

# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMMERCE, IT & MANAGEMENT

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## THE IMPACT ON MARKETING BY THE ADVENT OF WEB 2.0 INTERNET TOOLS

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### ABSTRACT

Ever since Marketing has emerged as the core of Business Management, there is always quest for finding ways to get connected with customers and consumers. Past centuries saw the Theatre, Printing Press, Public Gathering and Wall Graffiti as the communicating and connecting media. Then came the era, that was dominated by the advent of TV, Radio Broadcasting, Public Address Systems, Photography, Cinema, Newspapers, Magazines and Email. Marketing quickly adapted these emerging technologies for their quest for connecting with the customers. Conventional or Traditional marketing channels were highly controlled as they are mostly one-way messages created by some specific group and directed at the customers. Now with Web 2.0 Tools, everyone can participate in the creation, distribution and use of the messages. Web 2.0 denotes all online tools, platforms, that people use to share opinions, insights, experiences and perspectives with each other that include blogs, wikis, photo and video sharing, podcasts, Twitter, social networking sites like LinkedIn, Facebook, widgets, chat rooms, message boards etc. The Web2.0 tools have significantly altered the Business and Marketing Landscape. Unless corporate and business entities are aware of their existence, their potential, the cost of not adapting or the benefits of leveraging them, future survival and growth will be severely threatened. This research paper aims at capturing these trends and how they have forced the reengineering of the Marketing Landscape with special reference to Indian Markets and a discussion on future outlook.

### KEYWORDS

Marketing, Web 2.0 Tools, Social Media, Social Networking Sites, Impact on Marketing by Social Media.

### INTRODUCTION

Now a days, the term of social media is becoming increasingly popular and with the magnitude of social media users growing exponentially, the use of social media for marketing has been discussed in publications but not in details.

The enigma of marketing is that, it is one of the oldest activities and yet it is regarded as the most recent of business disciplines. Marketing relies heavily on interactions between entities be it within organization, among general public and between organization and society. The effectiveness then directly depends on how these interactions are planned, controlled and executed.

Ever since Marketing has emerged as the core of Business Management, there is always quest for finding ways to get connected with customers and consumers. Past centuries saw the Theatre, Printing Press, Public Gathering and Wall Graffiti as the communicating and connecting media. Companies and business entities which leveraged these media grew rapidly. Then came the era, in early part of the last century, that was dominated by the advent of TV, Radio Broadcasting, Public Address Systems, Photography and Cinema. Also with the advancements in printing technology, Newspapers and Magazines became the inevitable part of the mass media throughout the world. Marketing quickly adapted these emerging technologies for their quest for connecting with the customers.

History tells us that only those business entities which are quick to leverage these technologies survived and flourished manifold to become national and global players. Those who did not appreciate these trends were relegated to local level "mom and pop" businesses.

Conventional or Traditional marketing channels were highly controlled as they are mostly one-way messages created by some specific group and directed at the customers. With Internet proliferating in a big way starting with Initial Internet tools (which we can call as Web1.0) such as Email, World Wide Web pages and now with Web 2.0 Tools, everyone can participate in the creation, distribution and use of the messages.

Web 2.0 denotes all online tools, platforms, that people use to share opinions, insights, experiences and perspectives with each other as defined by Wikipedia. This includes blogs, wikis, photo and video sharing, podcasts, Twitter, social networking sites like LinkedIn, Facebook, widgets, chat rooms, message boards etc.

The revolutionary advancements in Web2.0 tools with Social Networking Sites and convergence of Mobile and Computer Technology have significantly altered the Business and Marketing Landscape. Unless corporate and business entities are aware of their existence, their potential, the cost of not adapting or the benefits of leveraging them, future survival and growth will be severely threatened.

This paper aims at capturing these trends, how they have impacted the Marketing Macro Environment, how they have forced the reengineering of the Marketing Landscape with special reference to Indian Markets and a discussion on future outlook.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### INTERNET IN BUSINESS

Greg Pelling(2005) in his book titled "CISCO Net Impact" writes that "most leaders know that as the global economy embarks upon the next new business cycle, the Internet is poised to be employed as the single greatest differentiator or equalizer"

John R Patrick(2001) in his popular book titled "Net Attitude", describes the potential of Internet using a concept namely 'Net Attitude'. He says, "Net Attitude is about preparing your organization and the people who are part of it, as well as all its systems and processes, to take advantage of everything the Internet has to offer".

