

# Social Networking as an emerging tool of communication A study of Facebook usage by Kashmiri Print Journalists

Shahana Islam\*, Ronaq Moon\*\*

\*Department of Library and Information Science, University of Kashmir

\*\*Media Educational Research Centre, University of Kashmir

**Abstract-** Social networking sites including Facebook are changing the way journalists interact. Journalists use social networks to gather and disseminate information as it takes seconds to reach the masses. The current study is conducted to examine the utility of the most commonly used social networking site, Facebook, in collecting and reporting news by Print journalists in Kashmir.

**Index Terms-** Facebook, Kashmir, Journalists, News delivery, and News source.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Social networking is emerging as a new and popular trend in the world of communications. It has made socialization simple. Facebook is one of the most widely used Social networking sites used by people from different walks of life in Kashmir. Like many other professionals, journalists in Kashmir have also started using Facebook. With the growing popularity of Facebook, journalists have begun to use these sites as alternative platforms for news delivery and dissemination.

An obvious reason for journalists doing so is the broad audience social networking sites have. A recent report by Hopkins (2010) shows that Facebook accounts for 3.52% of total traffic to news media websites, only behind Google (17.32%), Yahoo (7.98%), and MSN (4.43%). Facebook is a major referral site directing traffic to news and media sites. Some users follow hyperlinks on social network sites to news sites. In fact, some of the links are provided by news media sites because a growing number of news organizations, including newspapers, have begun maintaining their own presence on social networking sites. Journalists maintain their presence on social networking sites for a variety of reasons, such as delivering headlines of news stories, promoting events, and collecting user generated content (Lewis, 2009). Since Facebook is simple to use, journalists consider it as an easy mode of communication. The current study is an attempt to find how the advent of Facebook as a journalistic tool has had an impact on news gathering and news dissemination by the professional print journalists in Kashmir.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Journalists benefit from SNSs since they provide rich sources of naturalistic behavioral data (Golder, Wilkinson & Huberman, 2007). Lori Schwab, Executive Director of the Online News Association (as cited in Wilson, 2008) articulates that Facebook is used by journalist for themselves as well as in their profession

and has become a central fact of their online life. A study by Raymond and Lu (2011) on "Reporting on the Reporters: Facebook and Journalists" found that Journalists use Facebook not only for typical social networking reasons but also for purposes that are beneficial to their work. Many journalists use Facebook and other SNSs to assist them in their story research and investigation, finding story ideas, staying in touch with family and finding out information about others. The study of Chandha (N.A) on "Social networking sites and social ties: do they help forge new ties or simply revive old ones?" found that social media especially Facebook has helped media professionals to get leads on stories, interact with people who were probably at the place where news event was taking place and get information. Arrival of Facebook has brought some interesting trends to Indian journalists as it helped them with the stories and leads during breaking news events. Facebook is being used by scholars and journalists in gathering information for news stories as it is a much faster approach than traditional media (Jarad, 2007). For some journalist Facebook is an effective tool of communication as it helps them to keep in touch with what concerns the public in a particular community and all over the world (Al Ezzi, El-Sheikh, Hamdy, Kamal, & Mahfouz, 2008).

## III. OBJECTIVES

To ascertain the reasons Kashmiri print journalists have switched to Facebook.

## IV. METHODOLOGY

This section consists of research model, data collection tool and population.

**Research model:** The researcher relied upon the survey method for the collection of data.

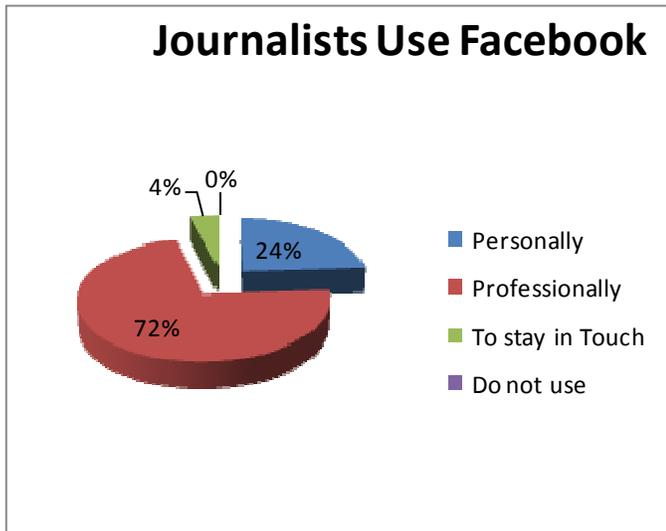
**Data collection tool:** To perceive the reasons Kashmiri print journalist drive to Facebook, an online questionnaire was administered. The questionnaire consists of two sections. The first section establishes the personal details of participants and the second section includes questions intended to determine the reasons journalists use Facebook in their day to day activities.

**Population:** online questionnaire was distributed randomly among fifty Print journalist of Kashmir. Most of them are working with national and local dailies.

