



## IS CONVERSATION A DYING ART?

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Most of us use some form of social media every day – and whether it's for personal communication, self-promotion or marketing, we use it conscientiously. Humans are creatures of habit, but they're also prejudiced and impatient. Those two traits alone are the reasons why social networks thrive. People want the news fast and they want to talk about it now. Technological advancements have made it easier for people to express themselves and relay news through social media platforms. We all live in a plugged-in world where communication is a child's play. But one of the biggest casualties of this connected world has been the art of conversation. We simply don't have the patience to talk to anyone anymore or even listen to others. We live in a self-absorbed world. We love talking, arguing, and debating in our own heads. The Indian social media scene represents a fast-emerging and influential domain of information exchange involving nearly 60% of the 83 million Internet users in the country. While Face book and Orkut continue to dominate the social media scene, Twitter and some other Indian micro blogging websites are also becoming very popular. Facebook and other social media channels are redefining how and what we communicate with potentially equally negative consequences and the one major concern is the art of dying conversation.*

**Keywords:** *Social Networking Sites (SNSs), Baby Boomers, Micro blogging Websites, Niche networking, Web 2.0.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Communication has significantly changed especially through Social Networking Sites (SNSs). Earlier, communication was through the mail, telephone, and in person. Nowadays text messages; voice messages; using instant messenger; emails; talk through cell phones, and online video phones; and, of course, interact through the Internet where an overabundance of social media tools has reshaped communication.

There are many obvious good things when it comes to social media such as it is a platform where people connect with others and strengthen networks in ways that weren't possible earlier. But, unfortunately they have also become the default forums for holding high-stakes conversations, blasting polarizing opinions and making statements with little regard for those within screen shot. We struggle to speak openly and respectfully in person, let alone through a forum that has no space for immediate feedback or the opportunity to see how the words affect others.

Personal information is being communicated on the social media intentionally or unintentionally. Feelings of like or dislike anything and everything, provide an array of details and images from our private lives, and overshare a variety of information that was once unthinkable for public consumption.

For Facebook and other social media channels, by contrast, it has meant fundamentally shifting, how we communicate. There's no dearth of examples of how communication has changed as a result of social media. It is seen that sentences communicating complete thoughts developed into obscure sound bites laced with a dizzying range of fragments and acronyms. Emoticons have replaced words as a tool for expressing feelings. Perhaps most importantly, a sea change is seen that is how social media is helping to foster a society that values frequent communication more than meaningful communication.

### **GENERATIONAL PERCEPTION OF SOCIAL MEDIA.**

Three generations occupy today's work-place. The three generations can essentially be broken out into those over the age of 50, the so-called Baby Boomers; those in their 30s and 40s, known as Generation X; and those in their 20s and younger, known as Generation Y. Baby Boomers have the most difficulty comprehending the phenomena

of social media, so the perception of social media between the outliers—Baby Boomers and Gen Y—bears consideration (Rich Maggiani, 2014)

Baby Boomers essentially grew up in two-parent households (almost 90 per-cent of families). For the vast majority, dad worked, mom worked at home. This family unit, with its incumbent network of extended relatives and neighbors, was the foundation of their lives. Boomers grew up with black and white televisions, party line telephones, news-papers, mail, double-feature movies, and mom-and-pop corner stores.

Only about 45 percent of Gen Y grew up in two-parent households. For the vast majority, dad and mom both worked a job, essentially disintegrating the basic family unit of relatives and neighbors. Gen Y grew up with technology constantly connected to the Internet, cell phones, digital media, email and text messaging, movies at home, and big box chains. Gen Y is inherently more comfortable using the tools of social media to communicate with their network of peers and friends because they have lived it their entire lives. One of the findings of a survey stated that younger people are four times more likely than Baby Boomers to prefer having these emotionally charged conversations over social media, so the need to learn to effectively communicate online is increasing. Social media is a platform where in people( usually who are in the age of 20s) are not comfortable talking face-to-face, converse and share their views on topics like their future leaders, business tycoons and so on. If people at such an age are unable to address these issues face-to-face, how will they be equipped to deal with these kinds of issues when they get older? And presumably have more responsibility both personally and professionally (Nidhi Arora Kumar , 2012).

