

**Online Communication in the Digital Age**  
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**Lecture – 32**  
**Introduction to Social Media**

Dear friends, good morning and welcome. In the previous module, we had discussed topics such as chatbot, robotic communication and AI in the context of digital communication. Today in this module, we will look at social media as a digital revolution and its technological interactivity with humans at various levels. Social media and networking sites are an integral part of our daily lives today. They have enabled individuals to connect, share and communicate on personal, educational as well as professional levels. Without the social media, we cannot have effective communication in contemporary times of digitized living.

## Social Media: A Digital Communication Channel

- Social media introduces a technological element, along with flexibility, in terms of how individuals consume, share, and collaborate with the presented content.
  - The term ‘social’ with regard to media suggests that platforms are user-centric and enable interactive activities.
  - As such, social media can be viewed as online facilitators or enhancers of human networks—webs of individuals who enhance social connectivity.
- Consequently, social media can be aptly described as an internet-based platform for publishing or broadcasting digital content, allowing readers to engage in full interaction with it.



Source:  
<https://www.investopedia.com/terms/s/social-media.asp>

Social media introduces a technological element along with flexibility in terms of how individuals consume, share and collaborate with the presented content. The word social in the context of media automatically suggests that the platforms are user centric and thus enable interactive activities. So social media can be aptly described as an internet-based platform for publishing or broadcasting digital content allowing readers to engage in full interaction with it. In a previous module, we had discussed interpersonal communication and there we had talked about the writing tools in the context of technology such as email,

text messages and we had also discussed mass communication tools such as group chat, discussion board, etc.

Today's topic, social media can be looked at as a medium of mass personal communication tool where three way web based technology is used as an interactive means to facilitate sharing and consuming of ideas, opinions and information through the building of virtual networks and communities.

- Social media is a collective term for the various social network and community sites, which work as a mass-medium to reach a potentially large audience.
- Pergolino Marketo (2010) describes social media as “the production, consumption and exchange of information through online social interactions and platforms.”
- Technological convergence and digitization allow traditional media to be carried to new types of media.
  - It has also allowed audio, data and mass communication to take place in the same channel.



Source: <https://www.marketing91.com/social-media-definition/>

We can see that social media is a collective term for various network and community sites which work as a mass medium to reach a potentially large audience. It is the convergence of technology and digitization which has allowed traditional media to be carried to new types of media, allowing audio, data based and mass communication to take place in the same channel simultaneously. These platforms allow users to consume, create and share content in various formats, blurring the lines between traditional media and digital user generated content. The rise of the concept of social media is a result of the combination of Web 2.0 and the internet's capability for mutual data communication.

- Therefore, social media encourages human communication, possessing characteristics of participation, openness, conversation, community, and connectedness.
  - It is the emergence of web 2.0 and the internet's capability for mutual data communication that have given rise to the concept of social media.
- **Andreas Kaplan and Michael Haenlein\*** define social media as:

– 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.



Sources: ResearchGate

\*Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of social media. Business Horizons, 53(1), 59–68

Andreas Kaplan and Michael Haenlein have defined social media as a group of internet-based applications that are built on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content. Kaplan and Haenlein emphasize the importance of Web 2.0 as the ideological as well as the technological foundation behind how social media works in general. In order to discuss further about the features of social media, we will look at another definition by Carr and Hayes.

- **Carr and Hayes (2015)** offer a definition that both encapsulates present-day social media, that is robust enough to account for the changing landscape of social media; as well as *platforms yet to come*.

– Internet-based, persistent and **disentrained** channels of mass-personal communication facilitating perceptions of interactions among users, deriving value primarily from user generated content.



Source: Search Engine Journal

- Here, communication through social media is referred to as “mass-personal” to create profiles, make explicit and traverse relationships.
- The value of this type of communication is primarily derived from user-generated content.

The definition provided by Carr and Hayes in 2015 encapsulates present day social media that is robust enough to account for the changing landscape of social media and communication as well as platforms which are yet to come. So, communication through social media is referred to in this definition as mass personal to create profiles, make explicit and traverse relationships. The value of this type of communication is primarily derived from user generated content.