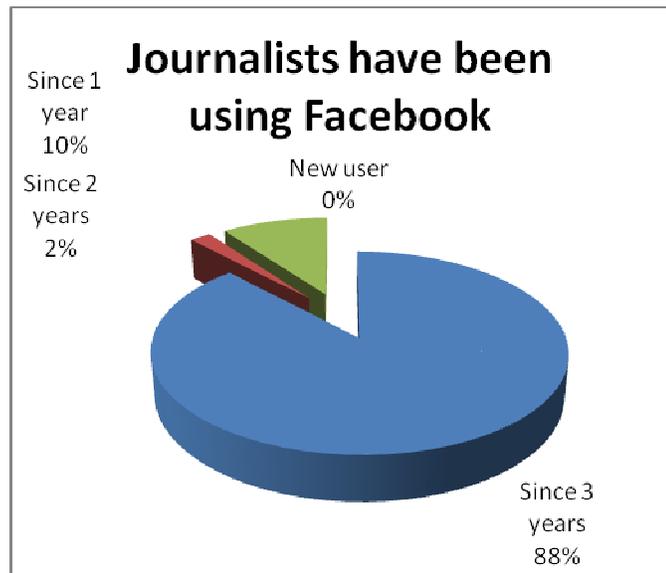
V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the questionnaires administered online showed the following results:

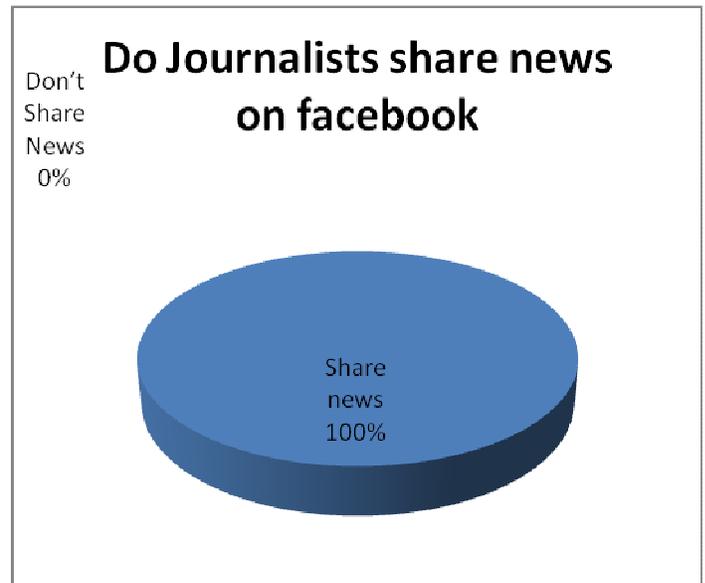
1. Among the journalists surveyed all use Facebook. 72% journalists use Facebook professionally, 4% use Facebook to stay in touch with friends and relatives and 24% use Facebook personally.



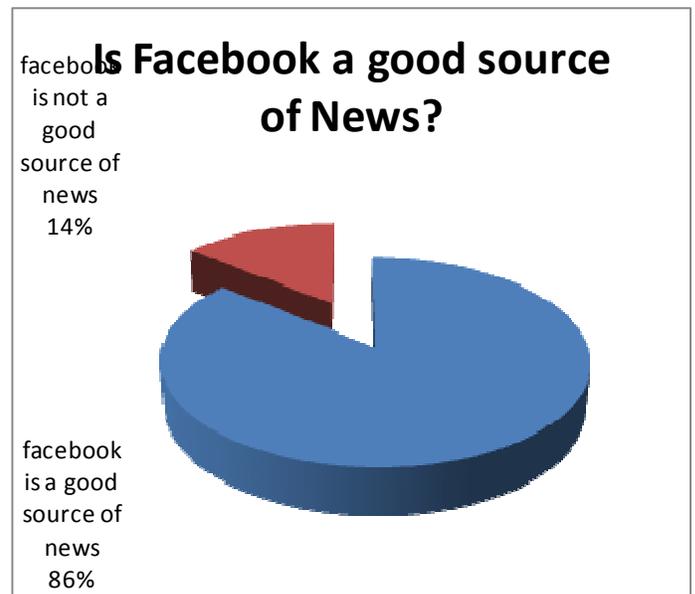
2. 88% journalists have started using facebook 3 years back, 2% journalist has been using it since last 2 years and 10% journalists have been using it since last 1 year.



