Blogs and Their Social Influence

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Abstract: The aim of this paper is to trace the development of blogs and discuss them as social media with wide influence. Research of the conditions which led to the emergence of blogs. **Approach:** Theoretical clarification and analysis of the phases in the development of blogs and their influence. **Results**: The general conclusion drawn in the paper is that development of social media and their technological improvement, their accessibility, make blogs popular, which also determine the impact that blogs have. **Implications:** The paper can initiate a further discussion concerning notions as social media etiquette, the power of social media, and should the social media be restricted. **Value**: The study will contribute to better understanding of blogs as a way of expressing public positions and values.

Keywords: blog; blogging; blogger; social media; values

1. Introduction

The blogosphere has changed the world of information and made bloggers one of the most influential people in the world. Some of them have a greater influence than even the most authoritative publications with huge editions and public positions.

Blogs are personal diaries where authors write political analyses, economic forecasts, give various advice, share their experiences, their way of life, their positions and views on all kinds of socially important topics. "God, what times have come! Everyone writes, no one reads!" The winged sentence from the Library of Alexandria is not valid for the „fifth class" because the blogosphere is a place for dialogue and exchange of information in the global world. The most discussed topics in the blogosphere are politics, people's lives in times of crisis, folk psychology, football, music. Blogs offer information and advice about banks, interest rates, computers, culinary, art, poetry, journalism, even the personal experiences of the author attract many readers and their comments. Through the blogosphere, ordinary people are trying to influence public life in their country, to take a stand on topics that affect millions of people. Thus, they compensate for the lack of power in the

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public space, but gain supporters, supporters, create friendly circles and fan clubs. Proof of their authority and influence in society are quotes from popular bloggers in the media, publication of bloggers, frequent interviews with them. This speaks eloquently about the social role of bloggers and their influence on life in their country. They are a corrective of the power in nature protection, light a red light in case of open irregularities, turn on the alarm in case of abuse of public position and power, organise actions, such as the one for the construction of bike lanes in the capital. The blogosphere is a collective reaction to the hot topics of the day, a barometer of public opinion that is still underestimated. Professional blogs are also gaining momentum, where you can discuss the issues you are interested in with virtual colleagues and solve a number of cases.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. The Appearance of Blogs

Although it is difficult to determine the exact origin of the blog, most seem to agree that the term weblog was coined by weblog writer Jorn Barger in 1997 (Blood, 2000; Jerz, 2003; Safire, 2002; Turnbull, 2002; Wikipedia, 2003). A search of the Lexis-Nexis database shows that the first mention in the press was in 1998 and by 2002, over five hundred blog-related articles had been registered. It seems that blogs are emerging as a way to share interesting information. These early blogs had three main functions: they were chronologically organized, contained links to interesting sites on the web, and provided commentary on the links.

In 1999, there were a number of blog portals launched, all offering easy to use editing tools that did not require coding. Since then, the number of blog portals and bloggers has increased dramatically: a 2003 study found that blogging in eight popular blogging sites increased by more than six hundred percent between 2000 and 2001 with over four million blogs currently survey and 10 million estimates by the end of 2004. The advent of social networks like Facebook, Twitter largely makes the emergence of new ones and the existence of old blogs questionable. Some blogosphere researchers in Bulgaria, such as Justine Toms, have argued and analyzed the following trends: "Blogging mania (in our country) is far from over, though few people think that blogs are dead (worldwide) bloggers and blogging have evolved and from an innocent, highly altruistic, committed to specific topics and society, or yourself model in the last about a year or two went into a new phase Commercialization - some of the personal blogs have migrated to commercial ones.

Others were created as such. This was an expected phenomenon, but the sharp turn and over-commercialization do not make a good impression, and they start to annoy just as much as the paid-for material in the traditional media, even more. One of the most popular blogs in Bulgaria https://www.avtora.com/author/ekip-na-avtora, analyzes the future of the blogosphere in "Social networks and media - the looming threat over the blogosphere". Blogs are undoubtedly not the most preferred way to communicate and share useful information. People always want to express themselves online, but with sites like Facebook and Twitter, blogs are no longer as popular for users, and especially for the young Internet generation that loves instant interaction.

It has long been rumored that blogs are virtually "killed planets" due to the sharp jump in the use of social media. However, according to official data from Word press, new blogs on the popular platform are over 6 million in 2010, and page views have increased by 53%.

According to Hristo Hristov, a popular blogger, the apogee of blogs came between 2009 and 2011 - 2012. A serious problem that weigh on blogs is the lack of statistics on who, how much, and whether particular blogs are read at all. So behind the words of an influential blogger there is no coverage. Many bloggers only receive attention due to personal contact with the media or advertising in other media.

An indicator of how much a blog is read has begun to accept its Facebook fan page. Not long after, however, Facebook's policy of profiting from everyone and everything happening on the social network took a serious blow to bloggers.

If initially the information published on the fan page reached the walls of all fans, then this information flow was limited over time and today the information reaches no more than 5-10% of all fans.

The development of information technology has brought a new level of communication between individuals and institutions. Expressing your personal position and opinion has become easier and more accessible.

