

FEED!

AN SCMC CHRONICLE MAGAZINE ON MEDIA TECHNOLOGIES



**Tracing the Evolution
of Sound Technology**

**Immersive Journalism:
New Frontiers**

Alexa, address my privacy concerns!

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AN SCMC CHRONICLE MAGAZINE ON
MEDIA TECHNOLOGIES

Managing Editor: Dr. Sreeram Gopalkrishnan
Consulting Editor: Liji Ravindran
Associate Editor: Supriti Malhotra
Assistant Editor (Design): Jaideep Kumar

Editorial Team - Batch 2020 (Journalism)

Adrija Saha
Ashish Prakash
Divesh Bhatia
Khushi Khurana
Madhavi Jain
Rhema Hans
Samidha Raut

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Symbiosis Centre for Media & Communication
Symbiosis Viman Nagar Campus,
Survey.No.231, off New Airport Rd,
Viman Nagar,
Pune 411 014,
Maharashtra, India

Write to magazine@scmc.edu.in

EDITING

MADHAVI JAIN
ADRIJA SAHA
DIVESH BHATIA

VISUALS

KHUSHI KHURANA
ASHISH PRAKASH

DESIGN

SAMIDHA RAUT
RHEMA HANS

LETTERBOXES

KHUSHI KHURANA

ILLUSTRATIONS

ROUNAK BHATT
(IMMERSIVE JOURNALISM)

IN LOVING MEMORY OF



SAMIDHA RAUT
(1999-2020)

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How Technology Has Changed The Way We Listen To Music

Madhavi Jain explores the journey from 1857 to the present day

Music is transcendental. It has the power to connect people in a way that only a few other things can. It supersedes cultural, religious, regional and other fundamental differences in human beings and brings them one step closer towards each other. Maybe, that has been the reason why over many years, generations and centuries the love for music in human beings has remained constant. Wars over wars, political upheavals, terrorism and

conflicts haven't been able to quench people's love for music. In fact, music has defined many eras. These eras with their advancing technology have completely changed the way humans listen to music. Here are some of the major advancements in the music world, how many of them can you identify with?

Phonograph (1877)

One of the first known devices that could record sounds was the phonograph. It could record actual sounds as they passed through the air, but

could not play them back. The phonograph was patented in 1857 by Parisian inventor Edouard-Léon Scott de Martinville. The earliest known recordings of the human voice are phonograph recordings, called phonograms, made in 1857. Little did we know that the phonograph would transform the way we listen to music forever.

Phonograph (1877)

Thomas Edison first invented Phonograph in 1877. He thought that a spoken message could be captured and reproduced. And it worked! In an 1878 issue of the North American Review, Edison hypothesized, "The phonograph will undoubtedly be liberally devoted to music. A song sung on the phonograph is reproduced with marvelous accuracy and power."

Gramophone (1887)

Emile Berliner, a German immigrant working in Washington D.C., patented a successful

system for sound recording. Berliner was the first inventor to start recording on flat disks or records. This was followed by the experiments of two famous American inventors – Thomas Edison and Alexander Graham Bell, who worked on telegraphs and electricity, and resulted in

what we know of today as the gramophone.

Radio (1895)

Guglielmo Marconi was the first to prove the feasibility of radio communication. In 1895, he sent and received his first radio signal in Italy in 1895.

Music first played on Radio when Canadian experimenter Reginald Fessenden produced about an hour of talk and music for technical observers, and any radio amateurs who might be listening. Radio then went on to become one of the most important tools of information dissemination in many countries.

Vinyl Records (1940s)

The invention of vinyl records is an extremely interesting story. Vinyl records were invented due to the limited manufacturing supplies during World War II. Vinyl was generally cheaper and more widely-available, so records were pressed on vinyl instead for distribution to U.S. troops." In 1948, long playing vinyls were introduced that changed the music industry and to this day, we collect vinyl records as prized treasures.

Cassettes (1960s)

In the 1960s, the listening



medium continued to evolve, with more options being offered, like the Philips compact cassette. It was one of the earliest formats of portable music listening – but the real game-changer may have been the eight-track tape, invented in 1964 by Bill Lear. Soon, tapes could be played in cars. Cassettes then went onto be loved for the next three decades!

Compact Discs (1960s)

Then came the compact disc, a.k.a., the CD. ABBA's *The Visitors* was the first pop album pressed to CD. By the following decade, economies of scale led to CDs being the primary music consumption format, with similar portable playing options emerging like in-car players and the Discman.

Sony Walkman (1979)

Advancements from the cassette led to the development of the Sony Walkman, a pocket-sized cassette player introduced in 1979. It was a revolutionary device at the time. The Walkman was the first

personal music player and it gave a major boost to sales of pre-recorded cassettes. Even today, the Walkman remains an iconic device and triggers many nostalgic memories.

iPods (2000-01): The iPods were a life changer for a lot of music aficionados. The sleek and stunning design apart, it was the first time where we had a listening device that



Listening to vinyl records in the 1950s.