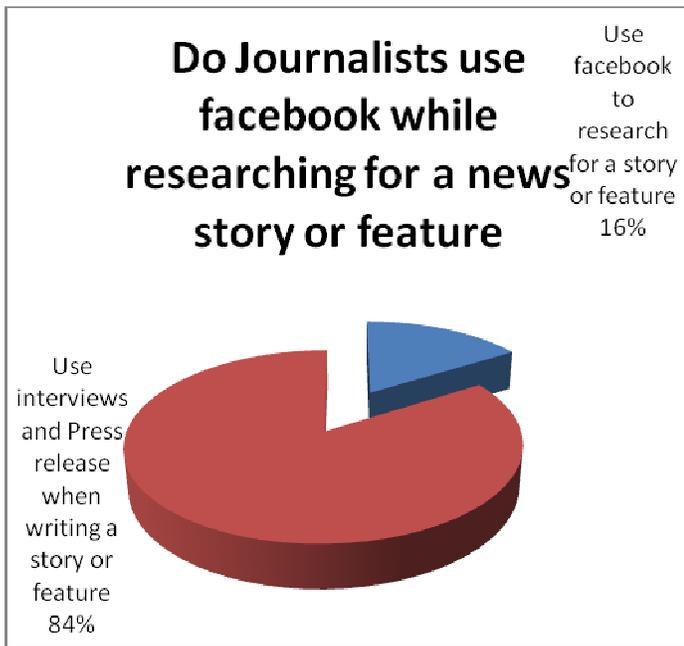
3. All the surveyed journalists share news through Facebook. All of them share the news that they find interesting



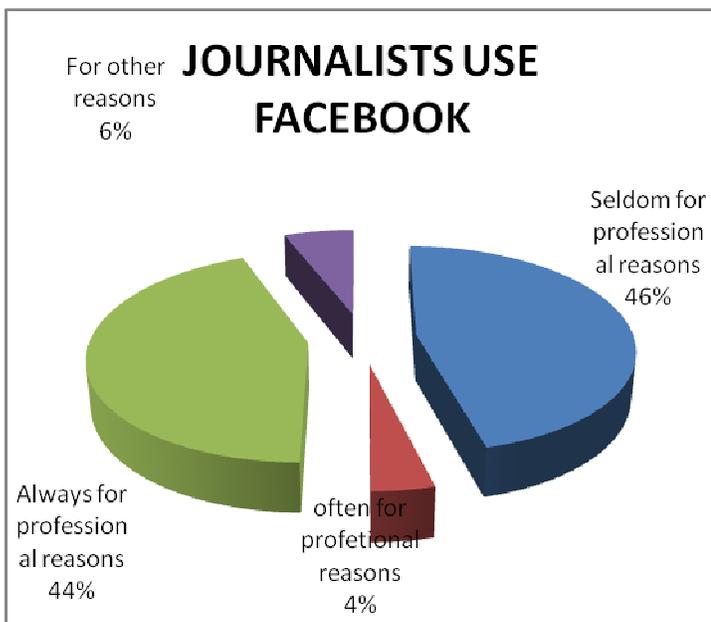
4. 86% journalists consider Facebook as good source of News while the remaining 14% do not consider it as a good source of News



5. Only 16% use Facebook as a first source when researching news and feature story, while 84% prefer to interview people or put their hands on a press release.



6. 46% journalists seldom join Facebook groups or like a page for professional reasons, 44% always do it for professional reasons and 4% said that they most often join a group or like a page for professional reasons. Remaining 6% had other reasons to join any group or like a page on Facebook.



7. All the journalists had an opinion that Facebook has an impact on their profession.

Some of the responses to the question how Facebook has had an impact on their profession:

- **“Facebook has helped journalists to connect well with the situation, to understand a general mood of things without fear of anything. It helps me sometimes in real**

**time to know what has happened for example if protest has erupted or some gunfight has erupted people do write about it.”**

**(Azhar Qadri, Correspondent, Press Trust of India)**

- **“Facebook has been a key source of information, platform for discussions, and a vast forum for ideological exchange. Being professionally associated with journalism, I see an extensive role being played by this social networking site especially in instant news delivery, which I feel is what prompts me every time to act on spot, and build a story around the details.”**

**(Lymon Majid, Works with Online news portal Kashmir Currents)**

- **“Journalism seems in full vigor and action because of Facebook. The online media (e-zine) has gained momentum now, because Facebook has given it the readers, unlike earlier, when there was hardly anyone accessing online media. Facebook, undubiously, has laid the foundation of good things in me and indeed has exposed certain corners of my mind to a world where empires are so vibrant in morning but dashed in evening.”**

**(Muddasir Peer, Correspondent, Kashmir Life)**

- **“We can see almost all of the news organizations have their Facebook pages, I think that speaks all. There are portals which first update news on their Facebook pages then on their respective portals. Facebook has brought a complete change in the mind set of people and producers of news as well.”**

**(Lubna Reshi, Reporter, Rising Kashmir)**

## VI. CONCLUSION

Most of the print journalists in Kashmir Use Facebook for professional reasons (sharing and collecting information) But do not rely completely on it.

Almost all the journalists maintain their presence on Facebook. The current study has brought us to the conclusion that most of the journalists are using Facebook to deliver news, suggesting that news dissemination through facebook has become a common practice. Although, they don't share every other information through facebook but most of them share news that they find interesting. The links they share on facebook are not necessarily of the websites of the organizations they work with.

Although, Journalists consider Facebook as an important news source but they don't completely rely on it. They prefer interviews and press releases to form the content of news for the newspaper organization they work with.

A majority of Kashmiri journalists join Facebook groups that are of some help in their professional lives. They even like the pages for professional reasons. These groups and pages on Facebook provide them a variety of information. Not only breaking news or news in real time, but some groups and pages