Social media is defined as being disentrained and are also persistent. Communication facilitated by a particular channel in which only one interactant can commit to participating as opposed to face-to-face communication when both members of the communication dyad needed to be committed at the same time. This has enabled the democratization of content while giving people the ability to emerge from consumers to publishers of content. Though this definition does not address the modality of communication, the style or purpose of the medium or the interface devices, is still it offers several elements worth highlighting and discussing individually.

- Their definition of social media begins by addressing some of the technical features necessary for facilitating communication processes.
- **Carr and Hayes (2015)** specified that social media are Internet-based (rather than Web-based), noting emerging social media tools which often run independent of the World Wide Web.
- Early social media tools, like **Friendster**, and **Bebo** were only accessible via web browsers.
- However, some of the earliest platforms, such as **The WELL** and the most recent ones like **TikTok** are not housed in web pages, rather they utilize the backbone of the Internet to transmit messages.



Source: Wikipedia

Carr and Hayes specified that social media are internet based rather than web based, noting emerging social media tools which often run independent of the world wide web. Early social media tools like Friendster and Bebo were only accessible via web browsers. However, some of the earliest platforms, such as the The well and the most recent ones like TikTok are not housed in web pages rather they utilize the backbone of the internet to transmit messages.

With the increasing use of apps on tablets and mobile smart devices, social media need not be tethered to a www address, and many operate independent of the web offering send alone applications that users can directly access on their devices. Many popular social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Snapchat etcetera have their

own dedicated mobile applications which can be downloaded from app stores, and we can access these social networks without the need to visit the respective websites.

- Social media channels are also **persistent**.
  - It is because they allow communication even when individual users are not online.
  - They also allow the users to create stable identities and means of connection.
- Some digital communicative tools are only meaningfully used when both communication partners are online.
  - For example, video chat services **Chatroulette** and **Omegle** do not allow users to go back and reconnect with someone they've met – as there is no persistent identity or means of reestablishing communication.
- These media, while simultaneously digital and social in nature, do not constitute to be “social media,” as they cannot facilitate continued interaction among individuals.

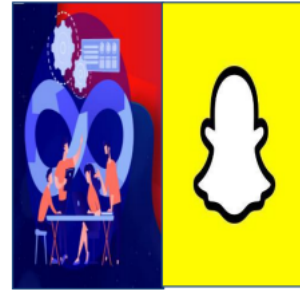


Source: <https://buzzooy.com/omegle-vs-chatroulette/>

We have already discussed that social media channels are persistent as they allow communication even when individual users are not online and thus, they allow the users to create stable identities and means of connection. Some digital communicative tools are only meaningfully used when both communication partners are online. We can take the example of video chat services, Chatroulette and Omegle. We find that there is no persistent identity or means of reestablishing communication. These media while simultaneously digital and social in nature do not constitute to be social media as they cannot facilitate continued interaction among individuals.

As these do not support ongoing and sustained interaction between users because of the absence of persistent identities or means of reconnection, making their usage meaningful only when both communication partners are simultaneously online. However, channels of social media like TikTok and Instagram allow users to be online even though one closes the app or logs off. Thus, they meet the persistence criterion to be considered as social media. Also, social media is disentrained. They do not require synchronous communication.

- Finally, social media are *disentrained* as they do not require synchronous communication.
- *Asynchronous communication* allows social media users increased time to carefully construct and maintain their identities online.
- Therefore, it allows users an opportunity for some degree of selective self-presentation.
- Although synchronous messages can be exchanged via Social media, synchronous interactions are not required for use.
  - For example, although you can message a friend via Snapchat in real time, Snapchat does not lose value as a communicative tool when your friend isn't actively using their phone or the channel at the same time as you.



Sources: paradisosolutions.com; Wikipedia



The asynchronous communication allows social media users increase time to carefully construct and maintain their online identities. It allows users an opportunity for some degree of selective self-preservation. Although synchronous messages can be exchanged via social media, synchronous interactions are not required for use as we can understand by the details given below here.

It means that when we are not physically tethered to our self-descriptions and self-statements, we can strategically present ourselves on social media. The dynamic traits of social media are so evident that many eminent and inspirational figures of our time have consistently used it to share their messages with the public and to foster a more inclusive and diverse world. For example, the former US President Barack Obama is strategically used social media to constantly be in touch with people and came to be known as the first social media president.