Bluetooth (1989)

Music became portable through bluetooth – almost a miracle. From a room in the house to gardens to road trips to colleges, music travelled with people. The technology of bluetooth was invented in 1989 by Swedes Nils Rydbeck and Johan Ullman.

allowed you to upload songs digitally, storing hundreds of songs in one go. The iPod touch was released in 2007 and was the first music device to have Wi-Fi. iPod users could connect to the iTunes Store and download music and listen to them right away or play games.

Bluetooth speakers (1997)

Rydbeck and Ullman's invention of the Bluetooth was soon repurposed for speakers. It allowed listeners to take their music wherever

YouTube (2005)

YouTube changed the music industry by allowing musicians to distribute their music and get exposure for themselves so they can be discov-

er YouTube, music videos were largely made by big name production companies and could only be enjoyed on television, on channels such as MTV.

Streaming sites (2000s) And finally, streaming sites became the gold standard for an easy listening experience. From Jio Saavn to Spotify, Apple Music and Gaana.com, streaming sites gave people unlimited access for a monthly or annual subscription fee. Streaming delivered high-quality music and allowed listeners choose from a wide selection of songs in the music library and also personalise their playlist.



Listening to music on Airpods today

they went without struggling with a mess of wires. Tord Wingren, Jaap Haartsen, and Sven Mattisson are the inventors of what became the Bluetooth, developed specifically for wireless headsets. And so came by the device that a lot of modern day listeners would be thankful for.

ered. Musicians such as Justin Bieber were able to get their start after being noticed on YouTube. Also, YouTube became a platform where artists, both large and small, could distribute their music videos. And the audience had free access to a wide range and variety of videos. Before

The evolution of music technology has been a story of providing music lovers more convenience, more accessibility, more choice, and a richer experience. How will the evolution of media technology change the music industry and the way we listen to music in the future? That is a question that remains to be answered.



let the crowd fund it!

Adrija Saha

In an age of growing monopolisation and corporatisation of all media platforms, crowdfunding is revolutionising things and helping create a space for independent media and unfiltered reporting.

Whether one is interested in raising money for a particular story, a publication or broadcast, or founding a news organisation, today crowd funding is looked upon as an alternative approach for financing various journalism or media projects. We see hundreds of crowdfunding platforms across the globe, growing at a fast pace, and these platforms have helped to raise billions of dollars for various projects starting from tech to media.

One such independent news organisations is the online news

site, The Wire, founded in 2015 by Siddharth Varadarajan, Siddharth Bhatia, and M. K. Venu. Although the organisation stands strong on their principles today, they too had their difficult times.

The Wire was hit by a lawsuit in the year 2017, where they were asked to pay an amount of Rs. 100 core, as damages for an article they wrote against politician Amit Shah's son Jay Shah. The founders knew that the site was delicate financially, and that this lawsuit could be a disaster for the organisation financially. However, their readers stood by their side, and started sending in money. Since then, the website has set up a membership

We are living at a time when most serious journalists are struggling to work without vested corporate interests.

programme based on the model followed by The Guardian in the UK. Initially, donations from readers made up 20 per cent of the Wire's revenue. Now, it has increased to 40 per cent. The

Wire is not the only organisation doing it. In India alone several organisations such as Newslaundry, Alt News, and IndiaSpend have taken up this model as well. Various news platforms across the globe are adopting crowdfunding as a way to support themselves financially, and to keep themselves independent, uninterrupted by reliance on corporate & political interests. The model is especially beneficial to journalists determined to break through the tight grips imposed on them within established corporatised media institutions.

We are living at a time when most serious journalists are struggling to work without vested corporate interests. Therefore, the advent of crowdfunding is a development welcomed with open arms. According to data released by Kickstarter, the most donated-to crowdfunding platform in the world, between 2009 and 2015, 658 journalism-related projects proposed on Kickstarter received funding to the tune of nearly USD6.3 million.



By Akshit Gupta

So this is something my dad recounted. He was raised in Lucknow in Papermill colony. His family was the first to buy a television in his Street. This is when he was around he 10-11 years old – 1980 or something. They had bought this humungous KONARK TV, which had a shutter in front of it to protect the screen. There was also a lock on the shutter. So every time you had to watch TV, you would use your keys and open the shutter. Now in those days, there was only Doordarshan. They used to get only a few programmes to look forward to, as most of it was catered to farmers. There was only *Chitrahar* at Wednesdays which gave a showdown of seven songs. My dad and his two brothers would rush every time it started. They'd feel impatient and sad as each song went by – *"kya yaar do gaane bache hai bas"*.

