information flow. For Tim O Reilly, an internet entrepreneur, the Internet only reaches its true potential when people take advantage of its interactive capability and power of the network (Newman, 2009). Web 2.0 advocates argue that the internet should not be just another form of distribution of information and entertainment for the big media companies, rather it opens up opportunities for a flowering of new creative expression, the read-write web (Newman, 2009).

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Like all other aspects of human society, traditional news media, for example, print and online newspapers as well as television and radio channels are not out of the increasing influence of the social media. Social media, such as YouTube, Facebook and Twitter, have significant impact on the mainstream media. There are instances in which the mainstream media collected or shared various contents, for example, instant updates, pictures, and video-footages, from the social media. User-generated picture or video scoops regularly lead television bulletins and the front pages of the newspapers whilst a new category of opinionated blogging is redefining the frontiers of journalism itself (Newman, 2009).

The impact of social media on mainstream journalism is increasing. For example, audiences, readers, or witnesses of incidents are no more simply passively reading or watching news. News is no more processed by the media houses only; audiences are actively participating in producing news or sharing information. Jeff Jarvis, the professor of journalism at the City University of New York, analyzed the social media implications in the perspective of 2008 terrorist attacks on Mumbai, India. In *Guardian*, on December 1, 2008, Jarvis wrote:

Moments after the terrorist attacks on Mumbai began last week, Twitter exploded with messages. Prasad Naik, AKA krazyfrog, tweeted: 'Firing happening at the Oberoi hotel where my sister works. Faaak!' Next, he reported that she had called and was safe. ... Nine hours later, his sister was home and he tweeted: 'She saw piles of bodies. The Oberoi hotel guests. Staff members from her own department. All dead. Right in front of her eyes... the witnesses are taking over the news. That will fundamentally change our experience of news, the role of witnesses and participants, the role of journalists and news organisations, and the impact reporting has on events.' (Jarvis, 2008)

Traditional mass media tools – radio, television, film, and print newspaper – generate one-way or top-bottom communication while the social media offers two-way and bottom-up, horizontal

communication mode. Thus, social media has created scope for the audience to get involved in the process of journalism in the mainstream media. Silicon Valley-based technology forecaster and a Consulting Professor in the School of Engineering at Stanford University, noted futurologist Paul Saffo has drawn the picture of the shift of the mass media tools to interactive era:

The Mass Media revolution 50 years ago delivered the world to our TVs, but it was a one-way trip – all we could do was press our nose against the glass and watch. In contrast, Personal Media is two-way trip and we not only can, but also expect to be able to answer back. Blogging, chat groups and adding comments to online articles are obvious examples, but just the beginning. In the TV era, it was hard, if not impossible to participate, but now in the new world of personal media, the exact reverse it the case: it is hard to merely be a bystander (Saffo, 2012).

With the increasing use and influence of social media, the mainstream media and journalists are gradually losing its monopoly on information and news; rather mass people, using the social and digital media, have come forward with information and footages and been increasingly participating in media activities. Now anyone can produce a piece of news, using personal blogs, Internet chat groups, email, or a host of other tools. Fuelled by the growth of powerful networks like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, individuals are now able to create, collaborate, and share their own media, often to the bemusement and bewilderment of governments, lawyers and traditional news organizations (Newman, 2011). American technology writer and columnist Dan Gillmor wrote in his book, *We the Media*:

Big Media has lost its monopoly on the news, thanks to the Internet. Now that it's possible to publish in real time to a worldwide audience, a new breed of grassroots journalists are taking the news into their own hands. Armed with laptops, cell phones, and digital cameras, these readers-

turned-reporters are transforming the news from a lecture into a conversation (Gillmor, 2004).

