

Online Communication in the Digital Age
Prof. Rashmi Gaur
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology
Lecture – 34
Blogging and Microblogging

Good morning, dear friends and welcome to this module. After discussing the role of social networking sites in the previous module, we will look at blogging and microblogging today. We begin by tracing the development of these aspects of digital communication. The term blog was first used in 1999 by Peter Merholz. And as we can understand, this is a truncation of the word coined by John Barger. Godwin-Jones has described blogs as one large loosely interwoven net of information as blog entries are linked, referenced and also debated.

Blogging: Sharing News and Views

- The term "blog" that was first used in 1999 by Peter Merholz, is a truncation of the word "weblog" coined by John Barger (December 1997).
- Godwin-Jones (2006) describes blogs as “one, large, loosely interwoven net of information, as blog entries are linked, referenced, and debated”.
 - Blogs are interactive Web 2.0 websites, allowing visitors to leave comments, and fostering social connections between bloggers and readers.
- Apart from personal use, the commercialization of blogging has been on the rise nowadays with corporations collaborating with bloggers for advertising purposes.



Source: Microsoft Designer

Blogs are interactive web 2.0 websites which allow visitors to leave comments and fostering social comments between bloggers and readers. Apart from personal use, the commercialization of blogging has also been on the rise today as corporations collaborate with bloggers for advertising purposes. Most blogs are primarily textual, although some focus on art, photographs, which are known as art blogs and photo blogs.

There can be videos, video blogs or blogs or music that is mp3 blogs and audio blogs which are known as podcasts. After a slow start in the 90s, blogging rapidly gained its popularity. The modern blog evolved from the online diary where people would keep a running account of the events of their personal lives. And online diaries became the first blog community where readers could add comments to the blog entries of other writers. Online diaries were started in 1994.

- Online Diaries were started around 1994, and are considered as precursors to modern blogs.
 - Claudio Pinhanez's "Open Diary" as a web page was published during 1994-96
 - Bruce Ableson launched Open Diary in October 1998, which soon grew to thousands of online diaries.
 - Ableson also built the first system for blog comments and innovated the use of friend's list privacy settings and activity feeds on the site.
- One of the early blogs was **Wearable Wireless Webcam**, an online shared diary of a person's personal life combining text, digital video, and digital pictures transmitted live from a wearable computer and *EyeTap* device to a website in 1994.

A Short History of Blogs

1994 The first blog was Linka.net by Justin Hall. Posts were short intros to a link he posted

1997 The term weblog was coined by Jorn Barger for Online Diaries or Personal Pages

1998 The first blogging platform "Open Diary" made blogging accessible to the masses

Source: <https://thetale.com/blog/history-of-blogging/> *SQ*

Claudio Pinhanez's 'open diary' as a web page was published during 1994 to 1996. Bruce Ableson had also launched open diary in October 1998 which soon grew to thousands of online diaries. Ableson also built the first system for blog comments and innovated the use of friend's list privacy settings and activity feed on the site. One of the early blogs was Wearable Wireless Webcam, an online shared diary of an individual's personal life combining text, digital video and digital pictures transmitted live from a wearable computer and iTap device to a website in 1994. The practice of semi-automated blogging with live video along with the text was referred to as sousveillance, and such journals were also used as evidence in legal matters.

- This practice of semi-automated blogging with live video together with text was referred to as sousveillance, and such journals were also used as evidence in legal matters.
- Before the term blog became popular, there were several digital communities in various forms; such as, Usenet, Genie, BiX, CompuServe, E-mail lists, Bulletin Board Systems and “threads” etc.
- Several names, during late 1990’s, compete for the credit of having invented blogs – Ian Ring, Dave Winer, John Barger.
 - As the progression of technology – perma links, blog rolls and Track Backs - made the usage of Blogs easy, blogging soon gained popularity.



Source: Wikipedia

Before the term blog itself became popular, there were several digital communities in various forms. For example, Usenet, Genie, Bix, CompuServe, E-mail lists, Bulletin Board Systems and threads, etc. Several names during the 1990s compete for getting the credit of having invented blogs and we can refer to Ian Ring, Dave Winer, John Barger, etc. But with the progression of technology, particularly with the inclusion of permalinks, blogrolls and track backs, we find that the technology became user savvy as far as writing the blogs was concerned and therefore it soon gained popularity among those people also who were not primarily very tech savvy. It was around 2002 that people also started to monetize their blogs with sites like Blockheads, which is a precursor to Google AdSense.