- Barack Obama’s usage of social media in his political campaigns, resulted in the popular tag of the ‘first social-media president’.
- In a conversation with David Letterman on the Netflix show ‘**My Next Guest Needs No Introduction**’ in January 2018, Obama discussed his own use of social media during his presidency.
- In his presidential campaign, Obama had more “friends” on Facebook and Myspace and more “followers” on Twitter than his opponent John McCain.
  - During his presidential campaign in 2008, by using social media and mobilizing the general public online, Obama was able to raise awareness about, and financial support for his campaign through the use of over 15 social networking sites.

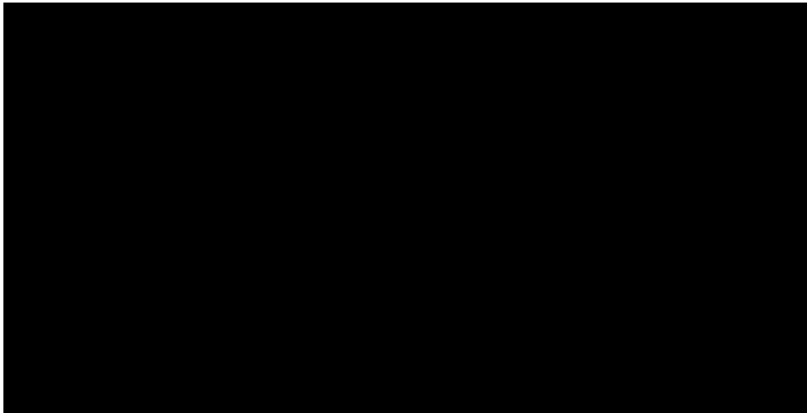


Source: The Guardian

In a conversation with David Letterman on the popular Netflix show in January 2018, Obama had said that in his own presidential campaign, he had more friends on Facebook and Myspace and more followers on Twitter in comparison to his opponent John McCain. By using social media and mobilizing the general public online, Obama was able to raise awareness about and also the required financial support for his campaign through the use of over 15 social networking sites.

Social media brings people together, defying geographical boundaries as well as boundaries of the time zone. Because of the social media platforms today, the individual voice and opinions have become stronger. It is fast democratizing media creation, and we can refer to Ian Rizzab, the CEO and founder of Time is Limited, who has called social media as people's platform. He suggests that it is in the people's hands to amplify and welcome such major changes in our lives. We will listen to him in the coming video.

## Social Media as People's Platform



*"Social media is addictive precisely because it gives us something which the real-world lacks: It gives us immediacy, direction, and value as an individual."*  
-David Amerland

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZcBBHxIH7-w>



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Social media works as an amplifier. We get there faster; we get there easier, and it works perfectly for that. And an example of that escalating is somebody said, don't fly British Airways. This customer was in no way motivated, it was not any motivation in particular. Their customer service is horrendous. That would be a normal regular tweet that any company gets a million of them. The difference between this and all the other tweets that they've been getting is that this person paid for promoting it. He paid a couple thousand dollars to promote this tweet to a lot of people. They now call that 'complain-vertizing'. Power of the individual. This guy had a hundred followers or something like that, right? I mean, hundred followers amplified through paid media, their retweets, then the media attention and then every piece of media in the world was reporting from BBC to Financial Times, promote a tweet to British Airways complaining about customer service.

A PR campaign worth hundreds of millions of dollars. That is the power of one individual, of one tweet. And coming back to the power of the individual, the individuals today have more power than they ever, ever had before. They have power to talk and change companies, to change governments, to change institutions. And I encourage every one of you to think about how you can influence the world around you because you can influence it more than you ever could for the last several generations. You have the power of social media, the power of amplifying those thoughts, amplifying those actions.

Rizzab reinforces the idea of how social media is the fastest channel to amplify a thought thus imparting immense power to every individual opinion. By giving the example of a customer of British Airways, he has shown the importance of an individual grievance if properly shared on social media platforms. On social media platforms, people's voice is heard and it can also spread rapidly followed by improved responses by systems and in the long run even societal changes. In this context, we should also discuss a very influential initiative by the Indian Government to connect with the people of our country through




media channels, and share ideas, future vision and innovations.

The 'Mann ki Baat' is an Indian radio program hosted by our Honorable Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi in which he addresses the people of the nation on all India radio, also in the live telecast on DD National and DD News. These are simultaneously picked up by all other TV channels. Later on, they are also released through various other media. It is a monthly radio program which was started on 3rd of October 2014. Prime Minister Modi interacts with citizens of India on themes and issues that matter to the nation.