Susan[2009] describes the present situation succinctly that "Seven of the top 20 most visited sites in the world are social networking sites. By 2011 and beyond, half of online adult and 84% of online teens in the United States will use social networking."

Dave et al [2000], explains that the Internet can support the full range of marketing functions and in doing so, can help reduce costs, facilitate communication within and between organizations and improve customer service.

#### SOCIAL MEDIA AND COLLABORATIVE TOOLS

Another noteworthy paper published titled "Social Media and its Role in Marketing" by Sisira Neti (2011) discusses the social media's role in the marketing. Starting with definition of Social Medium and describing some of the latest social media sites, this paper is a sincere attempt in understanding -what is social media and how relevant they are today. This discusses what are social media and why they are relevant. However, it does not discuss "How" aspect - that is, "How Web 2.0 tools can be used for marketing and their impact". The present research study will focus on this aspect also.

#### SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE INDUSTRY

According to a recent report by Michael A Stelzner (2011), number of B2B companies that have explored and tapped social media has increased significantly, as testified by the latest report that the majority of marketers (58%) are using social media for 6 hours or more each week, and more than a third (34%) invest 11 or more hours weekly!

Martin Thomas and David Brain [2008] opine that Social Media is still in its infancy, especially as a commercial vehicle, although most industry watchers are predicting dramatic growth. This is really happening now as we see the in the last few years exponential growth of social media and the urgent need to understand the phenomenon.

**NEED OF THE STUDY**

According to the internet blog "Role of Social Media in B2B marketing [2011], social media is seen by many marketers as the 'next gold rush'. The conventional marketing tools like the TV, the print media, and outdoor advertising no longer effective as they used to be. The reason for this is simply the lack of time spent by customers as compared to the social media tools in abundance today.

Here it is important to note a significant demographic development in the recent times as emphasized by the Alcatel-Lucent report titled "*The Rise of the Millennials -Strategic White Paper*" and the AT&T White Paper titled "*The Business Impacts of Social Networking*", the Millennials, a new term that is used to refer the generation born from 1980 onwards, brought up using digital technologies, Internet ,Mobile Telecommunication and Computer Gadgets (also called Generation Y) are the major market to reckon with as they represent 84 million people in North America ,with more than 51 million in Western Europe, and 99 million in the Asia Pacific region.

Millennials expect the communications channels to adapt to their lifestyle in which they are comfortable rather than willing to adjust to the other ways. Considered worldwide, this group has the same market clout as the Baby Boom generation. Given their buying power, their reliance on social networking, Millennials will continue to exert considerable influence over the success or failure of many business offerings for the next ten to twenty years.

Here it is also important to see how the Internet Usage stands today worldwide. The following table Table-1 World Internet Usage and Population Statistics reveals, how the Internet Penetration is more in the developed world than other places. Another interesting fact is though Asia, Internet penetration wise lagging behind the developed continents like North America and Europe, when it comes to absolute numbers of Internet users , it is the largest among all.

**TABLE -1 WORLD INTERNET USAGE AND POPULATION STATISTICS**

Region Names	Population ( 2011 Est.)	Internet Users	Penetration (% Population)
Africa	1,037,524,058	139,875,242	13.50%
Asia	3,879,740,877	1,016,799,076	26.20%
Europe	816,426,346	500,723,686	61.30%
Middle East	216,258,843	77,020,995	35.60%
North America	347,394,870	273,067,546	78.60%
Latin America / Carib.	597,283,165	235,819,740	39.50%
Oceania / Australia	35,426,995	23,927,457	67.50%
World Total	6,930,055,154	2,267,233,742	32.70%

Source : www.internetworldstats.