The importance of the blogging community and its relationship to larger society increased rapidly. Established schools of journalism also began researching and discussing blogging and soon we find that blogs also became a creditable news source. An early milestone in the rise in the importance of blogs came in 2002 when many bloggers focused on comments by US Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott. These comments were ignored by the popular media sources. However, once the bloggers started to comment on it, it soon gave rise to an increased public sentiment.

Political Impact of Blogging

- Senator Lott, at a party honoring U.S. Senator Storm Thurmond, praised Senator Thurmond by suggesting that the United States would have been better off had Thurmond been elected president.
- Lott's critics saw these comments as tacit approval of racial segregation, used as a strategy by Thurmond in his earlier campaigns.
- Though media remained silent, several blogs started to criticize these comments.
 - This view was reinforced by documents and recorded interviews dug up by bloggers, which eventually made Senator Lott to resign from his Senate leadership position.



Source: Wikipedia

During a party meeting, which was organized to honor US Senator Storm Thurmond, Senator Lott had praised him by suggesting that perhaps his presidency would have been a better idea for the country. Lott's critics saw these comments as tacit approval of racial segregation, which was used as his strategy by Thurmond in his earlier campaigns. This view, which was proposed and taken up by the bloggers, but was ignored by the media altogether, was reinforced by documents and recorded interviews, which were dug up by bloggers and eventually this led Senator Lott to resign from his leadership position in the Senate. By 2004, the role of blogs became increasingly mainstream as political consultants, news services and candidates started to use them as tools for outreach and opinion forming. The question which at this stage we should ask is whether blogging is a private or a public act of communication.

The Psychology of the Blog: Public or Private?

- Laura J. Gurak and Smiljana Antonijevec, in their research article, “The Psychology of Blogging You, Me, and Everyone in Between” (2008), discusses blogging from a different context.
- The phenomenon and practice of blogging, offer a rich environment from which to look at the *psychology of the Internet*.
- Blogs illustrate the *fusion of key elements of human desire*—to express one’s identity, create community and structure one’s past and present experiences.
- The character of blogs as simultaneously private and public enables the formation of both individual and group identities.

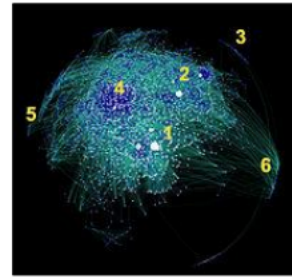


In this context, I would refer to the research article by Gurak and Antonijevec, who have discussed blogging from a different perspective. They suggest that the phenomenon and practice of blogging offer a rich environment from which to look at the psychology of the internet. Blogs illustrate the fusion of key elements of human desire and that is to express oneself, to express one's identity, create a community and structure one's own experiences in the past and present. The character of blogs as simultaneously private and public enables the formation of both individual and group identities. Gurok and Antoni Jevic suggest that weblogs invoke the notion of a contradictory genre and activity with you, me and everyone in between being brought into a single semi-private or semi-public space and experience.

They also conclude that blogging works as a bridge between private and public as it creates the widest arena of the blog sphere or multi-scale social space, where writing or reading blogs designates one to many interactions facilitating and enabling group forming of a community. To know more about collective community of weblogs, we must also understand the concept of blogosphere. The term blogosphere is a portmanteau of blog and atmosphere.

Blogosphere

- Amy Lupold Bair, in her book, ***Blogging For Dummies***, (2019), first talks about blogging as 'blogosphere', an exciting online space that people use to share their lives, build communities, and create personal brand platforms.
- Blogosphere can be understood as a virtual world of interconnected blogs and websites dedicated to sharing ideas, opinions, theories, knowledge, and much more.
- Blog search engines like **Bloglines**, **BlogScope**, and **Technorati** have been used to search blog content and discover relevant information.



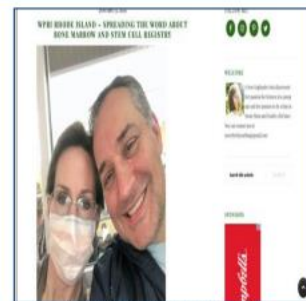
An artist's depiction of the interconnections between blogs and blog authors in the "blogosphere" in 2007.
Source: Wikipedia

It is Amy Lupold Bair who in her 2019 book has first talked about blogging as blogosphere, an exciting online space that people use to share their lives, to build communities and also to create personal brand platforms. Blogosphere thus can be understood as a virtual world of interconnected blogs and websites dedicated to sharing ideas, opinions, theories, our own knowledge etc.

