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Technical note

Advertising on social media

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A R T I C L E   I N F O

A B S T R A C T

This communication reports the latest trends of advertising on social media. Social media advertising means to gain traffic or attention of online users through social media sites. Today, when a user thinks about buying something, he first comes to the internet, searches for that product, compares its price with other competing brands and takes a decision, which one to buy. In this write-up, author has discussed many aspects concerning advertising through social media, *viz.,* what is social media? What is the impact of social media on mainstream media, why to advertise on social media? and what should be the strategy for advertising on social media. The author is of the view that in the year 2013, $4 billion will be spent on social media advertising across the globe and social media industry will generate over 1,00,000 new jobs all around the world.

1. Introduction

Before the advent of World Wide Web, organizations used to buy advertising time slots on television, space on paper, and best locations for their hoardings on the busiest of streets. But, still couldn't get directly in touch with their perspective consumers. After the arrival of World Wide Web, which was invented by British scientist, Tim Benders Lee, pros and cons of advertising changed completely. Advertisers got the most powerful and attractive medium of the 21st century, the Internet to attract consumers, which directly took them into the living rooms of their target audiences. Direct access to the living rooms of their eyeballs, provided advertisers with an opportunity to establish one-to-one personal relationship with them. In the late 90's, Hotmail and Yahoo were the

premier websites, which dominated the Internet with most of the market share. Then emerged Blogs. Weblog was the original name of the word blog. The term Weblog was the invention of Jorn Barger, who presented it on 17.12.1997. Later on, Peter Merholz broke this word Weblog into Blog. Since then the term is popular as Blog, which is one of the most popular social networking websites of today. Social media has grown very fast in its popularity over the past few years by connecting people together around the world. More and more advertisers are now planning to benefit from several social media sites, namely YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, Foursquare and Google+, since they can target huge audience and earn profits.

2. What is social media?

Any platform, which provides the facility of sharing ideas, exchanging information and sending messages over an electronic medium, is considered as social media. Social media includes online magazines, discussion forums, blogs, micro-blogging sites, podcasts, photographs, video and wikis.

2.1. Popular forms of social media

Full-blown social networking sites: Facebook, Orkut, Hi5, Myspace and LinkedIn are sites, which allow sharing updates, photos, creating events and a handful of other activities.

Micro-blogging: Twitter is a social networking micro-blogging site designed to let people share short messages or "updates" with others, upto 140 characters. From president Obama to your next door friend, everyone is present these days on twitter.

Blog: Blog is a personal diary of thoughts of a writer on a specific topic of adoring interest to the author. Blogs allow content posting and commenting. Examples of blogging sites are: Tumblr, WordPress, and Blogger. Mario Lavandeira started www.perezhilton.com in the year 2005, and since then it has become very popular all around the world; it is a celebrity gossip blog. Amitabh Bachchan, the Indian superstar of the millennium started his blog http://bigb.bigadda.com in the year 2008; now changed to http://srbachchan.tumblr.com. Everyday, he writes blog for his followers on exciting topics and shares his ideas and experiences. It is very popular blog with more than 10,000 hits received every day.

Videos Sites: YouTube is the 4th largest website on the Internet, serving the best videos, funniest movies and clips. It allows users to upload, share and comment.

Social News Services: Digg, a social news service website, is very popular in Europe. It delivers the most interesting and talked about stories on the Internet, and allows users to vote on those stories.

Location Based Sites: Foursquare and Gowalla are location oriented social media sites for mobile devices, such as smartphones, which allow users to discover their local interests and happenings.

3. Impact of social media on mainstream media

In December 2012, a leading Indian television journalist Kashish Gupta started her show called 'TSNONNDTV' on NDTV24X7 channel, which is a very well known television channel of India. The show became immensely popular among the Indian youth in a very short time. The show is very well planned, organized, presented and segmented into different sections. TSNONNDTV highlights and discusses the daily top trends of social media. TSNONNDTV was the first Indian show to discuss and raise issue of the #Delhigangrape, which later became an international issue. TSNONNDTV gives an opportunity to the viewers to tweet and take part in the LIVE discussion on television. Viewers are encouraged to send their video blogs as well, which are shown on the show and analyzed by the experts. This is happening for the first time on Indian television, where viewers are using social media to interact LIVE with the panellists on day's hot topics. Therefore, this show is a super-hit and driving people crazy all around India.