**TABLE-2 HOW INDIA COMPARES WITH OTHER COUNTRIES**

Region Names	Population ( 2011 Est.)	Internet Users	Penetration (% Population)
Bangladesh	158,570,535	5,501,609	3.50%
China	1,336,718,015	513,100,000	38.40%
India	1,189,172,906	121,000,000	10.20%
Indonesia	245,613,043	55,000,000	22.40%
Japan	126,475,664	101,228,736	80.00%
Korea, South	48,754,657	40,329,660	82.70%
Malaysia	28,728,607	17,723,000	61.70%
Nepal	29,391,883	2,031,245	6.90%
Pakistan	187,342,721	29,128,970	15.50%
Singapore	4,740,737	3,658,400	77.20%
Sri Lanka	21,283,913	2,503,194	11.80%
France	65,102,719	50,290,226	77.20%
Germany	81,471,834	67,364,898	82.70%
Italy	61,016,804	35,800,000	58.70%
Russia	138,739,892	61,472,011	44.30%
United Kingdom	62,698,362	52,731,209	84.10%
Canada	34,030,589	26,960,000	79.20%
United States	313,232,044	245,000,000	78.20%
Argentina	41,769,726	27,568,000	66.00%
Brazil	203,429,773	75,982,000	37.40%
Mexico	113,724,226	34,900,000	30.70%

Source : www.internetworldstats.com.

Coming to Indian Story, the same trend is observed. Though India, with the Internet penetration of just 10%, is very much behind the other developed countries, absolute number wise it is 3<sup>rd</sup> largest country of Internet users after China and USA. Also data from Google [2011], predicts that the Internet users will triple in the country by the year 2014.

This throws the following important pointers that need careful attention:

1. As the internet penetration is only 10%, there is lot of potential for exponential growth to catch-up with other developed countries.
2. Even the present absolute number of internet users is huge as the third largest in the world , thereby the impact of Internet on marketing is need to be analyzed by corporates before it is too late.

Another development that is fuelling the internet usage is the mobile revolution in India. Already India with 70% penetration of Mobile Users (that is approximately 850 Million !), the trend is that many of them are getting used to access internet on mobile.

As per the recent report by "7inverse.Com" [2011]" India with its 35+ million mobile internet users ranks No.2 in the world. And according to Google around 14 billion WebPages were viewed by Indian mobile internet users in February 2010. According to Google's India product head, Vinay Goel, the number of mobile internet users has grown nearly five times in the last five years with experts claiming that mobile internet usage in India will touch 250+ million by 2015

The International Business Times in its report dated November 9th 2011, quoting Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) predicts that Internet usage will continue to rise in India as awareness about its use spreads and India may become the world leader in Internet usage by the end of this decade.

The impact of social networking on businesses is so profound that if any business does not have a website, blog, or even a Facebook page then they are already behind everyone else. Businesses must realized that if they don't get into the business of doing business through social networking websites like Facebook, LinkedIn, MySpace, they will see their profits drop and what used to be household names will be nothing but a past long forgotten by a technology driven world.



The revolutionary advancements in Web2.0 tools with Social Networking Sites and convergence of Mobile and Computer Technology have significantly altered the Business and Marketing Landscape. Unless corporate and business entities are aware of their existence, their potential, the cost of not adapting or the benefits of leveraging them, future survival and growth will be severely threatened. Hence this study is aimed at bringing these facts in detail.

### SCOPE OF THE STUDY

- Marketing and the Communication Channels
- The rise of Internet and Mobile Telecommunication.
- Early usages of Internet and Mobile Technology for Marketing
- What is Web 2.0 and Social Networking Media
- Convergence of Internet, Mobile and Computer Technologies
- Prominent Web2.0 Tools and their use by businesses around the world.
- Present Indian Marketing Scene and Web2.0 adaptation
- How to harness the full Potential of Web2.0 Tools.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- What are Web2.0 Tools and their usage in Marketing;
- How they have impacted the Marketing Macro Environment
- How they have forced the reengineering of the Marketing Landscape in General and with specific reference to Indian Scene.
- Future Outlook and the Re-Engineering of the marketing

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methods are important to provide a systematic approach to a certain study. Empirical research methods are a class of research methods in which empirical observations or data are collected in order to answer particular research questions. While primarily used in academic research, they can also be useful in answering practical questions

In this study, the following have been used to gather information and analyze:

- Survey of published Books for understanding and appreciating the present context and the journeys undertaken so far in the territories.
- Survey of Internet Blogs, discussion Forums to understand the trends and the changes taking place in the industry
- Collection of supporting Data from conference proceedings, Seminars and Webinars
- Case Studies of some industries from selected industry verticals
- Face to Face interaction with industry veterans/thought leaders
- Perspectives from users of Web 2.0 tools and their beliefs, tastes, trends and buying behavior

### CONCLUSION

This chapter concludes the study with summary of benefits, key findings about the way the rules of marketing have changed and future outlook.