Blog search engines like bloglines, blogscope and technoretty have been used to search blog content and discover relevant information. Blogosphere is often compared to grassroots journalism where each member is able to post on any topic that interlinks to their personal interest.

▪ **Blogging as Personal Scape: Documenting Life Events:**


- Personal blogging allows individuals to express themselves, document their experiences, and engage in self-reflection.
- It provides a creative outlet to share insights, hobbies, and passions while fostering connections within a supportive community.
 - This urge to communicate appears in all kinds of mediums, from scrapbooking to taking digital photographs.
- Jennifer Leal, a Rhode Island-based blogger, uses her blog, *Savor the Thyme* (shown in the picture), to document her experience with Leukemia.



Source: Online Communication Strategies for Managers

Primarily if we look at blogging as personal escape, it allows us to document our life events, to talk about our experiences, to allow us certain self-reflection, talk about our futuristic vision. It also therefore provides a creative outlet while fostering connections within a supportive community. This urge to communicate appears in all kinds of medium from scrapbooking to taking digital photographs and Jennifer Leal, a Rhode Island based blogger has used her blog 'Savor the Thyme' which is shown in the picture on the right-hand side of this slide to document her experiences with leukemia. Maintaining this blog has motivated her to raise awareness about the need for bone marrow donors for cancer fighters.

- **Sharing Information Through Blogging:**
 - Informational blogs serve as a platform for journalists to report on local, national, and international news, providing timely updates and analysis on various topics.
 - Educators leverage informational blogs to keep parents and students informed about classroom activities, upcoming events, and important dates, fostering effective communication and engagement within the educational community.
 - **TechCrunch**, although primarily known as a technology, news and media platform, also serves as an informational blog.



Source: Online Communication Strategies for Managers

swayam

9

Blogging also allows us to share information and we can talk about anything local or national or even the international. It also helps us to receive timely updates and detailed analysis on various topics. Educators also leverage information blogs to keep parents and students informed about classroom activities, upcoming events and important dates, fostering effective communication and engagement within the educational community. TechCrunch, although primarily known as technology news and media platform also serves as an informational blog. TechCrunch hosts a community of bloggers who contribute their insights, opinions and expertise on various tech related topics. Numerous companies, both small and large incorporate blogs into their websites to initiate interactive dialogues with their customers.

- Personal connection improves a company’s credibility and often enhances customer recognition of its brand and values.
- Southwest Airlines has taken this approach by creating a blog and online community at www.Slouthwestaircommunity.com.
 - The site covers everything from winter storm updates to upcoming promotional partnerships. It provides travel tips, insights, and destination guides to help readers make the most of their journeys.
- For many bloggers, the blog itself is their way of becoming an online influencer. Creating a blog is an excellent way to put down some roots on the internet, build an online community, and establish an online footprint.
 - The Craft Blog by ‘trimcraft’ shown in the figure, combines a popular crafting blog with an online crafting community through their popular forums. It is a treasure trove of inspiration, featuring stunning craft projects, innovative techniques, and unique design ideas.



Sources:
 Online Communication Strategies for Managers
 Online Communication Strategies for Managers
 (www.thecraftblog.com)

Personal connection through blogging improves the credibility of a company and also simultaneously enhances customer recognition of its brand and values. Here we have cited the example of the blog which is maintained by the Southwest Airlines. But similarly we find that other organizations as well as other airlines also maintain similar type of blog which pass on timely information to their travellers.

For many bloggers, blog itself is their way of becoming an online influencer and creating a blog is an excellent way to put down some roots on the internet, build an online community and establish an online footprint. We can cite several examples in this regard. One of the examples taken over here is the craft blog by Time Craft which is shown in the figure which combines a popular crafting blog with an online crafting community through their popular forums. It is also essential to note that not every blog allows comments. Many popular bloggers find that they are being overwhelmed by the sheer volume of responses and want to avoid controversial situations. Let us now look at the concept of vlogging or video blogging.

Video Blogging (Vlogging)

- **Vlog**, a shortened term for video blog, refers to a form of blogging that uses video as the primary content.
- **Vlog** entries are made regularly and often combine embedded video or a video link with supporting text, images, and others.
- Compared to text- or audio blogs, **vlogs** can be used in a much wider range of applications, such as online education and learning, online gaming, product marketing, and news reporting.
- In the rapidly evolving era of vlogging, several camera apps emerged as a groundbreaking tool for vlogging, live streaming, and content creation.