### **INTERACTION USING SOCIAL NETWORKING& ITS IMPACT**

Social networking services make it possible to connect people who share interests and activities across political, economic and geographic borders.

Some people use social networking sites for meeting new friends on the internet .Others use is to find old friends. Then there are those who use it to find people who have the same problems or interests they have , this called **‘Niche networking’** .Following this trend is the emerging trend of people meeting online to meet offline .More and More relationships and friendships are being formed online and then carried to an offline/ in person setting .

People widely report that crucial conversations held on social media most often go unresolved, and yet, we haven’t changed the way we communicate via this medium. Manners have not kept pace with technology. We have a hard enough time holding crucial conversations face-to-face—when we have visual data about how our messages are being received. Since the invention of the telegraph, telephone, voice mail, email, texting and now social media—we have gotten progressively more distant from interpersonal cues but seem no less capable of dealing with sensitive issues in a skillful way. The number of social media networks isn't the problem—the problem is twofold—

- lack of social norms that guide us to stop conversations when the medium is the problem
- lack of skill in holding emotionally and politically risky conversations in general.

These aren’t necessarily bad things and in fact some of them are actually quite good. As social media continues to alter our communication, the long-term implications, particularly for those young enough to never have known anything different, could be significant. Maybe as with fast food, the solution lies in moderation.

### **OBJECTIVES**

The objectives that we wanted to achieve through our research is to:

- Find out how the conversational skills of people have been affected with the increased usage of SNSs
- Find out the impact of SNSs on the personal and professional life of the people and how it affects their relations

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

**Social Network Sites (SNSs):** We define social network sites as web-based services that allow individuals to:(1) Construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system,(2) Articulate a list of other users with whom

they share a connection, and(3) View and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. The nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site to site. "Networking" emphasizes relationship initiation, often between strangers (Social Network, 2007).

### **SOCIAL MEDIA AND ITS EFFECT ON COMMUNICATION**

A redefinition of the SNSs has an enormous effect in the way we communicate. The entire paradigm of social media has altered the basic rules of communication, especially between business and their audiences. The one-way communication methods of the recent past—business-to-customer and business-to-business—have been replaced by a more robust multidimensional communication model. That model is collectively called social media (also referred to as Web 2.0).

**The rules of social media.** To communicate effectively in the social media world means understanding the new rules of the road. People want:

- To have a say.
- Meaningful dialogue.
- To be engaged and involved in the process.
- Personal interactions with others.
- To be listened to.
- To help shape what they find useful.
- To connect with others engaged in similar activities.
- Plain talk.
- Communication to be genuine and relevant.
- To conduct business with ethical companies who work transparently.
- To be in partnership.

**Understanding social media.** While the tools and kinds of social media are many and their implementations seemingly boundless, they all share a common set of characteristics that meet the rules of social media (stated above). Herewith, then, are the five C's of social media (Rich Maggiani, 2014):

- **Conversation.** No longer is the communication one-way, broadcast or somehow sent to a passive audience. Social media is at least a two-way conversation, and often a multidimensional conversation. Social media engages everyone involved.
- **Contribution.** Social media encourages contributions and reactions from anyone who is interested. 'Encourage' is the key here; social media solicits an interaction, positive and negative, by making it easy to contribute.
- **Collaboration.** Social media promotes an exchange of information between you and your audience, and among audience members, by inviting participation. Creating a quick and simple collaborative platform requires that information be organized and easily distributed.
- **Connection.** Accessing information on the Internet only takes a click. Social media thrives on connections, within its own Web vehicles and through links to other sites, resources, people, and automatic feeds. People can even create their own personalized site of connections.
- **Community.** The fundamental characteristic of social media is the creation of community: a fellowship and relationship with others who share common attitudes, interests, and goals (such as friendship, professionalism, politics, and photography). Communities form quickly and communicate effectively. Communities build goodwill from members to the hosting organization and among members. While these communities are only virtual, with members seldom meeting each other in person, they are no less robust than the physical communities in which we live, and in many ways more robust from the simple fact that barriers are removed.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

