

Preserving the Integrity of Social Media through Information Technology Encompasses Vital Issues and Challenges

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ABSTRACT

Social media and IT are closely linked, with platforms depending on IT infrastructure. Social media comprises web applications that revolutionize communication and sharing within online communities. IT underpins content creation, processing, storage, and distribution. This synergy has transformed how people interact, leading to new social and communication forms. Major platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn rely on IT to function and are crucial worldwide, providing social, entertainment, and business opportunities. Advances in hardware, software, mobile tech, and internet access enable users to connect anytime and anywhere. Additionally, IT fuels the growth of machine learning and data analytics, helping platforms deliver personalized content and advertisements.

Keywords: Social media, Information Technology, Regulations, Self-regulation

INTRODUCTION

Today, thanks to social media, travelling and communicating globally are easier than ever. Its rise has allowed people to make instant and easy connections through widespread smartphone use. Information technology, particularly social media, has a significant impact on our daily lives. Many use social media to create online communities and interact socially. Besides personal use, social media greatly influences politics, business, sports, education, and other sectors. Key concepts involve knowledge creation, sharing, collaboration, and networking. For example, Mark Zuckerberg launched Facebook; Twitter is a microblogging platform; Steve Chen and Chad Hurley developed YouTube for videos; LinkedIn is a top professional network; educators use Edmodo to connect with students and parents; TeacherTube provides educational videos; and WordPress is a versatile content management system. Social media and information technology offer many benefits, but they also present challenges such as issues of “privacy,” “security,” and the spread of misinformation and fake news. Ultimately, both their positive and negative effects significantly impact society. It is crucial for individuals, businesses, and lawmakers to carefully assess the effects of emerging technologies as they develop to minimize potential drawbacks.

Objectives of Study

The primary goal of this study is to examine aspects of social media and information technology, as well as to address the challenges and issues linked to their use. The paper is divided into two sections. The first section analyses different facets of social media and information technology, highlighting and addressing the issues and challenges associated with their use. In the second section, existing legal measures, potential future legal measures, and suggestions to mitigate the problems caused by social media are discussed.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research was primarily conducted using secondary sources on research methodology, with a heavy reliance on existing literature and law journals. It also included commentaries, case analyses, newspaper articles, perspectives from various legal theorists, and rulings from the Supreme Court of India. Additionally, internet sources and e-books were referenced.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Digital media is a key communication tool between instructors and students, allowing the sharing of materials, tasks, and assessments (Atina, Nurchim, & Yudha, 2020; Krisyadi & Ricky, 2021). Rapid technological advances raise issues such as unequal access, over-reliance, privacy, and security that need to be addressed. Digital media promotes independent learning, sparks interest, and expands access to resources (Suyatin et al., 2021; Wijaya, Arifin, & Badri, 2021). Its impact, especially online learning, warrants an integrated review of its effects on student outcomes, as digital tools significantly shape education (Qureshi et al., 2021; Smirnova et al., 2021). Benefits include portability and convenience, which improve access to resources (Hidayat et al., 2021; Yuniarto, Supriyadi, & Sudjana, 2018), and make learning more engaging (Haq, Abdurahman, & Supriadi, 2021; Yordan & Fahyuni, 2021). Challenges include social isolation and reduced instructor engagement.

According to the constructivist philosophy of education, learners develop knowledge through active engagement with their environment. Digital media enhances student interaction with course material, supporting conceptual understanding (Al-Hail, Al-Fagih, & Koç, 2021; Patterson, 2019). It combines new information with prior knowledge, providing access to diverse data sources and opportunities for engagement. These tools help students apply their knowledge through assignments and projects, fostering a more profound understanding (Roemintoyo & Budiarto, 2021; Rosdiana & Kholiq, 2021). Digital media also facilitates communication and collaboration between students and instructors (López-Meneses et al., 2020; Saputra & Nurdiansyah, 2020), promoting idea generation through shared perspectives and enhancing learning outcomes and conceptual links. It provides immediate and accurate feedback to correct misconceptions and enhance learning. Online quizzes efficiently assess understanding and readiness to progress. Overall, constructivist theory emphasises interaction and hands-on learning, and integrating digital media improves engagement and mastery (Ertan Özen & Duran, 2021; Huda & Ahmala, 2020).