There was this movie night on Doordarshan every Sunday too. And since my dad's family was the only one that had a TV, everyone from the colony would come and gather in the house. There was so much crowd that Papa himself would struggle to find a seat. Sometimes, my Dada would find someone that he wouldn't know, only to realise, it's just a random stranger from a random colony who has just come to watch the film. My Dadi had her own hassles because she would have to make snacks for so many people after the movie ended. People would be sitting on the floor, by the window. Everywhere! It used to get so hot during the summers due to the number of people and since some people were sitting on the widow sill, mosquitoes would get into the house. They were truly crazy times!



THE LETTERBOX

Stories from the past

By Anushree Tidke

It was the late 80s. My mom and dad were in their first year of college; exploring life together. They were high school sweethearts but, they weren't like the Gen Z couples. They didn't swipe right before meeting each other; their eyes met everyday on their way to school. There was innocence, hesitation and nervousness. Well, like they always say, communicating with each other wasn't so easy back then. But don't get me wrong, they never complain about it. If anything, they reminisce about that time fondly. To quote my mom, "We may not have gadgets to communicate at the touch of a finger, but we were always connected with a network stronger than any telephone tower can ever provide."

They were one of the few lucky ones to have experienced the real old-school romance. The letters they wrote to each other are a testament to the fact that love isn't restricted or hindered by lack of technology; all you need is a paper and heart full of love!

My mom always narrates this when we (my brother and me) go to her with our millennial "relationship problems." She tells us how communication is the key and foundation of a strong partnership. Back in the day, my dad



had a landline telephone at his place, but my mom didn't. She told us how everyday she would go to the *kirana* store near her house to use the PCO box! "*Main har roj ek rupay ka sikka dal ke teen minute tak baat karti thi*, that's all I could afford on my modest pocket money!" I'm sure those three minutes made her day. That one phone call, those innumerable letters, some posted, some hand delivered by a middle man (my uncle) and those cheesy greeting cards on birthdays and other important dates; that's how they communicated, that's how they always stayed connected!

Now, after 30 years of being together, their communication mediums have changed, but their connection is still as strong, if not stronger! "*Wo aise hi baatein kiya karte the jaise aaj karte hai; tab khat likhte the, aaj ek whatsapp bhej dete hain!*"



living the stories with immersive journalism

Rhema Hans sheds light on new heights of technology in journalism.

Our world has been dramatically impacted by the evolution of technology; the everyday time-consuming chores have now become less burdensome. While technology continues to provide substantial opportunities, it has also simplified access to education, medicine, transportation, and more importantly to media. The shift from traditional news consumption to the new age digital style has completely changed journalism in its 360-degree view. News is no more just current affairs or information unload, because consumers today are looking for something more, they are looking for an experience, a news presentation which can stop an endless Facebook or Twitter scroll. Technological trends are changing the face of journalism with social media turning into our present-day news portal for informa-

tion, with news organizations like BuzzFeed, BBC, and many others using messaging apps like WeChat, WhatsApp, Facebook and Snapchat, innovative tools for conversation like chat bots, such as Washington Post's Kik bot and Quartz's Chat-like news app, or the robots becoming the new age reporters; and 360° content which gives us the full picture like YouTube, with their introduction of 360° video in 2015. These immersive visual ideas provide a new stance on the news stories and other media content which are only going to be more common.

Technology in journalism reached its peak with the introduction of virtual reality which is known as immersive journalism. It is an attempt to offer entertainment and engage the viewers with the absorption of technology like Virtual Reality while journalistic values of traditional news reporting, and a first-hand experience of the news story.

The first reported use of augmented or virtual reality in journalism was in 1997, by a

group of students at Columbia University's centre for New Media. They made use of an omnidirectional camera to create a 360° video of the Irish Lesbian Gay Organisation's protest at their exclusion from the 1997 St. Patrick's Day Parade in New York. Since then, VR or immersive journalism has been seen as a medium to not just give information, but also convey emotions of a story in its best impactful manner. The first-person essence of a news story real enough to be important for a viewer to get involved in.

The first immersive documentary film named Hunger was made by Nonny de la Peña, a journalist who has experience in print, broadcast and documentary. Hunger, the film, was based on intense lack of food in some neighbourhoods around Los Angeles. The ex-

perience of the film moved the viewers. She introduced the idea of VR in its most innovative manner, engaging more audiences and adding to the depth of journalism, bringing stories from not just the known places, but also



the most secluded corners of the world. As a journalist, she says she has always been compelled to make stories that can make a difference in the society, and inspire people to care and contribute to

to the change and development, "I've had Americans tell me that they've donated, direct deductions from their bank account, to go to Syrian children refugees when I did a story on Syrian civil war, and how the children have been the worst affected," said Peña at a TEDWomen talk in California.