For reasons, the mainstream media has been called as the “Fourth Estate” of the society as it monitors political activities to ensure that political players can not abuse democratic process. Now, the arrival and expansion of social media has re-formulated the process of news production and news consumption and shared space of the Fourth Estate that has been assumed by the mainstream media. Discussions and debates are taking place among researchers and academicians across the world whether the social media is replacing the traditional mainstream media and steadily being established as the ‘Fifth Estate.’ Patrice Schneider, chief strategy officer for the Media Development Loan Fund, believes a Fifth Estate has arisen, however, in the form of social media. (Kostigen, 2011).

Sociologist William Dutton in the abstract of his article, “The Fifth Estate Emerging Through the Network of Networks” said that the rise of the press, radio, television and other mass media enabled the development of an independent institution, the ‘Fourth Estate’, central to pluralist democratic processes. The growing use of the Internet and related digital technologies is creating a space for networking individuals in ways that enable a new source of accountability in government, politics and other sectors. Dutton said:

Highly ‘Networked individuals’ (helped by new platforms like social networking and messaging) can move across, undermine and go beyond the boundaries of existing institutions. This provides the basis for the pro-social networks that compose what I am calling the Fifth Estate (Dutton, 2008).

Digital Strategist and Consultant, former Head of BBC Journalism Products within the Future Media department, Nic Newman in his research opined that although the social media is still in its early state, the Fifth Estate could be as important to the twenty-first century as the Fourth Estate has been since the eighteenth century. From influential bloggers to community networks and activists, this

new sphere of activity offers new competition for the mainstream media. These groups are becoming an alternative source of news as well as a good option for politicians, businessmen and other public figures to bypass them and take their message – unmediated – to their supporters or followers. Moreover, as if to add insult to injury, new networks and individuals are also now acting as a check on the traditional media, questioning their accuracy and standards and forcing a new kind of transparency.

Against this scenario, there has developed two major responses. One is by the mainstream media organizations that have been trying to understand and or integrate the technical and social challenges raised by the rapid growth of personal and social media. The second response is critical and requires attention. The increasing impact of social media on journalism has raised a number of practical issues that need to be addressed: editorial control, scalability, ownership of intellectual property, the blurring of professional and personal spheres, and concern about the representative or unrepresentative nature of the networks stealing attention: “we are mid-way through an era of experimentation, but that hard choices will soon need to be made around the value that should be attached to participatory and social media and how it should be integrated into journalistic practice and culture” (Newman, 2011). Keeping these concerns in mind, this paper offers a critical reading of the emergence and impact of social media on the mainstream journalism in Bangladesh.

The Emergence of Social Media

Social media may be a new phenomenon, but its seed was sown with the birth of the Internet through the introduction of World Wide Web (WWW) in 1991. On August 6, 1991, inventor Berners-Lee posted a short summary of the World Wide Web project on the alt.hypertext newsgroup. This date also marked the debut of the Web as a publicly available service on the Internet, although new users only access it after August 23. For this reason this is considered the internaut’s day. Announcing the birth, Berners-Lee in his message had said:

The World Wide Web (WWW) project aims to allow all links to be made to any information anywhere. [...] The WWW project was started to allow high energy physicists to share data, news, and documentation. We are very interested in spreading the web to other areas, and having gateway servers for other data. Collaborators welcome! (Wikipedia 2013).

Internet collaboration soon gave way to the development of interactive social. Andreas Kaplan, Professor of Marketing at ESCP Europe Business School and Michael Haenlein, Professor of Marketing at the business school ESCP Europe and editor-in-chief of *European Management Journal (EMJ)*, in their research article, "Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of social media" said:

As highlighted, the idea behind Social Media is far from groundbreaking. Nevertheless, there seems to be confusion among managers and academic researchers alike as to what exactly should be included under this term, and how Social Media differ from the seemingly-interchangeable related concepts of Web 2.0 and User Generated Content. It therefore makes sense to take a step back and provide insight regarding where Social Media come from and what they include ... social media is a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content. (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010)

Keeping this definition in mind, we can identify six types of social media:

- *Social Networks*: Services that allow one to connect with other people of similar interests and background. Usually they consist of a profile, various ways to interact with other users, ability to setup groups, etc. The most popular are Facebook and LinkedIn.