Digital media enhances learning through the use of interactive visuals, music, videos, simulations, games, and apps, thereby boosting understanding and engagement (Radich, 2013; Hegarty & Thompson, 2019). It promotes constructivist learning with accessible resources and collaboration (Ashar, Kamdi, & Kurniawan, 2021; Olivier, Verdonck, & Caseleijn, 2020). It supports project-based learning, enabling students to apply their knowledge to real-world situations (Demirbas & Ogut, 2020; Utami, 2020). Responsible use is crucial in preventing dependency, social disconnection, and privacy issues. Analysing its impact is vital. When students take ownership of their learning, they achieve better results. Digital media can aid independent study (Pradana & Kristanto, 2022; Wijaya, Mustaji, & Sugiharto, 2021). Resources like e-books, films, and papers are accessible via digital media. It offers interactive, customised learning support, tailoring materials to students' needs and skills (Ramdas et al., 2012; Santoso & Sari, 2020).

Social Media & Information Technology: A Brief Overview

Advances in technology have encouraged people to explore alternative lifestyles. Social networking platforms can promote greater social responsibility among young people. Social media acts as an online space for data sharing, allowing users to participate in discussions, share information, and produce content. It includes various formats such as blogs, microblogs, wikis, social networks, photo and video sharing sites, instant messaging, podcasts, widgets, virtual worlds, and more. Billions worldwide use social media to connect and communicate. Professionally, it helps expand expertise and strengthen networks by connecting with industry peers. It also provides opportunities to engage with clients, gather feedback, and increase brand visibility. As a fast-growing and innovative field, many organizations leverage social media to improve their operations. The growth of social networking facilitates more effective interaction and advertising. Information technology has played a key role and will continue shaping society and business practices. Today, nearly all professional, commercial, and industrial activities depend on information and communication technology, making it nearly impossible for organizations to operate without these tools. These technologies enable large-scale storage, processing, sharing, searching, and retrieval of information, making them essential.

The Relationship Between Social Media and Information Technology

Social media and information technology are closely linked, with social media platforms heavily dependent on

IT infrastructure. Social media encompasses web-based applications that have revolutionised communication by enabling users to create, share, and exchange content within online communities. Meanwhile, information technology covers a wide array of tools and techniques that support the creation, processing, storage, and distribution of information. The rise of social media has significantly changed how people communicate and share information, giving rise to new modes of interaction and social engagement. Social media has rapidly transformed the way people interact and share information, giving rise to new forms of communication and social engagement. Social media platforms such as “Facebook”, “Twitter”, “Instagram”, and “LinkedIn” rely on IT infrastructure to operate and deliver their services to users and have become integral parts of day-to-day life for the masses around the globe, providing opportunities for socialising, entertainment, and business networking.

Information technology is essential for the expansion and popularisation of social media. Improvements in computer hardware, software, mobile devices, and internet access allow users to connect from virtually anywhere and at any time. Additionally, IT has enabled social media platforms to develop advanced processes, machine learning algorithms, and data analytics tools that enable them to provide tailored content and advertisements to their audiences. Although social media and information technology have brought many benefits, they also pose challenges related to “privacy,” “security,” and “the spread of misinformation and fake news.” Ultimately, both positive and negative effects of social media and information technology significantly impact society. It will be essential for people, companies, and legislators to carefully evaluate the effects of new technologies as they develop and work to minimise any potential harmful consequences.

Issues And Challenges Presented by Social Media and Technology

Social media allows everyone to stay connected and make new friends around the world. It also delivers daily news updates from different platforms. Today, social media has many uses, such as sharing music, promoting businesses, running product campaigns, advertising, sharing news, and expressing opinions. Although it offers benefits that improve lives, many users are unaware of its potential drawbacks. Problems like cybercrime, cyberbullying, poor academic performance, decreased work productivity, and strained personal relationships can stem from social media use. To reduce risks like hacking and cybercrime, users should be aware of these issues and use social media responsibly and securely.

Privacy and Security

Security and privacy are the main concerns with social media use. Currently, privacy risks on these platforms generate significant anxiety among users. Protecting privacy can be difficult because these platforms are public, making it easy for anyone to access information quickly.

Spreading of wrong information /fake news

The spread of misinformation and fake news through social media poses a threat to democracy and societal norms. Fake news refers to false or inaccurate stories online, whereas misinformation is misleading information spread unintentionally. The rapid spread of false information online is a global threat—a serious issue that demands urgent attention.