While Peña is on a journey to deliver a richer, gripping news experience to the audience

ise to make you a part of the story, and not just show the story. Producer and Director of BBC VR Hub, Phil Harper, wrote in his article on the use of Virtual Reality that, "In true VR, the aim is to simulate as much of the human condition as possible: in real life we can pick things up, move around, prod things and watch as they react. We can look wherever we want and move through our world." Since VR in general has not been able to place

"In true VR, the aim is to simulate as much of the human condition as possible"

via VR, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) is constantly experimenting with new technologies to enhance their viewer experience by bringing immersive journalism into practice.

BBC launched an application called 'BBCVR' where you can experience their storytelling like never before. They prom-

itself in the market and is not even close to becoming mainstream, Immersive journalism, despite its promises to help impact the development or change in society, will fail to provide what it is capable of unless VR takes off. "VR is still in its infancy and the primary target group are gamers. But once virtual reality does become more mainstream, I

can imagine news broadcasts being more Immersive. Not only will on location reports be more Immersive, but the studio experience can also be enhanced with animations, and such to help immerse the viewer better into news stories," says 21-year-old Gokul Balram, a gaming enthusiast.

When the journalists decide to have viewers witness a news story or a news event as if they were a part of it, they obtain new responsibilities towards their audience. While some journalists appreciate the idea of immersive journalism, others question the possible impact of the news presented through VR.

According to Amitabh Dasgupta, professor and journalist, "Immersive journalism is just a name for non-fiction documentaries, using computer generated images to create virtual reality. It cannot replace breaking news reporting." What is clear though is that the advancements in technology can change the journalism, making people more involved, and give their bit to transform the society.



THE LETTERBOX

Stories from the past



By Sayali

My parents had an arranged marriage, hence the love blossomed after they were engaged in the year 1991. As we all know, mobile phones didn't exist then, but they had landline phones at their house. They would generally give each other three missed calls, so that the other person would know who is calling to make sure it's them who picked up the phone on the fourth ring. That is how they communicated back then. My father is super shy and not a person who would generally do out-of-the-world romantic things, which is completely opposite to my mother. In their younger days *aai* would write *baba* letters and greeting cards and send them across through my *kaka* (my dad's brother). She still blushes when she shows me all the letters and cards back from those days that she has preserved. Theirs was a sweet simple cute love story.



Villagers gathered for a workshop conducted by Muktipath in Gadchiroli district.

In the world of speed: Stories from the village

Samidha Raut explores technology interactions in rural Vidarbha

A Saturday evening with some time to ourselves would include watching Netflix and chilling for most of us. We would get a notification from a food app giving restaurant recommendations. We would get to know the breaking news of the day as it is happening. The same Saturday evening would be very different for someone who lives in a small village in Vidarbha in Maharashtra: watching videos on

Facebook, gathering at a friend's house who has television connection, and sitting on the roadside with the neighbours after dinner. In rural India, even internet connectivity is sometimes a major issue, let alone thinking about a future with Artificial Intelligence. In places like these villages in Vidarbha, the equivalent of over-the-top platforms (OTT) like Netflix is a 'natak', where small artists perform a play with colorful lights and overdramatic sound in

the background. Facebook and WhatsApp are the only two social media platforms which are majorly used by the youngsters in these areas.

Aditi Atre is a former coordinator for a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO), 'Muktipath', in the district of Gadchiroli, Maharashtra. She tells us about the journey of the NGO which focuses on making rural people aware of the hazards of consuming tobacco and alcohol. She tells us about the challenges the district faces in terms of technology and what are the most used media technology platforms by the people of the district. Gadchiroli faces not only severe network connectivity issues, but also even the newspapers are received



A woman gets shy in front of the camera during an interview.

in the evening in some interior areas. Language also becomes the barrier sometimes as people in extreme rural areas speak only tribal languages.

"The top-most used social media is WhatsApp and Facebook. (Telecom network) Jio has changed the internet scenario of the rural areas. But here not everyone can afford to have the Jio net pack, so gathering and sharing hotspots, community watching of videos

on a smartphone are common practices," says Atre. She adds that people also consume some local news portals and news channels too. That news is also circulated on WhatsApp groups that locals are part of and so they stay updated. The youngsters also use smart phones to play offline music, use camera, share photos and videos via Bluetooth.

As Muktipath is a district-wide project, conveying the message across the district was a big challenge for Atre. Even in 2017-18, five out of the 12 blocks of the district had severe network issues. Internet was almost absent in these areas, which led to limitations in communicating messages. Some of the

educated ones among rural youngsters used to have Facebook and WhatsApp, but the usage was limited because of the costly internet packs. Looking at the technical challenges, Muktipath created their own medium. They carried their own projectors, laptops and sound system to showcase their presentations and films on various health issues. Also, they designed a newsletter to spread the messages in each and every village of the district as they

could not totally rely on the technology for communication. But newspaper is a medium which is read by only a small number of people in Gadchiroli district, while people from interior tribal areas are unable to read at all, which leaves a platform like Muktipath with very narrow scope to reach to people. To communicate more closely with the people, Muktipath puts up banners and hoardings for every event they conduct, they run announcements through loud-speakers mounted on auto rickshaws. They also have to rely on real-life influencers like sarpanch (head of the village), teachers, officers, villagers etc.