- *Bookmarking Sites*: Services that allow one to save, organize and manage links to various websites and resources around the internet. Most sites allow one to "tag" your links to make them easy to search and share. The most popular are Delicious and StumbleUpon.
- *Social News*: Services that allow people to post various news items or links to outside articles and then allows its users to "vote" on the items. The most popular are Digg and Reddit.
- *Media Sharing*: Services that allow one to upload and share various media such as pictures and video. Most services have additional social features such as profiles, commenting, etc. The most popular are YouTube and Flickr.
- *Microblogging*: Services that focus on short updates that are pushed out to anyone subscribed to receive the updates. The most popular one is Twitter.
- *Blog Comments and Forums*: Online forums allow members to hold conversations by posting messages. Blog comments are similar except they are attached to blogs and usually the discussion centers around the topic of the blog post.

However, these types are overlapping. For instance, Facebook has microblogging features with their "status update." Also, Flickr and YouTube have comment systems similar to that of blogs.

Among all the social media mentioned above, Facebook, LinkedIn, Youtube, Flickr, and Twitter are the most widely used social media across the world. Facebook is an online social networking service the name of which stemmed from the colloquial name of the book given to students at the start of the academic year by some university administrations in the United States to help students get to know each other. It was founded in February 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg with his college roommates and fellow Harvard University students Eduardo Saverin, Andrew McCollum, Dustin Moskovitz, and Chris Hughes. Worldwide popular, Facebook had over one billion users users and about 180 petabytes of data a year

and grows by over half a petabyte every 24 hours in September 2012 (Wikipedia 2013).

LinkedIn is a social networking website for people in professional occupations. Founded in December 2002 and launched on May 5, 2003, it is mainly used for professional networking. As of June 2013, LinkedIn reports more than 225 million acquired users in more than 200 countries and territories. The site is available in 20 languages, including English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, Swedish, Romanian, Russian, Turkish, Japanese, Czech, Polish, Korean, Indonesian, Malay and Tagalog. As of 2 July 2013, Quantcast reports LinkedIn has 65.6 million monthly unique U.S. visitors and 178.4 million globally (Wikipedia, 2013).

Bookmarking sites has been a distinct field of social media since its inception in the mid 90s. Scores of people have been using Bookmarking sites as a way to access a consolidated set of bookmarks from various computers, organize large numbers of bookmarks, and share bookmarks with contacts. Various institutions across the world including businesses, libraries, and universities have used social bookmarking as a way to increase information sharing among members. Social bookmarking has been also used to improve web search. A social bookmarking service is a centralized online service which enables users to add, annotate, edit, and share bookmarks of web documents. Many online bookmark management services have launched since 1996; Delicious, founded in 2003, popularized the terms "social bookmarking" and "tagging." Tagging is a significant feature of social bookmarking systems, enabling users to organize their bookmarks in flexible ways and develop shared vocabularies known as folksonomies (Wikipedia, 2013). A social news website features user-posted stories that are ranked based on popularity. Users can comment on these posts, and these comments may also be ranked. Since their emergence with the birth of Web 2.0, these sites are used to link many types of information including news, humor, support, and discussion. Social news relies on crowd sourcing to shape focus in a bottom-up fashion, forming a type of collective intelligence. Social news sites

facilitate democratic participation on the web. Some social websites are as Slashdot, Fark, Delicious, Digg, Reddit and Newsvine (Wikipedia, 2013)

Among the Media sharing sites, Youtube and Flickr are the most popular. Founded in February 2005, YouTube allows billions of people to discover, watch and share originally-created videos (YouTube, 2013). Flickr, on the other hand, is "almost certainly the best online photo management and sharing application in the world" (Flicker, 2013).