Source: Grishma Udayawar. (2023, March 18). Rishikesh One Day Tour Plan with all information [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F70CDs10jwY>

Vlog is a short-term term for video blog, and it refers to a form of blogging that uses video as the primary content. Vlog entries are made regularly and often combine embedded video or a video link with supporting text, images and other things. Compared to textual blogs or audio blogs, vlogs can be used in a much wider range of applications such as online education and learning, online gaming, product marketing, news reporting, trivialogues etc. In the rapidly evolving era of blogging, several camera apps have emerged as a groundbreaking tool for vlogging, live streaming and content creation.

Some popular apps are Expression Camera, FaceApp, Face Swapper and Frame.io etc. Their innovative functions as a creator platform support an array of memes, GIFs, cinematic and social content generators etc. which help us to produce original content in a smooth fashion. Some of these apps also maintain complete privacy by allowing the user to change the image on the screen.

Let us look at one video in order to better understand how these features help us to shoot our own avatar for blogging purposes. Here we have taken an example of Expression Camera app which is merely for illustration purposes.



Expression Camera is made by Embody Me, and it was selected as the number one product of the week in its beta phase on Product Hunt. Now not only can you use it to hide your background, but you can use pre-loaded or even some images that you upload to transform into your on-screen avatar while you're using a webcam. And since it doesn't require any pre-processing, not only can you make scripted content with it, but you can use it in live stream situations as well.

This app is free to download and use and we also offer a paid version for those who would like access to further customization and utility. This app is compatible with both Windows and Mac so let's go over a quick rundown of how to get started with this program. When you open Expression Camera, this is what it's going to look like. It's split up into two. Now along with blogging, we are also familiar with the word microblogging.

Now if we are already blogging, why do we need microblogging at all? Perhaps a similar question might have been asked earlier too. If we have email already, why do we need WhatsApp ultimately? However, blogging and microblogging are two different things. We can define microblogging as a shorter form of blogging that allows us to send messages quickly. It is immediate, mobile friendly and portable. While traditional blogs can be hosted on many different websites, microblogs are typically hosted on social networking websites.

Microblogging

- With the immense success of blogs as a means to present subjective content like opinions and sentiments, newer means of expressing feelings, like **micro-blogging** (Twitter etc.) have emerged.
 - Providing a unique blend of social networking ideas with blogging, micro-blogging is gaining widespread acceptance as the new tech-savvy way of sharing information.
- Unlike most social media sites, microblogging sites limit the amount of content, users can upload to their accounts at a time.
- Martin Ebner and Mandy Schiefner, had conducted a survey in 2016 to find out opinions about the main differences between blogging and microblogging, and users' preferences in this regard.



Source: https://www.digital-together-2022.mzl.uni-muenchen.de/speaker/schiefner_rohs/index.html

We can say that microblogging is gaining widespread acceptance as the new tech-savvy way of sharing information. Unlike most social media sites, microblogging sites limit the amount of content. That means that users can upload to their accounts at a time only a predefined length of content. I would refer to a research by Martin Ebner and Mandy Schiefner who had conducted a survey in 2016 to find out opinions about the main differences between blogging and microblogging and also which particular way of blogging is preferred by the users for what reasons. They found that most of the respondents did not always prefer to write long texts which they have to in normal blogs.

For them, microblogging is much easier and faster. Also, many young people saw normal blogs as tools for knowledge saving, coherent statements and detailed discourses. Whereas microblogging is used mostly for writing about their quick reflections.

Early Micro blogging Platforms

- The first micro-blogs were known as *tumblelogs*.
- The term was coined in a blog post on April 12, 2005, by “why the lucky stiff”.
- However, by 2006 and 2007, the word “microblog” was used more widely for services provided by established sites like Tumblr and Twitter.
- As of May 2007, there were 111 microblogging sites in various countries.
 - Among the most notable services are Twitter, Tumblr, Mastodon, Micro.blog, Plurk, Jaiku, FriendFeed, and identi.ca



The first microblogs were known as Tumblogs. This term was coined in a blog post in April 2005. However, by 2006 and 2007, the word microblog was used more widely for services provided by established sites like Tumblr and Twitter. As of May 2007, there were 111 microblogging sites in various countries and among the most notable services were Twitter, Tumblr, Mastodon, Micro.blog, Plurk, Jaiku, FriendFeed and ident.ica etc. These sites have minor differences in terms of their functions. For example, Plurk has a timeline view that integrates video and picture sharing or Flipter may use microblogging as a platform for people to post topics and gather the opinions of the audience. Pink gadget is a location based microblogging service etc.