To bring us some more perspective on the matter, Rohidas Raut, editor of The Hitvada

generally covered in the mainstream media. While Raut's target group is the urban class, he strives to make them aware of the challenges faced in rural areas. "D-Voice is just a small step, we have a long way to go," he adds.

People like Rohidas Raut and Aditi Atre are working on the ground level and starting from scratch to bring the advantages of media technology to the rural population by touching upon relevant topics. On a large scale there are also online digital platforms which are doing the same. For example, Adivasi Lives Matter, a social media platform, brings the voices of Adivasi communities across India. They aspire to highlight the richness of Adivasis, their culture, customs, traditional knowledge, and

Like the NGOs working on the ground, some online digital platforms are now bringing voices from the forgotten Adivasi communities into the mainstream

in Gadchiroli, talks to us about an online news portal that he has started to focus on problems in rural areas. "The power supply itself is insufficient in interior parts of the district, let alone connectivity of internet," Raut says. He adds that the youngsters in these areas want to make use of technology to become aware, but what stops is them is the lack of availability of infrastructure facilities. D-Voice, an online news portal which Raut started from Gadchiroli, brings us the voices of Adivasi and other regional communities which are not

environmental conservation, as well as their stories of the violation of their rights. Adivasi Lives Matter brings stories of the struggles of Adivasi rights activists, about tribal languages, and also recipes and stories behind tribal food.

One such platform is news and media website, People's Archive of Rural India (PARI) Network. It practices the journalism of bringing farmer issues, cultural diversity from across rural areas in India and brings the stories to the forefront. PARI focuses on how the marginalised

communities are affected by national news such as demonetization and the Citizenship Amendment Act. On a larger scale, the digital news and website, The Wire also gives out news in tribal language of Gondi. It releases episodes of podcasts on its YouTube channel in Gondi language, so that important national events reach every corner of the country. These platforms make us familiar with not only

the issues faced in rural areas but their cultural background and their means of livelihood. Media technology or social media does not play a very significant role in the rural lives, but the freedom of creativity and faster techniques of sharing news from across the world will truly be successful when rural journalism also gets the same speed and importance in the mainstream world of media technology.



By Manisha Deswandikar

My grandparents lived in a particularly interesting time. It was the time before independence. At an age when an arranged marriage or even child marriage was very normal, in fact a norm, my grandparents had a great grand love story! They defied the rules of society, fell in love, and got married at the tender age of 19. She was 19 and he was 23; a rather-small age gap compared to the other couples of those times. It was the late 1920s, and almost no

easy way of communicating with each other existed. Dedicating songs to each other on All India Radio; meeting each other for barely a minute after college hours, being part of strictly conventional families, they still had some ways to

stay connected to each other. Theirs will always be one of the best relationships I've heard of. I wish I could've met them and told them that their relationship is a celebration of love in its most beautiful and pure form!

“ALEXA, address my privacy concerns!”

By Madhavi Jain

In December 2017, college student Harnoor Bhutani was gifted a small Alexa Echo Dot (3rd Gen) for Christmas by her family. The Echo Dot slowly became a major part of her life. From helping her out during assignments, to sourcing and playing music for her, from bringing her the news from around the world to helping her stay in touch with friends, the advent of this digital but personal assistant in Harnoor's daily routine completely turned her life on its head, easing out every task and aiding her questionable habit of procrastination. Alexa

became the best friend she never had. But like all friendships, Harnoor had to pay a price. Alexa slowly became a nuisance. She finished Harnoor's sentences for her, knew her daily life inside out, wrote her emails for her, and gave Harnoor the illusion that she had control over her life. She didn't.

The world's biggest technology companies – Amazon, Google and Apple, over the last five years have been competing in getting their smart home devices into the bedrooms of each of their users. Be it Amazon's Echo, Apple's HomePod, or Google's Home, the race to being the perfect personal assistant has been one that has been long and very eventful. One could argue that the utility of all these smart home devices is all the same, that they implement and perform the same functions and probably yield the same results. However, their similarity goes beyond just their functional abilities. For instance, even the privacy concerns associated with them are the same. Users of all three major voice activated devices have complained of their digital assistants knowing a tad bit more than they probably should. Some, even going so far as pulling the plug on their devices forever, which brings us to the next question that we should probably ask our smart devices: "Hey Alexa, are you spying on me?"