Twitter is one of the fastest-growing networks. A "real-time information network," it "connects you to the latest stories, ideas, opinions and news about what you find interesting" (Twitter, 2013). If someone says something interesting, her/his followers might 're-tweet' it, which means repeating it and saying who said it. So, some of their followers might start to follow the first tone, and that is how one is introduced to new people. Twitter was created in March 2006 by Jack Dorsey and by July, the social networking site was launched. The service rapidly gained worldwide popularity, with over 500 million registered users as of 2012, generating over 340 million tweets daily and handling over 1.6 billion search queries per day (Wikipedia, 2013).

Forums are an instrument used to communicate and collaborate with others. Forums save information posted on a particular topic for other people to see at any time, creating a discussion environment. Everything that gets posted can be read again and again (Sue studios, 2013). Blogs are collections of articles, ideas, news, facts, opinions or inspirations that are "posted" on the internet. They are usually structured, organized by category and are updated often, if not daily. The owner of the blog is able to control the content. The term, which stands for "Web log," was coined in 1999 and has caught on like wildfire. There are now about 4 million blogs on the Internet (Sue studios, 2013).

The Impact of Social Media on the Mainstream Media

Mainstream news media collects information from a number of conventional sources including people, institution, letters, books, files, films, and tapes. More specifically, the sources of news include the media houses' staff correspondents, national and international news agencies, news syndicate/feature services, press releases, press note, handout, advertisers, websites of various organizations and institutions. Moreover, every news media works as a source of information and news for another news media. Since the inception of the Internet, online sources have become crucial in collecting and sharing information. Search engines like Yahoo and Google have been working as enormous source of information and news. Very recently, the mainstream media has also started to use information, pictures and footage appeared in various social media for making news reports. The increasing use of social media as the news source and tools of reaching news has been changing the process of journalism. Nowadays lots of information first come to social media and, in many cases, the mainstream media collect and select information already uploaded in social media. This practice has marked a significant change in mainstream journalism.

Professor and Associate Dean for research at Northwestern University in Qatar and former chair of the Department of Journalism and Media Studies at the School of Communication, Information and Library Studies at Rutgers University, John Vernon Pavlik in his book *Journalism and New Media* said:

Journalism is undergoing a fundamental transformation, perhaps the most fundamental since the rise of the penny press of the mid nineteenth century. In the twilight of the twentieth century and the dawn of the twenty-first, there is emerging a new form of journalism whose distinguishing qualities include ubiquitous news, global information access, instantaneous reporting, interactivity, multimedia content, and extreme content customization. Authenticity of content, source verification, accuracy, and truth are all

suspect in a medium where anyone with a computer and a modem can become a global publisher. (Pavlik, 2001)

Nic Newman has conducted a research on the impact of social media on mainstream journalism. Studying the leading organizations in the UK and USA using topical case studies from the aftermath of Iranian elections of June 2009 and the G20 London Summit, Nic found that new Internet tools like You Tube, Facebook and Twitter are changing the way news is produced, distributed and consumed:

User-generated contents (UGC) like picture or video scoops, regularly lead television bulletins and the front pages of newspapers, whilst a new category of opinionated blogging is redefining the frontiers of journalism itself. ... There are six core conclusions from this study. (1) Social networking and UGC have become mainstream activities, accounting for almost 20 percent of internet time in the UK and involving half of all internet users. (2) Social Media and UGC are fundamentally changing the nature of breaking news.(3) Journalists are beginning to embrace social media tools like Twitter, Blogs and Facebook, but very much on their own terms. Guidelines are being rewritten; social media editors and twitter correspondents are being appointed; training and awareness programmes are underway. (4) Social media, blogs and UGC are not replacing journalism, but they are creating an important extra layer of information and diverse opinion. (5) With resources tight, most are looking to focus their investments on richer engagement with the most trafficked areas of their websites, whilst increasing involvement with conversations around their content in third-party network. (6) Social recommendation has begun to play a significant role in driving traffic to traditional news content. (Newman, 2009)

Nic Newman conducted another research, entitled "Mainstream media and the distribution of news in the age of social discovery," where he found that social media are beginning to rival search as a

way of discovering news content in the UK. The average news site receives 7.5 per cent of referral traffic from Facebook alone (up from 2 percent in 2008), whilst the overall importance of search as a gateway has begun to fall for the first time (Newman, 2011).