And now gradually, we find that it has transformed into an inspirational platform that encourages sustainable progress on priority themes that are core to India's efforts towards achieving the goals of sustainable development. Since 2nd June 2017, 'Mann ki Baat' is also available in regional dialects to expand the reach of the program. The program has received more than 61,000 ideas on the website and more than and about 1.5 lakh audio recordings by listeners during the first 15 addresses only. It shows us the connect with the people and the immense reach and popularity of the program using various platforms of the social media. Each month, some selected calls also become a part of the broadcast. This program has an innovative framework which was immediately accepted by the people confirming the reach of the digital media.

- The Honorable Prime Minister is constantly active on Internet platforms, and has framed *Mann Ki Baat* as a more intimate, longer-duration, participative interaction with the people.
- *Mann Ki Baat* has campaigns such as *Vocal for Local*, *Make in India*, and *Swachh Bharat Abhiyan*, which have had a positive impact on the country.
- During the 89th episode of Mann Ki Baat, Prime Minister Narendra Modi discussed the Indian unicorn startup in the global pandemic.
- He highlighted that Indian startups have been creating wealth and value even during the Covid-19 pandemic, and the country has reached a landmark figure of 100 unicorns with a valuation of more than 300 billion dollars.




Source: WION. [2022, May 29]. 89th edition of Mann Ki Baat: PM Narendra Modi leads India's unicorn club | Latest English News | WION [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UxOs14D1ETk>

The Honorable Prime Minister is constantly active on internet platforms and has framed 'Mann ki Baat' as a more intimate, longer duration, participative interaction with the people. 'Mann ki Baat' has campaigns such as 'Vocal for Local', 'Make in India' and 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan' which have had a positive impact on the country. During the 89th episode of 'Mann ki Baat', Prime Minister Narendra Modi discussed the Indian unicorn startup in the global pandemic.

He highlighted that Indian startups have been creating wealth and value even during the times of COVID-19 pandemic and the country has reached a landmark figure of 100 unicorns with a valuation of more than 300 billion dollars. The Prime Minister's discussion on Indian unicorns aim to inspire and encourage the startup community, highlighting their significant contributions to the economy and the spirit of innovation in the country. This showcases the potential and competitiveness of the Indian startup ecosystem on a global scale. The reach of social media has successfully conveyed this message to the people of the country. Rather than using mainstream media, Modi ji had also announced his win via Twitter to his followers.

At that time it was 4.27 million and now it is 29.1 million and encouraged voters to tweet their selfies with the hashtag selfie with Modi. Selfies came in mostly from the younger crowd, but this practice was certainly not limited by age. The effective use of social media under the influence of our Honorable Prime Minister has also filtered to other government ministries and channels as a medium of immediate grievance redressal.

Source: <https://blog.vuroll.com/digital-and-social-media-landscapes-in-india/>



- Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi is the first Indian political leader to use social media to effectively connect to and engage with the people.
- He use all available platforms – digital, as well as, offline channels to reach out to his people.
- Another example is the railway Minister Suresh Prabhu, who dispatched railway police to the aid of a woman being harassed on a moving train.

Source: <https://reelreel.com/indian-digital-media-landscape/>

Platform	Percentage	Category
YouTube	28%	Social Network
Facebook	28%	Social Network
WhatsApp	28%	Messaging/Chat App
Twitter	2%	Social Network
Google+	2%	Social Network
FB Messenger	2%	Messaging/Chat App
Instagram	2%	Social Network
LinkedIn	2%	Social Network
Skype	2%	Social Network
WeChat	2%	Messaging/Chat App
Snapchat	2%	Messaging/Chat App

Honourable Prime Minister Narendra Modi uses all available platforms, digital as well as offline channels to reach out to his people successfully. Following his example, we find that the railway ministry also uses certain social media channels, particularly tweet in order to help distressed passengers during their train journey.