While these home devices are smart, some wonder whether they out-smart their owners. It's no hidden fact that these smart home devices are used by gigantic tech companies as probable surveillance equipment. What would they get out of keeping a tab on their users? Data and lots of it. In the tech world, the race has slowly moved on from who creates the fanciest, most innovative invention, how and when; to who has the most amount of information on their consumers and how they use it for very specific (and arguably, creepy) digital marketing. Home devices originally meant for the convenience of their owners, take away a big chunk of their personal information and sell it to advertisers, who in turn use it to sell their products. Private information like one's interests, hobbies, experiences, relationships, morals and values, fantasies and even one's taste in food and clothing are all subject to invasive scrutiny by their smart home devices.

Let's go back to Harnoor. During her interview, she admitted that in her days of using Amazon's Echo Dot Alexa, she very frequently ordered from a biryani place in Pune. Every once or twice a week, she'd ask her digital assistant to order up without ever being sceptical of the consequences. After a couple of weeks, Harnoor started noticing the advent of more and more biryani recommendations on her social media accounts. Food delivery services like Zomato and Swiggy would show heavy discounts on specific biryani restaurants close to her place. She only noticed the pattern, after she started falling for it. How? Well, she

realised that she was consuming more biryani than ever. Believe it or not, sometimes it does take a while for people to realise how deeply entrenched technology is in their lives after the adverse effects start acting up. Safe to say, her obsession for biryani was curtailed for the next couple of months.

Such is the power of smart devices that just when you think you know it all, a new, completely unheard of aspect about it pops into one's lives and changes them forever. While the common perception is that these smart home devices only listen to you once they are 'woken up' by a call, experts suggest that this may be far from the truth. Awake or not, Alexa and the likes are always listening to your conversations, picking up key words, and giving them out to marketers.

The thing is most owners of these smart home devices do know that they are severely compromising on their data and security when they choose to install them, but most people choose the convenience of this advanced technology over privacy which says a lot about why mega tech companies continue to exploit the data of their users. In fact, this exploitation of data is probably the reason why these companies can even afford to provide more evolved and luxury products to its customers as times go by. Buyer data worth many, many bucks. As for Harnoor, it's safe to say that she's better off unplugging her smart home device at least for the time being. 'Smart' is not what her home assistants have been making her feel lately.



THE LETTERBOX

Stories from the past



By Shreya Laddha

My mother and father met in a traditional, typical arranged marriage set up; but theirs is a story as fun and romantic as a story could be. Well, my Mummy and Papa instantly knew, they had a gut feeling that they would and wanted to spend their lives together. Maybe, they were starry-eyed or something; but their names are Radha and Sham Laddha, so there's that. PS: I don't like Shah Rukh Khan all that much, but I would say they are a *Rab Ne Banadi Jodi*. Having had an arranged marriage, they didn't have family opposition, but yeah, there was one big hindrance in their communication,

my mother's sister! My Papa would call my mummy on neighbour's landline phone because there was no telephone in her place. And for all these efforts he took, my Maasi had to have her fun. She would purposely pick up his call, which by the way sometimes took more than an hour to connect or got into cross-connections, and pretend to be my mother, just to mess with him; not that he ever fell for it, but yes, she did have her share of mischief with both of them. From being a tag-along on their movie dates, to being their biggest supporter now, she has always helped strengthen their relationship!

Wanna be an Entrepreneur?

Khushi Khurana gathers expert tips on media startups

Imagine this....You start your own digital newspaper or ad agency or perhaps even a production house. You're in your new office with your dream team. Your walls resemble Pinterest boards and the place is full of happy, energetic faces. The company turns out to be a huge success and you're listed in Forbes lists of Start-Ups to Watch Out For.

Now stop, and think....How did you get there? Who bought the office? Where did the money come from? Who was on your team? What were the teams? How did you sustain yourself on your way to the top? How were your employees so happy? What made you so special? Don't stress yet! Here are a few pro tips, curated from some people who made it big themselves, that will help you realise your dreams in the digital age and answer the questions we forget to ask.

The first answer starts with our last question, What makes you special? To move forward in the industry, you need to first differentiate your service from the ones already available in the mar-

ket. Due to multiple players already existing, the best way to go about this is to extensively use an available service, and then come up with various ways to improve upon it. Decide on the medium/media platforms you want to cater to and identify who your audience will be to curate content for them.

The second thing to keep in mind would be to generate capital for your new venture. Now, other than using your personal savings and taking some help from friends and family, there are multiple ways to do this. The simplest alternative is obviously applying for a loan from your local bank, but there are a few other attractive options.

One is to approach Venture Capitalists and Angel Investors. These are people and firms who would invest in the early stages of your company in exchange for equity share or convertible debt respectively. It's essentially them helping you put your building blocks together and stand at its entrance to take a share from your gains. An-



other option would be crowdfunding. With the coming of the age of the internet, it is becoming increasingly easier to approach the masses with your creative ideas and expect them to support you in putting them to practice. Some common platforms like Kick-starter, Ketto and Rockethub or Pozible.