We can also say that we are microblogging each time we update our status on Facebook or share information about our current project on LinkedIn. But there are subtler differences here. Social networking websites like Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, Diaspora, Google Buzz and Zinc etc. also have their own microblogging feature which are better known as status updates. Status updates are usually more restricted than actual microblogging in terms of writing.

It can be said that any activity involving posting short messages can be classified as microblogging although it is usually not considered a microblogging site or service if it is a secondary rather than the principal service provided there. Microblogs are indexed by search engines just as quickly as traditional blogging and are usually listed higher on search engine results. Microblogging is therefore beneficial not only in maintaining context but also particularly in business. It is also useful for working together in communities that are only loosely held. In the field of teaching also it is emerging as an alternative to some other online media like Blackboard or Moodle which most of the time perhaps are not that agile.

While there are several microblogging sites such as Weibo, Poink, Yammer, Plurk etc. Twitter is by far the most popular.

Twitter



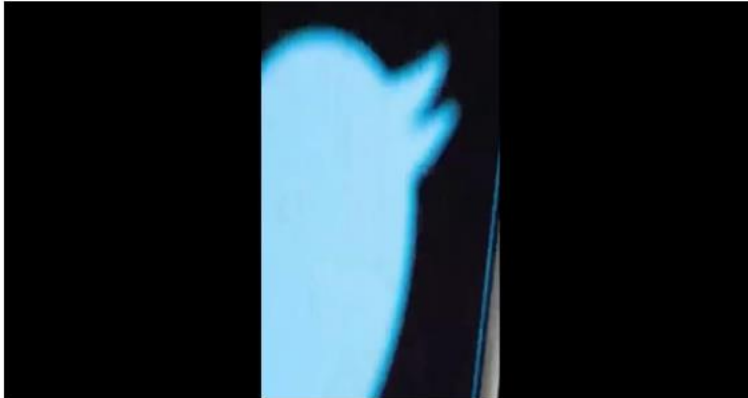
Source: <https://blog.mikelegal.com/trademark/a-brief-history-of-the-iconic-twitter-logo/>

- While there are several micro blogging sites such as Weibo, Poink, Yammer, Plurk, Twitter is by far the most popular.
- According to Joel Comm, author of the book titled *Twitter Power 2.0: How to Dominate Your Market One Tweet at a Time* (2009), what really distinguishes Twitter from other micro-blogging sites is its simplicity.
- Twitter was created by Jack Dorsey, Noah Glass, Biz Stone and Evan Williams in March 2006 and launched in July, in the same year.
 - Its former parent company, Twitter, Inc., was based in San Francisco, California and had more than 25 offices around the world



In his 2009 book, Joel Comm has commented that what really distinguishes Twitter from other sites is its simplicity. Twitter was created by Jack Dorsey, Noah Glass, Biz Stone and Evan Williams in March 2006 and launched in July in the same year. Its former parent company, Twitter Inc. was based in San Francisco and had more than 25 offices around the world.

Twitter



Source: <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/aXqlvqY-LgE>

- It was acquired by Elon Musk in October, 2022. Recently, Musk replaced the company's blue bird silhouette with "X," a term for what he has described as an "everything app."
 - The application will soon allow users to add long-form text to their tweets.

It was acquired by Elon Musk in October 2022 and recently Musk has replaced the company's bluebird silhouette with 'x', a term for what he has described as an 'everything app'. The application will soon perhaps allow users to add long form text to their tweets. Twitter was found in 2006 but by 2012 more than 100 million users had already joined it and soon it became one of the 10 most visited websites.

Twitter Communities

- The special ability of Twitter to reach a large number of people has led to the creation of many thriving communities around leaders in different spheres of life, such as politics, religion, fashion, mass media, and commerce.
- This medium had become so popular that **Melinda Emerson** (2012), who has built a **Twitter community** of more than 234,000 people interested in getting tips on running small businesses well, says, "I don't remember what I did before it existed, and I can't imagine what I would do if it went away".
 - This sounds almost idolatrous, but this simple medium has helped her reach out to tens of thousands of people she wouldn't otherwise be able to.