In print media, these days a special section is kept in newspapers featuring top tweets of the day of famous people, which make the news. Who can forget the Facebook group drove 15,000 people to Singapore tattoo show, which made headlines all over the planet or Facebook's Tahrir Square call, where thousands of the people gathered together to protest against the long ruling dictator and finally succeeded to remove him with the people's movement created through Facebook. World governments are now fearing these social media sites and trying to restrict their content. According to the report of FoxNews, a meeting was held in Dubai in December, 2012 to censor the content on social media sites, to which the Internet giant Google strongly protested, and said

"Engineers, companies and people that build and use the Web have no vote". According to the author, Internet and social media can be defined as '*Internet is like a sea and content of social media sites is like water of that sea. Is it possible to restrict the water of a sea?'*.

4. Why to advertise on social media?

Now here is a million dollar question, why one should choose social media over the traditional advertising mediums. Facebook was launched in February 2004 and has more than 908,000,000+ registered users. The micro-blogging site twitter was launched on July 15, 2006 and has more than 500,000,000+ registered users, while Google+ was launched on June 28, 2011 and has 250,000,000+ registered users. Now, these social networking sites are like a happiness comic strip to both users and advertisers, as they have more number of people, than a population of a mid-sized country. These numbers suggest that social media has gained immense attention among people around the world, and who in turn have been responding and keeping pace with the increased usage and impact of this new medium.

Another significant reason for advertising on social media is that when people want to purchase something they turn on to the Internet for primary research and investigation of that product. Such consumers can be targeted on the Internet by the companies. There are following different forms of social media advertising:

Facebook says '*Connect with over 1 billion people with Facebook Advertising*'. Facebook gives the following options to advertisers.
(i) Facebook Offers
(ii) Promoted Posts
(iii) Sponsored Stories
(iv) Page Post Ads
(v) Facebook Object (Like) Ads
(vi) External Website (Standard) Ads

Twitter says '*Share and discover what's happening right now, anywhere in the world*'. The three forms of advertising best suited to businesses on Twitter are:
(i) Promoted Tweets
(ii) Promoted Trends
(iii) Promoted Accounts

YouTube is the second largest search engine in the world offering a promising opportunity to the advertisers. YouTube provides these three types of options for advertising:
(i) Branded Video Channel
(ii) Promoted Videos
(iii) In Video Advertising

5. Strategy for advertising on social media

From the advertiser's point of view, it is very important to discover where their target audiences lie. What are their estimated budgets? How much they can invest? It is extremely important for the advertisers to know exactly what category the network they are going to be using falls into; this way they can make the most of out of their social media agency and have the best return on their campaign. For all this, they need right people, who should have experience, expertise and knowledge of social media hosting, architecture and integration. People, who can contribute to web content strategy, design and interactive development, manage web development and support procedures, tools, and documentation. This includes writing documents and developing technical support standards and procedures. They need people who can design comprehensive social media strategy (objectives, tactics, timelines, accountabilities and metrics) to increase visibility, membership and traffic across all their web touch points; implement and manage social media campaigns, and who can collaborate with sales and external communications teams to create and leverage new web applications and channels, identify, select and manage external service providers and third party tools/licenses. Also, who can work with external vendors for complex web projects like App development, etc. Companies must use in-house web developer for regular web mastering. Employees should have the ability to map out advertising strategy into web and social media plan and then drive

that plan with metrics. A company should be very clear about its goal and should create/monitor social media employee policy/guidelines for HR. From time to time, there should be a training program for people who are engaged in advertising on social media, as advertising trends change very quickly on social media. Companies must craft and implement group web policies that meet high standards.

6. Concluding remarks

It is expected that in 2013, $4 billion will be spent worldwide on social media advertising, and social media will generate over 1,00,000 new jobs all around the world. This is due to the every second increase in popularity of these social media sites. So, there is a win-win situation for all the advertisers as well as consumers.

Authors Biography

Sumit Goyal received his Bachelor and Master's degree from the central university of Government of India. He has published many research papers in more than 55 international journals throughout the world, which have been citied more than 440 times. Besides that, he has also written book chapters, instructional manuals, review articles, technical papers and brought out special issues of international journals, as Guest Editor. He is holding positions in the editorial board of 30 world renowned international journals. His interests include Professional Writing, Artificial Intelligence and Social Media.