One of the most dependable, comfortable ways is to find the right partner to open and run your dream project. Someone who shares your vision and is ready to invest in the idea, both emotionally and financially. You can either both combine your funds or strategically source funds together, sharing the burden and the profits.

Even after you have the capital to 'start-up' with your new media house, you need a sustainable model to be able to expand your project, repay your loans and earn your bread and butter. There are again, several kinds of revenue models that you can adapt according to the needs of your service.

Let's say you are a wedding photography company. The simplest model of revenue would be basic transactions. That is, you earn through selling your service or products and gain your profits through it. But it gets more complicated than that if you are in the field of journalism. For that to work, you either need to make your content subscription-based, or run advertisements on your web page/ youtube channel. To put it simply, you will have to make

quality content around the most searched and popular topics, so that your website can trend in the field it adheres to, increasing your reach to your audience. This will attract advertisers to run advertisements on your page; and every time someone clicks on those banners, you earn! Subscription would mean that you can have the users or consumers pay for the content you produce for them, it is probably a bit easier than ads.

A similar approach is freemiums. This is the model on which companies like Spotify or LinkedIn function. You let the user access some of your content for free and then charge for a premium or special services and updates.

A new emerging technique is content marketing. It is literally the digital equivalent of brand placement, that lets you earn through promotional content. GoPro and Red Bull are the pioneers of this kind of marketing. Even BuzzFeed runs on the same model.

What next? What after you've gathered your audience, supplied your information, are selling your service and earning your profits? How do you expand and grow then? The company can be taken to the next level by getting it listed onto the stock exchange and selling its shares in the market. This will increase your profit margins letting you earn your cost back and create a successful dream further on. This might not be a complete step guide or a map but it's surely a start for those who are wanting to take that entrepreneurial journey.



THE LETTERBOX

Stories from the past

By Sheetanshu Kulkarni

Nagpur, 1957: My grandfather had a government job, he was a civil engineer posted in Nagpur between 1957 and 1960. However, even though he was posted in Nagpur, he had frequent visits to Chandrapur (about 150km from Nagpur) as he was simultaneously working on a project there. There were times when he went to Chandrapur for days and my grandmother along with her children and a servant stayed back at Government quarters in Nagpur. There were no phones, landlines were available but middle-class people could not afford them. My grandma was expecting a baby at that time. Upon asking my grandfather about how he managed to communicate in those days with grandma and he answered, "Telephony was rather primitive those days compared to today. In Nagpur at the government quarters, I remember Mr Phadke was the only one among the neighbourhood of 10 to 15 flats who owned a landline telephone. The entire neighbourhood would depend on the Phadke family for the use of telephone.

"Mr Phadke and I worked together at Chandrapur. To talk to someone in another city in another part of the country, trunk calls were used, but they were expensive and had to be booked in advance through the telephone op-

erator. So, I used to book the call in advance and call Mr Phadke's home. If the phone was picked up well and good, otherwise the call would be dropped and I would be charged. If the call was picked, Mrs Phadke would receive the message and send her son running to our house to fetch grandma. Grandma used to drop whatever work she would be doing and would rush to come and talk to me. Calling in those days meant we had to shout into the mouthpiece to be heard properly at the other end, and there would be frequent interruptions. After a decent bit of shouting from both the ends, one of us used to hang up. I gener-



ally asked her about the kids, her health and she used to ask me about how my work was going on, how long would I be there, etc. After the call was done, I used to pay the amount that was charged against my name and leave. If she had to give me a call, she would call the office and they were often kind enough to receive messages for me and also allowed me to use the office phone that meant no charges, no shouting and a good long conversation!"

The Challenges of Journalism in the Information Age



By Adrija Saha

With the growth and evolution of the internet, we are now witnessing a new age of information distribution. There is no longer a need to wait for the next day's paper, as the world's news is available in the palm of our hands seconds after it happens. With these seismic changes in information distribution visible before us, it has become a necessity to monitor it. With so much information available so easily, the question is how does the media maintain its credibility? Society's trust in the journalists that report on it determines both the credibility given to the media as well their economic standing. This is primarily due to allegations of biased reporting and paid coverage, or as it is

better known, 'fake news'. Another issue is the 24-hour news cycle, and the need to produce content at a greater speed than ever before. The media industry has become highly saturated and competitive, and with everyone vying for consumer attention, the amount of time people spend reading or viewing content is directly linked to the economics of the organisation.

Reports suggest that trust factor in traditional media is rapidly declining, even as they face the challenges brought on by the advancement of technology. According to Edelman's Annual Report on Trust in Media, government institutions, NGOs, and the media are trusted less and less around the world, with trust in media seeing the largest drop. There are certain steps which can be adopted in order to tackle the challenges. For example- transparency and accountability are two things which every media organisation in the world should practice. This can be done by providing (bylines) ownership, by citing credible sources, providing accurate data at all times, and most importantly by extensively vetting and verifying all items before reporting them as news.