**Data Collection Method:** A primary research was carried out through a questionnaire and the responses of 100 respondents were collected using simple random sampling method. The questionnaire was well structured and the responses were sought from the respondents. To evaluate the responses for questions 1 to 5, simple percentage method was used and for questions 6 to 10 Likert scale was used. The nature of the questions was such that it avoided ambiguous responses from the respondents and it also helped in quick analysis of the data collected. The secondary data was collected over the internet, books, articles and journals.

## DATA ANALYSIS

Table 1 furnished below gives a gender wise % distribution of the respondents covered under the study.

**Table 1: Gender wise distribution**

Gender	Percentage
Male	60
Female	40

**Table 2: Age wise distribution**

Age	Percentage
18 to 25	94
30 to 45	5
50 or above	1

Table 2, provides the age wise distribution of the respondents selected for the study. Among the age group, 94 % of respondents belong to the GEN Y group. By this we can infer that majority of the GEN Y group prefer to communicate over the social media when compared to GEN X group (respondents in the age group of 30 to 45) and the baby boomers respondents in the age group of 50 or above).

**Table 3: Usage of SNSs**

Response	Percentage
Yes	94
No	6

Table 3 shows the % usage of SNSs among the selected respondents. 94 % of the respondents have responded 'yes' when asked about having a profile or an account with any of the SNSs. This shows that majority of the respondents are using and having an account or profiles in the SNSs. They are preferring to communicate through social networking sites. By this we can know that the popularity of SNSs is immense.

**Table 4: Duration of time spent on SNSs**

Response	Percentage
30 Min or Less	8
1 to 2 hrs	25
3 to 4 hrs	22
5 hrs or more	45

Table 4 provides the data on the amount of hours spent by the respondents on SNSs per day. On an average 45% of the respondents spend 5 hrs or more of their time in a day on SNSs. 25% spends 1 to 2 hrs on SNSs and 22% of the respondents spend 3-4hrs of their time in a day on SNSs. By this we can infer that majority of the time respondents are spending their time on SNSs in a day.

**Table 5: Duration of time spent per day in Face to Face conversation**

Responses	Percentage
30 mins or less	16
2 to 4 hrs	51
5 to 8 hrs	22
10 to 12 hrs	11

Table 5 presents the duration of time spent by the selected respondents per day in Face to Face conversation with others. 51% of the respondents spend 2 to 4 hrs social / leisure time per day in face to face conversation with others. 22% spend 5 to 8 hrs per day in face to face conversation with others and 11% spend 10-12 hrs per day in face to face conversation with others. From the above figures we can say that nearly half of the respondents spend minimal time in face to face interaction and spend more time in SNSs to communicate with others.

**Table 6: Texting to stay in touch with people**

Responses	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	18
Disagree	12
Neutral	36
Agree	27
Strongly Agree	5

Table 6 shows the reliance on texting over face to face conversation to stay in touch with people. There has been a huge shift in the way we communicate. From the above table we can infer that 27% of the respondents agree and 5 % strongly agree to text rather than face-to-face interaction or talking over phone to stay in touch with people.

**Table 7: Improvement in the ability to communicate using SNS**

Responses	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	5
Disagree	13
Neutral	37
Agree	28
Strongly Agree	17

Table 7 shows the average percentage of respondents who have improved the ability to communicate with others by using SNS. 28% of respondents agree with this and 17 % strongly agree that their communication has been improved by using SNSs. By this we can infer that SNSs help the people communicate freely without any shy feeling. They use different terminologies and jargons to communicate over the SNSs, in doing so they come across and learn new words in the process of conversing. Also, for some, face to face interaction may not be a preferable option if they want to communicate with each other instead they prefer to communicate through SNSs.