Source: Twitter

The special ability of Twitter to reach a large number of people has led to the creation of many living communities around leaders in different spheres of life such as politics, religion, fashion, mass media, and commerce etc. The medium has become so popular that Melinda

Emerson who built a Twitter community is almost idolatrous in her praise of this platform. There are countless examples when Twitter as a microblogging site spread news and awareness to people across the world. The power of Twitter has been repeatedly demonstrated in breaking news about major events and developments worldwide.

- The power of Twitter has been repeatedly demonstrated in breaking news about major events and developments worldwide.
- Examples include the terrorist attacks in Mumbai in November 2008.
 - Crash of U.S. Airways flight on the Hudson River in January 2009.
- Also successfully used by popular figures in all fields



Source: Twitter



Source:
Twitter

We can cite examples of the terrorist attack in Mumbai in November 2008 which was immediately tweeted and retweeted with the help of this medium. Similarly, information about flight delays, unfortunate flight pressures etc. is also immediately reported. Because of the immediacy and ease with which we can communicate with each other to a larger audience, it is being successfully used by popular figures in all fields. The growing influence of social media and blogging and microblogging sites can be seen also in the top leadership circuits in every field who often use it very successfully.



Source: Twitter

- Even the Indian Prime Minister's Office has a Twitter account, @PMOIndia, with 53 million followers.
- Many major political, financial, and humanitarian institutions also use it for the distribution of thoughts and opinions.

Even the Indian Prime Minister's office has a Twitter account with 53 million followers. A well-known example of the reach of Twitter is the case of James Karl Buck, an American student who managed to free himself from an Egyptian jail within 24 hours of tweeting just one word arrested. The picture on the right-hand side illustrates it very aptly.

- Another well-known example of the power and reach of Twitter is the case of **James Karl Buck**, an American student who managed to free himself from an Egyptian jail within 24 hours of tweeting one word: 'arrested'.
- Buck was arrested when he was covering an anti-government protest as part of his master's thesis project on Egypt's "New Leftists and the Blogosphere."
- The one-word tweet helped him reach contacts who could get him freed from prison.
 - Commenting on the case, **Biz Stone**, co-founder of Twitter, told CNN that the case demonstrates the power of Twitter, whereby a simple message which reached a lot of people in real-time could make such a difference.



Source: Techcrunch.com

Buck was arrested when he was covering an anti-government protest as part of his master's thesis project on Egypt's New Leftists and the blogosphere. The one-word tweet helped him reach contacts who could get him freed from prison. Over the years, Twitter has

also emerged as a catalyst for social change in recent years from promoting awareness of climate change to sparking discussions around gender and racial inequalities.

Use Twitter to Champion a Cause

- Some examples of a successful cause campaign on Twitter:
- The **#LetMeLearn campaign** unites youth, celebrities, and the UN in demanding urgent action for quality education in 2022.
- **Interface Business Solutions**, its digital agency, used the hashtag **#aWomanWants** to launch the campaign on Twitter.
- **Maybelline New York - India** used a tongue-in-cheek catchphrase to market their SuperStay lipstick on social media in February 2013.
- Social media agency **FoxyMoron** launched the campaign using the hashtag **#doesntlastlongenough** on Twitter.



Source: Their world

There are several successful cause campaigns on Twitter which might be referred to. We can refer to #LetMeLearn campaign, interface business solutions, Maybelline New York India which used a tongue-in-cheek catchphrase to market their super-stay lipstick on social media in 2013 and the use by #FoxyMoron who launched the campaign using the #doesnotlastlongenough.

PASSENGER ADVISORY

As per the latest Delhi Govt. Guidelines, all passengers arriving from UK must continue to undergo RT-PCR test both in India & UK. Passengers who are found negative during RT-PCR test at Delhi Airport must undergo 14 days of home quarantine, as per the norms of MoHFW & State Authorities. However, passengers testing positive during RT-PCR test shall be quarantined at a state-approved institutional quarantine facility. Passengers are requested to get in touch with Delhi Govt. officials for more information.

FLIGHTS

VANDE BHARAT FLIGHTS
(International to domestic circuit)

Specifically for international passengers arriving with Vande Bharat domestic connection will have international to domestic transfer only. Vande Bharat domestic flight at Delhi Airport and the screening & quarantine will be carried out as per the destination state protocol.

For more info, we request you to kindly reach out to the respective state govt. authorities.