Giant western news media institutions like British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Associated Press (AP), Agence France Presse (AFP) or Reuters have already started to embrace social media as primary source of information. These institutions have asked their staffs to utilize the social media and thus be more interactive and collaborative for producing news stories. Noted newspaper *The Guardian* in 2010 reported that BBC news journalists have been told by Peter Horrocks, the new director of BBC global news, to use social media as a primary source of information (Bunz, 2010). About the carefulness while using social media as primary source of information to make news reports, Peter Horrocks in an interview with PDA, *Guardian's* digital content blog, said:

We need to apply our ethical principles in the same way to social media as we do for our other reporting. Just because it is social media it can't be different. So we don't take a different view. But it is a faster medium. It should not be too difficult to use social media in the same way as live reporting. So it will be used according to the same principle, only the way we deliver it and how we use it has to change. (Bill Doskoch, 2010)

BBC has formulated a social media guidance saying that there are three main kinds of social media activities they are concerned with: (1) your own personal activity, done for your friends and contacts, but not under or in the name of BBC news. (2) activity for core news (eg breaking news), programmes or genres carried out officially in the name of BBC news. (3) Activity of editors, presenters, correspondents or reporters carried out as part of official BBC output. Explaining the second concern, BBC maintained that "the golden rule for our core news, programme or genre activity is that whatever is published-on Twitter, Facebook or anywhere else-must have a second pair of eyes prior to

publication." (BBC, 2011) USA-based news agency Associated Press (AP) in its revised guidelines (May, 2013) on social media usage, said that "all AP journalists are encouraged to have accounts on social networks. They have become an essential tool for AP reporters to gather news and share links to our published work." AP also asked its staffs to remain alert regarding use of user generated contents on social networks as primary information to make news reports (Associated Press, 2013). France-based news agency Agence France Presse (AFP) in its guidelines for using social media maintained that "social networks such as Facebook and Twitter have firmly established themselves as both an essential part of the newsgathering process and a space where the news is shared and consumed" (AFP, 2013).

So it is clear that western mainstream media has embraced the social media sites as primary source of information and it is going to have a long term impact. The Director of BBC's Global News Division, Richard Sambrook thinks that journalism should take social media into account on the long term (Bunz, 2009).

The Impact of Social Media on the Mainstream Journalism in Bangladesh

The number of internet users in Bangladesh is increasing day by day. Presently, with increasing number of mobile phone users, the Internet has reached remote and rural areas too. Consequently, the number of bloggers and users of Facebook and Twitter is increasing. All these have impacted upon the mainstream journalism in Bangladesh. Some recent examples will make the influence of social media on mainstream journalism evident. On July 28, 2013, *Daily Star* published a story entitled, "PM cooks to treat son on his birthday." The story was that of the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina, cooking Polao on the occasion of the 42nd birthday anniversary of her son, Sajib Wazed Joy. *Star* maintained how the Prime Minister stole some time off her busy schedule and cooked food for her only son. Soon, Sajib Wazed Joy posted a photograph of his mother on his Facebook page that showed the Prime Minister

cooking chicken wearing a white sari and a striped apron in Gono Bhaban. Joy appended a caption to the photo: “A special treat for everyone. The prime minister cooking chicken pulao for me! Her pulao is really the best I have ever tasted.” The photo went viral and earned 8,000 ‘likes’ and more than 2,350 ‘shares’ within an hour. Bangladesh’s largest online newspaper bdnews24.com also carried the story using photo and status of Sajeeb Wazed Joy’s facebook page (bdnews, 2013).