Source:  
[https://www.google.com/search?q=1C1C HBD\\_enIN019IN019&scrf=ABSstBqIAKDU U0WVnN55yYvXaMk5sGGBNq; 16906808 6568&oeq=sushma+swarajji&btn=ic&oeq; e=4m&sa=X&ved=2a1JKEWjwIDEELWAA xWZUHPHqLUvUQDpQJqCjCAAB&chid= 16906808&oeq=1170&bih=752& dp=3.25](https://www.google.com/search?q=1C1C HBD_enIN019IN019&scrf=ABSstBqIAKDU U0WVnN55yYvXaMk5sGGBNq; 16906808 6568&oeq=sushma+swarajji&btn=ic&oeq; e=4m&sa=X&ved=2a1JKEWjwIDEELWAA xWZUHPHqLUvUQDpQJqCjCAAB&chid= 16906808&oeq=1170&bih=752& dp=3.25)



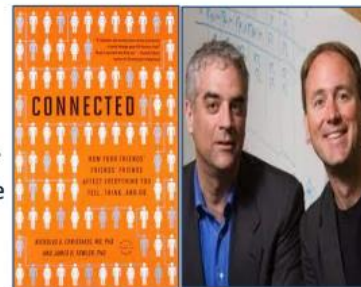
Source:  
<https://www.livemint.com/politics/news/remembering-sushma-swaraj-first-full-time-female-foreign-minister-so-twitter-is-favorite-1565150051427.html>

- In this context, we must also refer to our former Minister of External Affairs, Sushma Swarajji (1952-2019), who made use of social media, specially Twitter; and went beyond files and protocols to reach out to the common Indian citizens in the country and overseas.
- The Minister helped distressed Indians abroad, and on several occasions rescued men and women trapped in other countries.

We must also refer to our former Minister of External Affairs, Sushma Swaraj ji who made use of social media, again especially Twitter and went beyond files and protocols to reach out to the common Indian citizens in the country and also overseas. She helped those Indians who were trapped in other countries due to some unfortunate circumstances. So, we see that the social networks made it easier to connect with others who share similar or even for that matter different interests and values beyond geographic limitations.

## Connecting with Social Media

- **Communication:** Dwyer, Hiltz, and Passerini (2007) emphasized that the main motivation for using social media is **communication and maintaining relationships**.
  - Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram have allowed us to stay connected with our loved ones and form new relationships with people with similar interests.
- Nicholas Christakis and James Fowler in their book, **Connected: The Surprising Power of Our Social Networks and How They Shape Our Lives** (2009) explain how social media has expanded over the years.
- Social networks beyond geographic limitations made it easier to connect with others who share similar of different interests and values.



Source: Twitter

Critics like Dwyer, Hiltz and Passerini have emphasized that the main motivation for using social media is communication and maintaining relationships with our loved friends, loved

ones and also in the hope of generating new friendships. Nicholas Christakis and James Fowler in their 2009 book, *Connected: The Surprising Power of Our Social Networks and How They Shape Our Lives* have explained how social media has expanded over the years. These digital platforms have created virtual spaces breaking the monotony of physical proximity. Social media offers different platforms for sharing ideas, learning from others and engaging in discussions.

- The most frequently used forms of communication include:

- updating one's own social media profile
- commenting on photos or other posts
- posting public messages to others
- wall style messages
- social network based instant messaging



Source: Workable Resources

- While the reading and writing of blogs remains in the top ten online activities carried out by young people, its popularity is decreasing, particularly with the rise of micro-blogging practices.
  - For example, via Twitter and the Facebook 'status', 'function', both of which are further enabled by the use of SNS via mobile phones (Lenhart, Purcell, Smith & Zichur 2010).

Most frequently used forms of communication include updating our own social media profile, commenting on photos and other posts, posting public messages to others, wall style messages or social network based instant messaging. While the reading and writing of blogs remains in the top 10 online activities carried out by young people, its popularity is now diminishing particularly with the rise of microblogging practices. In one of our next modules, we will discuss the significance of blogging and microblogging in detail. Now we shall see how Christakis and Fowler have explored the influence of social media connections on human behaviour.

- They posited the three degrees rule that diverse phenomena, ‘...ripple through our network, having an impact on our friends (one degree), our friends’ friends (two degrees), and even our friends’ friends’ friends (three degrees)’.
- Individuals possess the power to influence their immediate circle of friends, thereby creating a ripple effect as these friends, in turn, influence their own network of connections.
  - They explored the influence of social connections on human behavior describing how social influence does not end with the people to whom a person is directly connected.
- Hence, a person’s beliefs and actions can influence people they have never met, to whom they are only indirectly tied.