- Twitter has also become a key platform for some of the world's top experts to contribute to real-time knowledge-sharing and provide input on policymaking.
- It was also highly effective during the Covid-19 pandemic, when airlines publicized the changing guidelines through Twitter also.
 - Twitter has been instrumental in spreading awareness about the COVID-19 pandemic, information on vaccines, precautions, and other important updates.

Twitter has also become a key platform for some of the world's top experts to contribute to real-time knowledge sharing and provide inputs on policy making. It was also highly effective during the COVID-19 pandemic when airlines publicised the changing guidelines through Twitter also, and it had been instrumental in spreading awareness about the COVID-19 pandemic, information on vaccines precautions as well as several other updates.

COVID-19 related advisories were retweeted and forwarded to members of other Twitter communities by users for rules regarding health checks etc. on arrival in different countries and also, we can refer to the campaign 'Vaccines Work' which promoted the importance and effectiveness of vaccines in preventing disease. However, Twitter has also been criticised for the banality of several of its tweets.

- **Pear Analytics**, a Texas-based firm that specializes in marketing analytics and insights, studied Twitter usage patterns in 2009 and found that 40.5% of all Tweets are 'pointless babble'.
- In response to this finding, known Internet researcher **Danah Boyd** (2009) remarked:

I challenge each and every one of you to record every utterance that comes out of your mouth (and that of everyone you interact with) for an entire day. And then record every facial expression and gesture. You will most likely find what communications scholars found long ago – people are social creatures and a whole lot of what they express is phatic communication. (**Phatic expressions** do social work rather than conveying [sic] information...think 'Hi' or 'Thank You.')...I vote that we stop dismissing Twitter just because the majority of people who are joining its ranks are there to be social.



Source: Twitter

Pear Analytics, a Texas-based firm which specialises in marketing analytics and insights, studied the Twitter usage patterns in 2009 and concluded that more than 40% of all tweets are 'pointless babble'. In response to this finding, another internet researcher, Danah Boyd, had remarked that most of the expressions are like the phatic expressions which are necessary for any type of social conversations. They are like icebreakers and therefore these expressions also serve a certain purpose. Though recognised as a successful social networking platform, Twitter has also been involved in numerous controversies over the years.

- Twitter has been involved in several controversies over the years.
 - In 2011, Twitter was involved in a legal battle with a U.K. footballer who had taken out a super injunction to prevent the media from reporting on his extramarital affair.
 - In 2013, Twitter was hacked, and the accounts of several high-profile individuals, including Barack Obama and Bill Gates, were compromised.
- Since Elon Musk's takeover of Twitter in 2022, the platform has been embroiled in several controversies, including an alleged surge in racist and anti-Semitic tweets, planned changes to Twitter that have ignited backlash, and reports of panicked workers worried about their jobs.
 - Almost a month after Elon Musk purchased Twitter, the social network reported that it would no longer apply the policy of misleading information about COVID-19.



Ryan Giggs of Manchester United looks dejected after defeat in the UEFA Champions League final between FC Barcelona and Manchester United FC at Wembley Stadium on May 28, 2011 in London, England.

Source: https://content.time.com/time/special/packages/article/0,28884,2075071_2075082_2075214,00.html



Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2011/may/16/footballer-super-injunction-twitter-ukraine-head>



Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/16/technology/twitter-hack-speech.html>



Source: <https://www.nbc.com/2022/11/09/twitter-stops-policing-covid-19-misinformation-under-elon-musk.html>

For example, in 2011, it was involved in a legal battle with a UK footballer who had taken

out a super injunction to prevent the media from reporting on his extramarital affair. In 2013, Twitter was hacked, and the accounts of several high-profile individuals were compromised. The list included Obama and Bill Gates too. Some commentators have also suggested that since the takeover of Twitter in 2022 by Elon Musk, the platform has been embroiled in several controversies. They have suggested that there is an alleged surge in racist and anti-Semitic tweets as well as reports of panicked workers who are worried about their job security. Almost a month after Musk purchased Twitter, the social network reported that it would no longer apply the policy of misleading information about COVID-19.

- Another controversy involving users was the banning of accounts of journalists, from publications such as The New York Times and the Washington Post; who expressed opinions contrary to Musk's ideas.
 - This action was heavily criticized, including by European public bodies, as it violates press freedom.
- There were many controversies surrounding Donald Trump's tweets on Twitter which led to his account being permanently suspended in 2021 due to worries about potential violence.