To cite another example: *Daily Star* on August 5, 2013 published a report entitled “‘Death threat’ to PM, family, Reveals Joy in Facebook Post.” The report mentioned that “Sajeeb Wazed Joy yesterday said a ‘self-proclaimed human rights activist’ has issued death threats to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and members of her family, including himself” (*Daily Star*, 2013).

The next example involves Allama Shafi, an Islamic cleric of Bangladesh who had been a talk of the country after his controversial remarks on women education and employment. Social media like Youtube and Facebook had brought the video footage of Allama Shafi commenting on women education and employment to public. The mainstream media in Bangladesh used the video footage to make news stories. For example, a leading local news agency, United News of Bangladesh (UNB) released on 14 July 2013 a news story on Allama Shafi quoting facebook sources (UNB, 2013) while Dhaka Tribune published a special story on Allama Shafi entitled, “Shafi’s video creating storm in social media” (Dhaka Tribune, 2013). All these examples testify to the increasing impact of social media on the mainstream journalism in Bangladesh.

Analysis and Recommendations

Social media engagement has undoubtedly brought pace and vigor inside and outside the news room in gathering information and producing news. Looking back, we can remember those days when newsroom journalists had to depend on telephone calls to contact with the reporters in the field for information gathering and news writing. Now with the commencement of the Internet facilities

including updated social media, news-related activities in the news room and in the fields have got such dynamism that we can spot the reporters online within seconds to collect and verify the information coming from the fields. At the same time, viewers and readers of the mass media are also enabled by the social media to give their opinion on the news reports being published and updated competing with the time. Using the advantage of interactive features of the social media and blogs, mass media authorities and the readers can come to a close level of mutual communication regarding all kinds of news, features, footages, steal photographs and even advertisements. Now-a-days almost every newspaper and television and radio channel has its online versions, facebook pages, and blogs. More particularly, television talk shows have become the most effective platform of interactive communication. Television viewers listen to the valuable comments and analysis of panelists in the talks shows, make phone calls to the panelists with various vital questions, and, at the same time, can express opinions on the relevant Facebook pages. In newspaper journalism, just after the uploading of news reports on their online versions, readers can make comments, provide more information regarding the news reports through the blogging system of the web versions of newspapers. The use of the Internet facilities in journalism and the interactivity between internet-based newspapers, video and audio documents and social media have become so widespread that the popularity of online media are increasing while that of the printed newspapers are decreasing.

Jayson DeMers, Founder and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of AudienceBloom, a Seattle-based SEO agency, in his article, “How Social Media is supporting a Fundamental Shift in Journalism” said: “It is very possible that the near future may witness the extinction of print media corporations, in favor of digital media corporations. ... Suddenly, online papers are no longer the favored place to get the news and people are instead (intentionally or unintentionally) turning to ‘citizen journalists’ for their news” (DeMers, 2013).

The increasing use of laptops, tabs, and smartphones that have options of easy access to the Internet has increased the scope of 'citizen journalism.' The concept of citizen journalism has got the real momentum following the commencement of digital technology equipped with the Internet facilities. Mobile phone users are increasingly capable to take pictures and capture videos which they may then send to various news media houses through emails for broadcast or publication. News media houses too have been responding to and making use of the photos and videos sent to make news stories. A good example of citizen journalism in Bangladesh can be the video footage of a tornado that hit the bordering district Brahmanbaria, killing dozens and leaving several hundred people injured as well as several hundred houses demolished on March 22, 2013. The video footage of the tornado originating and approaching towards villages was captured by cell phone cameras of local people that were collected by media houses and used in news stories on the devastating tornado (You Tube, 2013). For the journalist Justin Auchiello:

Citizen journalism is not a new concept. In the digital age, prior to advent of Twitter, bloggers were the flag bearers of the movement. The rise of social platforms changed that, spurring a greater democratization of media.... With ubiquity of Twitter and more so Facebook, every citizen is not just a potential source, but also a potential reporter (Auciello, 2013).