**Table 8: Reliance on SNS for communicating**

Responses	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	15
Disagree	18
Neutral	25
Agree	34
Strongly Agree	3

Table 8 provides the percentage of the respondents who feel out of touch with others because of reliance on SNS for communicating. 34% of the respondents agree that they feel out of touch because of social networking .18% disagree with the statement. It is evident that social networking sites are playing a major role in everyone lives. SNSs is basically a virtual platform, many of them prefer to converse over the SNSs rather than meeting face to face that's why nowadays people are feeling personally disconnected to the person at the other end because they are spending more number of hours using SNSs.

**Table 9: Texting rather than talking to someone**

Responses	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	17
Disagree	10
Neutral	30
Agree	29
Strongly Agree	5

Communication has become a formality these days! Isn't it?

Table 9 shows the percentage of respondents who prefer carrying on conversations by texting rather than talking in person. 29% of the respondents agreed that they carry on conversations by texting rather than talking to someone face –to- face and 5% strongly agreed to it. This figure isn't a big surprise for us because in today's hi – tech savvy world, communication with the social networking sites have become so easy and user friendly that why wouldn't anyone spend more time in SNSs rather than face-to-face conversation

**Table 10: Texting people in proximity**

Responses	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	18
Disagree	8
Neutral	23
Agree	27
Strongly Agree	24

Table 10 provides the percentage of people to prefer to text people in proximity rather than talking. 27% of respondents agreed that they prefer to text others in the same place rather than talking and 24% of the respondents strongly agreed to it .This shows that people are addicted to technology. They spend more time with their Mobile phones/Smartphone rather than speaking face to face.

## DISCUSSION

From our study we can understand that we have an abundance of communication choices at our disposal. With so many available options, making the right choice is not always easy, and not necessarily the one we favor the most. Social media sites today have become the talk of the town. There is a phenomenal change in the way we communicate. People nowadays prefer to text rather than have a face to face interaction. The impersonal virtual space is the best to argue and engage.

All of us live in a self-absorbed world. There is no time to patiently listen or speak to anyone. If we don't like someone's views, we tune off. But talking – or listening – is simply not an option anymore. We love arguing, debating and talking in our own heads. The moment it becomes real we lose control. The irony is man is alienated from a manmade world.

Conversation is a formality these days. Even if we want to converse with others, most of the time we depend on SNSs to communicate our messages. Gen Y is tech savvy era. If people wish to indulge in communication they prefer the Social networking platform to communicate their message .The lack of interpersonal conversation compromises our ability to self reflect, which the bedrock of development for the human species is.



## CONCLUSION

On a whole, SNSs have also made major contributions to transform our society for better for instance if we want to share our opinion about any social cause social media or the SNS platform is the viable option where we can put forth our views and share them with large group of people . Also, suggestions to address the social problem can be made if such kind of platform exists.

However, to strengthen interpersonal relations there is a strong need to communicate interpersonally. There might be instances where we are able to put forth our ideas, views within no time with the means of SNSs but in reality these SNSs prove to be very impersonal and individualistic.

Therefore one should focus on the appropriate use of these SNS so that it serves our society in the right way and the youth can understand the importance of living in a real world rather than a virtual one.SNS is a both a boon and a bane both for the Indian society .On one hand it provides ways to connect with our near and dear ones whereas on the other side it is a challenge and threat to the Indian heritage and culture.

## LIMITATIONS

The sample size used to carry out the research was small i.e. 100 which is assumed that its homogeneous and enough to carry out the research.The underlying assumption was that the survey conducted in limited area represents the general psyche of the users of the social networking site.

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