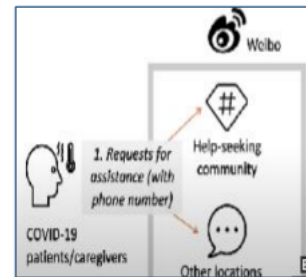


Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/15/technology/twitter-suspends-journalist-accounts-elon-musk.html>

This in itself is rather suggestive. Another controversy involving users was the banning of accounts by journalists from publications such as the New York Times and the Washington Post who issued opinions contrary to Musk's ideas. This action was heavily criticised, including by European public bodies, as it violates press freedom. Several controversies also surrounded the expulsion of Donald Trump from the use of his Twitter account. We would also briefly look at two other apps, Sina Weibo and Koo. After the 2009 riots in north-western China, domestic microblogging services including Fanfou, the very first Weibo service and international microblogging services like Twitter, Facebook and Plurk were banned by the Chinese government.

Sina Weibo

- Sina Weibo is a Chinese microblogging website launched by Sina Corporation in August 14, 2009.
 - In an interview, **Charles Chao**, the CEO of the company emphasized the platform's ability to distribute and approve content, empowering individuals to report and publish information.
- The company's logo, an **eye symbol**, represents the power to see through crises and save lives.
 - Weibo also has a verification program for known people and organizations, like Twitter.
- Weibo envisions developments towards a micro-charity platform and a micro-reading platform.



Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hig6nMQw4&t=175s>



26

This gap was filled by the Sina Corporation. So, Sina Weibo is a Chinese microblogging website which was launched in 2009. Its logo is an eye symbol which represents the power to see through crises and save lives. Weibo envisions developments towards a micro charity platform and a micro reading platform. Indian microblogging sites cater to the Indian audience and promote conversations on various topics. Prominent among these is Koo, launched in March 2020. It has now become the second largest multilingual microblogging platform available to the world.

Koo: Vocal for Local

- Koo is co-founded by entrepreneurs Aprameya Radhakrishna and Mayank Bidawatka.
- The app was launched in early 2020; it won *Atmanirbhar App Innovation Challenge*, which selected the best apps from some 7,000 entries across the country.
- Koo is used in 100+ countries across its app and web platform.
 - Koo's interface is similar to that of Twitter, allowing users to categorize their posts with hashtags and tag other users in mentions or replies. It uses a yellow-and-white interface.
- On 4 May 2021, Koo introduced a new feature called 'Talk to Type' which allows its users to create a post with the app's voice assistant.



Source: Times of India



27

Koo is co-founded by Aprameya Radhakrishna and Mayank Bidawatka. It was launched in

early 2020 and had won the Aatneerpar app innovation challenge. We selected the best apps from more than 7,000 entries across the country. In the short period, Koo is now being used in more than 100 countries across its app and web platform.

In 2021, Koo introduced a new feature called 'Talk to Type' which allows its users to create a post with the help of the voice assistant. Koo is currently available in more than 20 languages. It has over 50 billion downloads and is actively leveraged by over 8,000 eminent personalities across various areas. An innovator of language-based microblogging, Koo democratizes the voices of people by empowering them to share their thoughts and express freely in a language of their choice.

Conclusion

- Blogging and microblogging platforms enable sharing news, expressing opinions, contributing to public discourse, and connecting with diverse communities.
- It also helps to connect with the audience through video content and written blog posts, sharing valuable information, opinions, and experiences.
- Microblogging sites advocate social issues and can drive positive changes.

So, we can say that blogging and microblogging platforms enable the sharing of the news, expression of the news and thus contribute to the public as well as private discourse connecting us with diverse communities. And therefore, it is very helpful through its video content and written and audio posts, etc. Microblogging sites advocate social issues and can also drive positive social changes. In the next module, we shall discuss how different social media platforms have increasingly become a prominent source of social support due to their widespread use and accessibility. At this point, I am also referring to a video by Darren Rowse for further reference.

CAN YOU REALLY MAKE MONEY BLOGGING?

by Darren Rowse



"I've long advised that bloggers seeking to make money from blogging spread their interests across multiple revenue streams so as not to put all their eggs in one basket."

Source: Problogger

Darren Rowse. (2015, June 1). *Can you REALLY Make Money Blogging* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QWmVGvUirKQ>



Rowse is a founder of Problogger.net and actively shares insights on LinkedIn, Instagram and YouTube to offer tips for bloggers. The video which I am sharing here discusses the monetization potential of blogging. It may be of interest to some of us. Interested people can watch it later on. Thank you.