With a huge volume of information provided by and preserved in social media, especially Twitter and Facebook, the interactive features available in social media, online newspapers, and online versions of printed newspapers, and journalists' increasing engagement with sources and readers through social media, journalism as a profession has got more pace and zing. But, the same pace has raised questions of authenticity and responsibility. It has because social media has the ability to not only misinform but also to reach the maximum number of people in a jiffy. Vested quarters often use social media to spread rumors using fake

photographs and audio-video footages to materialize their own socio-political interests. Therefore, journalists using social media contents for journalism purposes have to be very cautious to keep the credibility of their houses upheld, because intentional or unintentional use of wrong or fake text, audio and video documents in news stories will finally harm the credibility of the institutions concerned as well as the society in general.

A question that has often been raised regarding social media is: are the traditional policy guidelines and ethical rules suitable for today's and tomorrow's news media? Arguably, no. Social media, online journalism, blogging, digital photojournalism – these new phenomena have generated new possibilities of reach and exposure as well as questioned old practice of maintaining accuracy of information and objectivity of news. What then would be the attitude of news media authorities and journalists towards social media? Stephen J.A. Ward, the James E. Burgess Professor of Journalism Ethics in the School of Journalism and Mass Communications at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and an adjunct professor at the University of British Columbia (UBC), in his feature article "Guidelines for guidelines: Social Media polices spark debate" opined: "Since everyone is on twitter, we have to let journalists tweet away, unrestrained. But as newsrooms start to create editorial policies for social media, we need sober, nuanced, ethical thinking that takes the long view, not emotional arguments from social media enthusiasts." (Ward, 2009)

Keeping the changed reality of news media and the much-expected objective role of news media in focus, we can put forward some recommendations on journalists' skills, guidelines and ethical norms on use of social media in journalism:

1. *Networking*: Journalists and other staffs of a news media institution will have to be encouraged to be active participants in social networks to increase interactivity that would finally add pace to information gathering, news writing and news dissemination processes. The staff may not use their respective houses' logo or official photos in

- their profiles, but their identity will certainly be official; for example, a *Daily Star* reporter must mention her/his official identity as reporter of *Daily Star* in profile.
2. *Posting and sharing*: All staff having accounts in social networking sites will share their feelings on various social issues, but they have to be very cautious regarding political views and opinions.
 3. *Making comments*: Regarding contentious public issues in any public forum and organized action in support of causes or movements, the staff would remain highly alert and supportive so that their comments and/or opinions do not damage the institution's reputation as unbiased source of news.
 4. *Friending and Following*: Regarding friending and following on Facebook and Twitter, media people have to be very selective. Any person of the society can be friend of a media person on social networking sites if they are considered as valuable for reporting purposes. Regarding 'likes' and 'share,' media people must be very cautious as their liking of a particular post may give a message to others that they are advocates of a particular political or religious view.
 5. *Publishing*: Regarding publishing contents in social networking sites, authorities would encourage their staff to publish news, features, columns, photos and all audio-video documents. In this case, the staff would keep it in mind that only those reports, features, columns, photos and audio-video documents which are already published in the main website or printed version of the media house can be published and shared in social networking sites. In case of any breaking news, the staff will first provide that information only to their respective office.
 6. *Sensitive information*: The office staff must not post or share any information on social networking sites that could cause life and security threat to reporters or camera persons working in secret assignments.

7. *Sourcing*: Political personalities, businessmen, celebrities of all sectors including entertainment and sports have their own accounts of Facebook and Twitter. They, on different occasions, post information and photos on Facebook, they tweet about anything they like. Famous people's comments, statuses and photos can make interesting news stories. In case of using any photos and status of particular persons for making news stories, the journalists first have to take permission from the account holders. They can contact the desired persons through sending messages to inbox. We all know that many Facebook accounts may be fake. To verify the accounts, journalists have to talk to the account holders over phone or e-mail.

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