### SUMMARY OF BENEFITS

Marketing through Web 2.0 Tools provide many benefits that include:

- Reach
- Segmentation
- Refreshed Updated Content
- Ability to Listen to the Market in Real Time
- Creating the Buzz in the market
- True Multimedia engagement with Customers
- Personalized and increased interaction duration with the customers
- Cyber Sales Force
- Reduction of Sales Cycle Time

#### Key findings about the way the rules of Marketing have changed:

- People want participation and not propaganda.
- Develop thought leadership and the content that buyer wants to read, hear and see; Let the content drive the buyer's action. Create content and thought leadership by leveraging blogs, informative web content and avoiding direct sales pitch. Be a catalyst and use the collective wisdom of community to drive, shape and influence the perception of the buyers subtly.
- Be visible in online forums where potential customers throng.
- Use the power of creating viral buzz if you have appropriate deserving content, deals, products, events or innovative offering.
- Social Media is still to catch up in Indian Public Sector Industries. Even in Public Sector Banks, except State Bank Of India, there is no presence from state owned entities.
- There is a need to come with Social Media adoption policy from the Government as well as state controlled enterprises. One silver lining is, recently, there was a draft policy on "Framework & Guidelines for Use of Social Media for Government Organisations" dated [September 2011], by Department of Information Technology, Ministry of Communications & Information Technology, Government of India circulated for feedback from the various stakeholders. Similar approach to be followed by Public Sector Companies.

### FUTURE OUTLOOK OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

The marketing through Social Media is still in early stages as the companies are still experimenting with various trial and error strategies. With more and more penetration of internet and mobile access devices, people accessing Social Media is going to explode. This will attract more players using Social Media platform and companies need to vie for each other in grabbing their attention.

With technology growth both in Hardware and Software, new social media platforms may emerge. The future is mobile and 'appified' resulting in the products / services not designed for mobile will flounder. To keep pace with them the "content-ware" also needs to evolve, in attracting, communicating, connecting and convincing the users. The present ways of engaging with the customer by the Social Media may look like spamming in future.

Cross-Platform Marketing will come into its own in the coming years, the ability to cross-integrate a marketing strategy across all online avenues such as SEO, Social Media, Mobile Marketing may become feasible. This will give companies the ability to deliver a focused message across multiple platforms. World tilting towards going Mobile Devices. It is predicted that by 2014 the majority of people accessing the internet will do so from mobile devices. Companies are already beginning to recognize the need to serve mobile demand. We will see more and more companies shifting their direction to feed the mobile frenzy.

**LIMITATIONS OF STUDY AND FUTURE RESEARCH**

As Social Media itself evolving and growing at an astronomical proportion coupled with experimental nature of companies trying with *ad hoc* strategies, it is difficult to define a framework as the "observer" and "observed" are constantly changing. Also proper monitoring tools are not fully developed and agreeable to all. At present there are reliable data only with respect to PC, mobile devices and internet penetration data. These data alone will not help in studying the impact on marketing. The data collected through observation and qualitative case analysis may lead to biased and incomplete results because of the people's subjective opinions. There are many industries especially in India which are yet to adapt to digital marketing. Social Media literacy is also to increase to bring about the change in the increased recognition and use of Social Media potential. It therefore brings the further possible research in many ways taking into account the following:

- Social Media Literacy
- Business Sector wise adoption of Social Media
- Business Models with Social Media either from Cost or Profits perspectives
- Quantitative research frameworks or other metrics for studying the Social Media's return on investment. (Refer Appendix)
- Categorizing Social Media and Web 2.0 tools with their alignment with business models.

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