Source: Slack



They have discussed how individuals have a power to influence their immediate circle of friends but also creating a ripple effect as these friends in turn would influence their own network of connections. They have posited the three degrees rule that diverse phenomena ripple through our network having an impact on our friends that is one degree, our friends' friends that is the two degrees and even our friends' friends' friends that is the three degrees. So, they have explored the influence of social connections on human behaviour describing how social behaviours and their influences do not end with the people to whom a person is directly communicating to.

Generally, an influencer is someone who has the power to affect people's views and decisions because of one's authority of knowledge, position or relationship with the larger audience. Having an asset of building good social relationships such people follow a distinctive niche within which they actively engage. The size of following depends on the size of the selected topics niche.

- **Social Influence:** Social media influencers (SMIs) represent a new type of independent third-party endorser who are often known as '**social media stars**' or '**micro-celebrities**'.
- **Ed Keller and Jon Berry** propose five characteristics common to influencers. They are (1) activists, (2) well connected, (3) capable of making an impact, (4) mentally active, and (5) trendsetters.
  - Influencers cultivate sizable and engaged audiences whose ardent attention is captivated by their leverage of perspectives through blogs, tweets etc.
- They are repeatedly approached by advertisers to endorse products, brands, organizations, or ideas on their social media profiles, a marketing tactic known as **influencer marketing**.

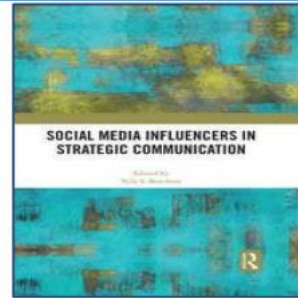


Source: Wikipedia



So now let us look at social media influencers, also known as SMIs, who represent a new type of independent third-party endorsers who are often known as 'social media stars' or 'micro celebrities'. Ed Keller and Jon Berry in their work have proposed five characteristics which are common to influencers, and they are activists, they are well connected, they are capable of making an impact, they are mentally active and therefore they are also trendsetters. Influencers cultivate sizable and engaged audiences whose ardent attention is captivated by their leverage of perspectives through blogs, tweets etc. and they are repeatedly approached by advertisers to endorse their products, brands, organisations or ideas on their social media platforms, a marketing technique known as influencer marketing. Social media influencers recognise their ability to change the ways in which the users consume content and thus shape cultural values and norms.

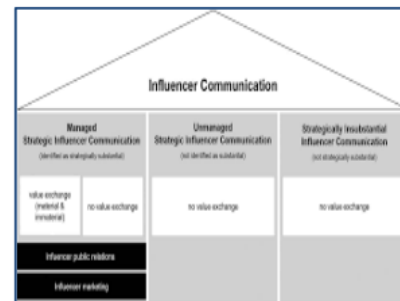
- Nadja Enke and Nils Borchers describe Social media influencers as '**secondary stakeholders**' who fulfill brand's commercialization objectives.
- We can decide the types of social media influencers on the basis of the criteria of :
  - (a) the status group of SMIs,
  - (b) the specific topics of their postings,
  - (c) the necessity of a following,
  - (d) their engagement with audiences, and
  - (e) the willingness to monetize their activities as further criteria,



Source:  
<https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapter/edit/10.4324/9781003181286-2/social-media-influencers-strategic-communication-conceptual-framework-strategic-social-media-influencer-communication-nadja-enke-nils-borchers>

Nadja Enke and Nils Borchers have described social media influencers as secondary stakeholders who fulfil brands commercialization objectives. We can decide the types of social media influencers on the basis of certain criteria which are listed here. They may be the status group of SMIs or the specific topics of their postings, the necessity of a following, their engagement with audiences and the willingness to monetize their activities as a further criteria.

- They also propose a framework for **strategic social media influencer communication**, which encompasses activities directed at SMIs.
- The framework includes:
  - ✓ managed strategic SMI communication-activities managed by organizations
  - ✓ unmanaged strategic SMI communication-activities independent from organizational management
  - ✓ strategically insignificant SMI communication-activities that are insubstantial to organizations



Source:  
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/1531180X.2019.1620234>

They also propose a framework for strategic social media influencer communication which encompasses activities directed at SMIs and the framework includes as listed below,

managed strategic SMI communication activities managed by organisations, unmanaged strategic SMI communication activities independent from organisational management and strategically insignificant SMI communication activities that are insubstantial to organisations. These frameworks help in creating a broader context referred to as the strategic action field. And we can categorise SMIs either by the number of followers or on the basis of content.