"By transforming information processing, new information technologies have an impact on all spheres of human activity and make it possible to establish an unlimited number of links between the various spheres, as well as between the elements and subjects of each activity. A networked and deeply interdependent economy is emerging that is increasingly implementing the advances in technology, knowledge and management for the sake of technology, knowledge and governance. (M. Castells, 2004; p. 83).

Over the last few years, the network has fundamentally focused on user-driven technologies such as blogs, social networks and video sharing platforms. (Tom Smith "The social media revolution" International Journal of Market Research Vol. 51 Issue)

Collectively, these social technologies have revolutionized user-generated content, the global community, and the publication of consumer opinion, which is now equally branded as social media. (Tom Smith "The social media revolution" International Journal of Market Research Vol. 51 Issue)

2.2. Blogs as Social Media

Social media are technologically mediated means of communication, as well as a term referring to web-based and mobile technologies that are created and used, for communication, sharing of personal photos, files or media content, making communication interactive.

They help individuals and social groups, as well as companies, communicate and use them to share opinions, experiences, views and any other information with each other. Social media can take many forms: text, images, audio and video. Popular social media are Facebook, Twitter, blogs, discussion forums, podcasts, wikis, social networks for sharing photos and videos, as well as listening to music, and other forms of social networking.

Andreas Kaplan and Michael Henline determine social media as „a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and enable the creation and sharing of user-generated content." The term Web 2.0 was first used in 2004 to introduce the World Wide Web in a new way. Software developers and users begin to use the web as a platform for sharing content that has already been developed and published by individuals. Social media is a social interaction media, like a superpower beyond social communication. Allowed by ubiquitous and scalable communication techniques, social media is revolutionizing the way communication between organizations, communities, and individuals.

Social media have many different forms. In some cases communication is a direct dialogue (in chat applications), in other cases it is rather presented in the form of articles and users can communicate under each other. For example, magazines, the internet, forums, web logs, social blogs, microblogs, wikis, podcasts, photos, videos,

ratings and social tagging. By applying a set of theories in media research and social processes, Kaplan and Heinlein create a classification scheme for different social media types, which was published in 2010 in Business Horizons. According to this scheme, there are six different types of social media: collaborative projects (e.g. Wikipedia), blogs and microblogs (e.g Twitter), public content (e.g YouTube), social networks (e.g Facebook), virtual gaming sites (e.g World of Warcraft) and virtual social worlds (e.g Second Life). Technologies include: blogs, picture sharing, logs, email, instant messaging, music sharing, crowd sourcing and voice services over IP.

Many of these social media services can be integrated through social media aggregation platforms. In 2011, Kayzman presented a structure that defines how social media services focus on some or all of the seven core elements (identity, conversations, sharing, presence, relationships, reputation, and groups). These building blocks help to understand the needs of users of social media.

For example, a LinkedIn user is primarily concerned with their identity, reputation and connections, keeping in mind the essentials while YouTube shares the primary elements - conversations and groups. Social media is an interactive computer-mediated technology that facilitates the creation and sharing of information, ideas, career interests and other forms of expression through virtual communities and networks.

The variety of separated and embedded social media services currently offered introduces challenges to the definition; however, there are some common features:

- social media is an interactive web 2.0 based application;

- user-generated content, such as text posts or comments, digital photos or videos, and data generated through all online interactions, is the lifeblood of social media;

- users create service-specific profiles for the website or app that are designed and maintained by the social media organization;

- social media facilitates the development of online social networks by linking a profile to that of other individuals or groups;

- users typically access social media services through web-based technologies on desktops and laptops, or download services that offer social media functionality on their mobile devices (such as smart phones and tablets);

- as users engage with these online services, they create highly interactive platforms through which individuals, communities, and organizations can share, create,

discuss, participate, and modify user-generated content or pre-made content posted online. Social media works in a broadcast system (many sources to many receivers).

This is in contrast to traditional media that operate on a monologic transmission model (one source to many receivers), such as a newspaper that is delivered to many subscribers, or a radio station that broadcasts the same programs throughout the city.

Some of the most popular social media sites with over 100 million registered users include Facebook (and related Facebook Messenger), YouTube, WeChat, Instagram, QQ, QZone, Weibo, Twitter, Tumblr, Telegram, Reddit, Baidu Tieba, LinkedIn , LINE, Snapchat, Pinterest, Viber, MeWe and VK.

Social media can improve the individual's sense of connection to real or online communities and can be an effective medium of communication (or marketing) for corporations, entrepreneurs, non-profit organizations, advocacy groups, political parties and governments. The diversity of evolving self-contained and embedded social media services makes it a challenge to define them. However, marketing and social media experts generally agree that social media includes the following 13 types of social media: blogs, business, collaborative projects, corporate social networks, forums, microblogging, photo sharing, product / service reviews, social bookmarks, social games, social networks, video sharing, and virtual worlds.

3. Conclusion

Despite the negative trends in the development of the blogosphere and its merger with social networks, it is clear that blogs are the precursor of social networks. Blogs also have their advantages over social networks, such as the volume of content, the quality and the amount of information provided. Blogs also provide links for more extensive and trustworthy information and also have significant role in transmitting and shaping public values, political ideas and social influence.

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