Hacking

On the Internet, security and private information are both vulnerable to hacking.¹⁷ In the past, programmers have hacked into Twitter and Facebook accounts and posted content that has affected the users’ lives.

Deception

The identity of the person signing up for social networking sites can be real or fraudulent. The other user has no way of knowing whether their identity is genuine. Deception situations have been reported frequently recently worldwide. Social networking has emerged as a simple technological method for misleading people.

Prevalent Laws and Regulations Governing Social Media and Information Technology

Many questions are being raised about how digitisation and social media impact communities, driven by significant conceptual and technological changes affecting modern societies. The widespread misuse of modern technology and social media, embedded in everyday life, is often seen as indicative of a 'crisis'. The rise of social media has significantly increased human sovereignty by providing numerous new channels for private communication and media engagement. Although the internet is often praised as a freeing force, it is also increasingly linked to risks to safety, order, and well-being. Therefore, regulating social media platforms has become essential. India has enacted various laws and regulations to oversee social media and information technology. These are mainly categorised into two key laws: the Information Technology Act of 2000 and the Indian Penal Code of 1860.

Social Media and Information About Ipc

The IPC provides for various crimes committed through social media platforms. The IPC provides for punishment for crimes such as cyber stalking, cyber bullying and identity theft.

Section 499 of the IPC provides for the punishment of defamation through social media. It provides for imprisonment for up to two years, a fine, or both. This section has been used to regulate the use of social media in India.

Section 503 of the IPC provides for the punishment for criminal intimidation through electronic devices. It provides for imprisonment for up to two years, a fine, or both. This section has been used to regulate the use of social media in India.

Social Media and the Information Technology Act, 2000

The primary law governing various activities in cyberspace and on computers, including social media sites and platforms, is the Information Technology Act, 2000. The U.N. General Assembly's 1997 resolution led to the passage of the Information Technology Act, 2000. The regulatory aspect of these Internet services and cybercrimes is covered under the IT Act.

Social Media and Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines) Rules 2011

In an effort to broaden the intermediary's "due diligence," the government drafted extensive guidelines in April 2011. The authority granted to it by Section 87(2) read with Section 79 of the IT Act was used to enact the rules. "The rules place a heavy burden upon intermediaries to exercise due diligence while discharging their functions, forcing them to screen content and exercise online censorship." Nevertheless, given the enormous volume of content uploaded and the complex issue of legal infractions, it would have been incredibly challenging for intermediaries to comply with these rules.

Social Media and Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules 2021

The Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules 2021 have been drafted to exercise the authority granted by Section 87(2) of the Information Technology Act, 2000, and they replace the previous Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines) Rules, 2011, to close the legal and technological advancement gap.

Self-Regulation as a Viable Alternative Approach

Self-regulation involves actions by companies or industry groups to anticipate or complement government regulations. It can include various approaches, such as proactive CSR initiatives or self-monitoring for compliance issues. This self-regulatory approach is encouraged by the push for stricter laws and the growth of state-supported discourse. Consequently, adopting self-regulation as an alternative to social media oversight is advisable.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Social media platforms are among the fastest-growing global communication tools, allowing people worldwide to interact. During pandemics, they often became our only connection. Social media encompasses any web or mobile platform that supports interactive communication and sharing of user-generated content between individuals or organisations. While it remains the top platform for international information exchange, social media has also become a hotspot for cybercrime.

Many governments, including India's, utilise social media to gather public input and feedback, as well as to develop initiatives. However, issues arise around authorisation, technology choices, scope, communication, and legal compliance. Therefore, social media policies are essential for project leaders to maximise effectiveness, in line with laws such as the IT Act of 2000 and the IT (Amendment) Act of 2008, as well as relevant rules.

While social networking boosts transparency, protecting users from harmful content is vital. An effective strategy should focus on monitoring and engagement. Implementing laws quickly is crucial to overseeing social media and ensuring safety. As platforms evolve, new forms of misconduct emerge daily, necessitating legislation that remains flexible. Regulations should be established by an autonomous body, with platforms self-regulating, and limited government oversight for public policy. India needs a comprehensive legal framework, approved by parliament and following stakeholder discussions, to govern social media and IT, striking a balance between civil rights and technical impacts.

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