By the number of the followers, SMIs can be categorized into four types:

- **Mega-influencers** (more than 1 millions followers) on at least one network platform.
- **Macro-Influencers** ( 500,000 and 1 million followers)
- **Micro-influencers** (10-50 thousand)
- **Nano-influencers** (less than 10000)



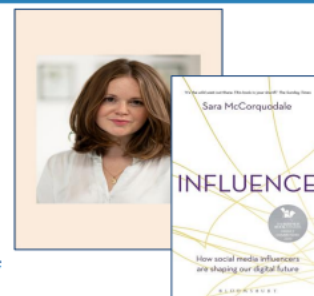
Source: India Today

By the content, types of influencers are categorized as follows:

- Bloggers
- You Tubers
- Podcasters
- Social Posts only

This slide also describes different types of influencers. At this point, I would refer to Sara McCorquodale's work which discusses several examples of social media influencers.

- Sara McCorquodale's book, *Influence: How social media influencers are shaping our digital future* (2019) explores the impact of influencers in digital communication.
  - The book includes case studies and analysis of influential individuals in the realm of social media.
  - Sara McCorquodale is a former journalist and a guest lecturer at Edinburgh University Business school.
  - She first realized the power of influencers while working as the digital editor of the magazine Tatler.
- She is also the founder of the influencer intelligence platform called CORQ that provides cherished insights and data on influencers.
  - In a podcast with Movidiam Creative Leaders \*, she discusses how her platform, CORQ, empowers brands and agencies to make informed decisions about their influencer marketing strategies.



Source: <https://primer.com.au/sara-mccorquodale-the-woman-who-cracked-the-influencer-code/>

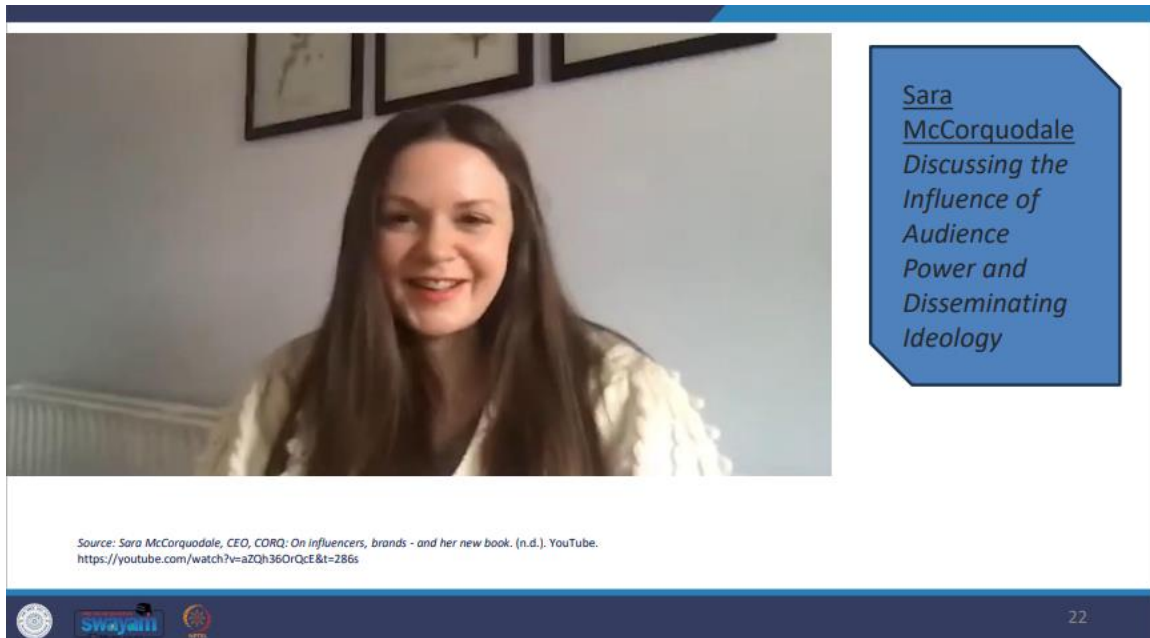
\*Movidiam. (2020, June 15). Sara McCorquodale - Founder & CEO - CORQ | Movidiam Creative Leaders Podcast [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=swsDFWw6LQ0>



Sara's 2019 work explores the impact of influencers in digital communication, including different case studies and analysis of influential individuals in the realm of social media. Owing to her journalistic training, she has also drawn a lot by talking to different social media personalities and on the basis of her personal interviews. The book therefore provides an invaluable insight into the inner workings of digital communication, and she has cited the examples of Zoella, Chiara Ferragni, PewDiePie, Kylie Jenner, and we can also specifically refer to the case study of Chiara Ferragni which has been discussed by Sara in somewhat detail.

Ferragni is an Italian fashion influencer with over 23 million followers on Instagram. The book discusses how she has leveraged her social media presence to build a successful fashion brand with collaborations with major fashion houses and introduced her own line of clothing and accessories. Sara McCorquodale also examines how Ferragni's influence extends beyond the fashion industry with her involvement in political campaigns as well as social causes. The case study is used to illustrate the power and influence that social media influencers can have on their followers and the wider digital world. They can also use their platforms to effect changes in various industries and causes.

During an online interview with Tech Forge Media, Sara highlights the significant power that influencers have in influencing people. When questioned about her stance on banning the former US President Donald Trump from Twitter, she raised a crucial point about the far-reaching impact influencers can have on society. Let us take a look at it.



Sara McCorquodale  
*Discussing the Influence of Audience Power and Disseminating Ideology*

Source: Sara McCorquodale, CEO, CORQ: On influencers, brands - and her new book. (n.d.). YouTube.  
<https://youtube.com/watch?v=aZQh36OrQcE&t=286s>

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Like Twitter banning Donald Trump is pointless. If they were going to ban him, they should have banned him like five years ago because the fact is now, he has this audience. He has grown this audience. He has mobilized them. He has radicalized them over a period of four to five years. And now, to be honest, it's sort of too late. Twitter is kind of besides

the point. I think as well banning Trump, he will go to another platform, or a Trump digital platform is coming.

Mark my words. And his following will congregate there. But the thing with Trump that he's done so effectively and the reason why Twitter banning him doesn't really matter so much is his ideology is all over the platform. So, you can ban him, but are you going to ban everyone who's on the alt-right or who is a Mega supporter? Probably not. Therefore, the ideology and the communities exist on the platform, whether Trump does or not. And actually, when I was writing the book, I interviewed a really interesting expert in the alt-right called Mike Wendling, and he's written an incredible book on that. And he's a BBC journalist. And he was just talking about it's not really possible to deplatform someone anymore because they can just move to other platforms. And actually, when you take them off the mainstream ones and they go to create their own platform or they go to lesser-known ones or ones that are more kind of, I don't know, under the radar, these people in these communities can become more extreme. So, the idea that we can just chop Trump off Twitter and he's gone is, to my mind, not true. It's incorrect.

While social influencers can build a dedicated audience, not all social media users with a large following can be considered as influencers. This term also implies the ability to genuinely influence and impact the opinions and behaviours of others. This suggests the intent of inspiring others to emulate and perpetuate personal as well as professional relationships on global levels.

## Conclusion

- Social media platforms facilitate human communication by fostering participation, openness, conversation, community, and connectedness.
- The emergence of Web 2.0 and the internet's capacity for mutual data communication have given rise to the concept of social media, which is characterized by user-generated content and the ability to create and exchange information.
- Social media has enabled to make connections beyond geographical boundaries, allowing individuals to connect with others who share similar or different interests and values.

So, we have seen that social media platforms facilitate human communication by fostering participation, connectedness, a feeling of community, openness and conversation, etc. The emergence of Web 2.0 in the internet's capacity for mutual data communication have given

rise to the concept of social media which is characterized by user-generated content and the ability to create and exchange information. Social media thus has enabled us to make connections beyond geographical boundaries allowing us to connect with others who may share similar or even different interests and value systems. So today we have focused on how social media as a mass communication tool facilitates global connectivity and thereby empowering individuals and individual opinion of course. In the next module, we will discuss different social networking sites and their importance on our digital communicative behaviour. Thank you.