Today, with the market becoming more and more competitive, one must focus more on quality than quantity. Information should be provided responsibly. Journalists must be given adequate space and resources in order

to produce quality content. Along with time and financial pressure, the anonymity of a source is something that really limits the credibility of a story. From government officials demanding anonymity even while speaking about known government policy, to anonymous Instagram and Twitter handles making baseless claims being reported as news, there is an unprecedented amount of unveri-

Along with time and financial pressure, the anonymity of a source is something that limits the credibility of a story

fied content out there. The responsibility falls on journalists to be more rigorous with their sourcing while at the same time protecting those whose safety depends on anonymity.

On the flip side, with the internet revolution today, there is direct communication that exists between journalists and readers. Social media platforms, such as Twitter and

Facebook, are providing news and information content in unprecedented quantities in ways never seen before, with ways for readers to respond and provide all forms of feedback to the media instantaneously, unfiltered. Readers can now influence the nature of reporting directly. With social media and direct communication between content producers and consumers, the choice remains in the

hands of the consumer as to which link they wish to share and which publications they think are more trustworthy. In a world where information & content are produced, shared, and updated in the blink of an eye, the best thing one can do as a journalist is pursue the truth, maintain their integrity, and understand the responsibility they have towards the communities they serve.

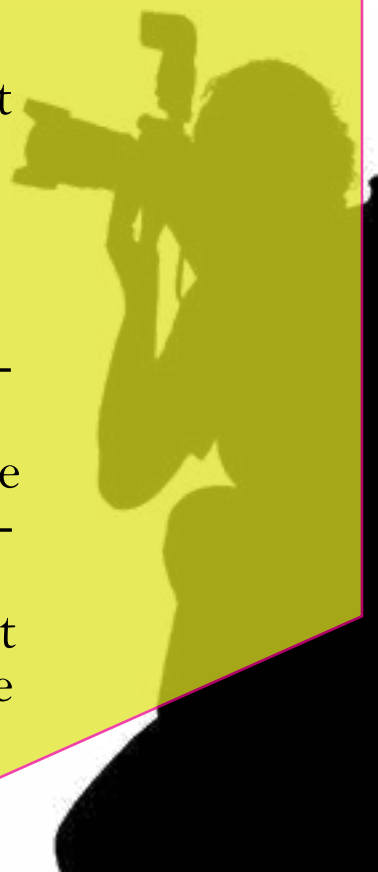
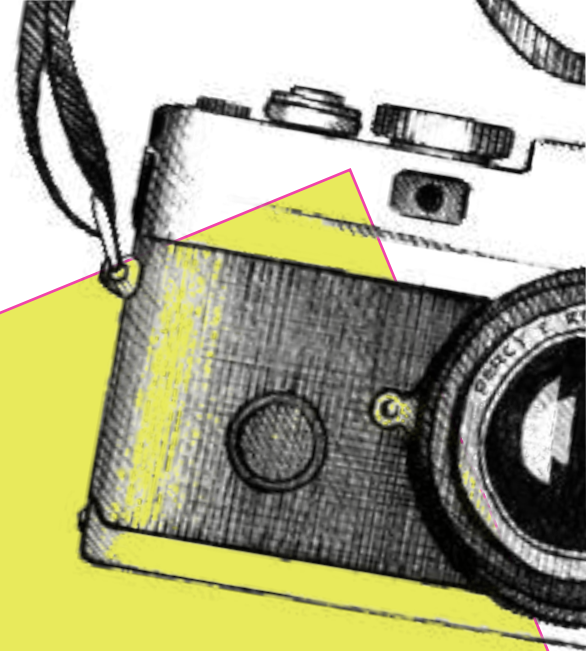
alumni speak



Swaraj Srivastava

Audio Visual Production, 2018

“I’ve been creating video and photo content for music festivals and other events for three years now and it is really interesting to note the drastic change in how the audience consumes this content. We have seen a platform shift from Facebook to Instagram and content that thrives on referencing (story mentions, hashtags) to connect more but over a minimum attention span. It translates to content creators and brands focusing on shorter and vertical formats (Boomerangs, IGTV, Cinemagraphs) and is also changing the way people shoot and edit because less is more. This is the age of 9:16 where every extra second in duration would matter. The audience might just skip what you create because they do not want to turn their phone by a mere 90 degrees. The stakes have grown higher.”



Shreevar Chhotaria

Advertising, 2019

"My final thesis in college was on how Indian millennials were interacting with voice technology and how marketers were adapting to this. I work for SOCIAL, a brand at the centre of youth culture in our country, where our conversation has moved from having a 'logo' at the end of every creative to having a 'sonic tag' or a 'brand sound' that you associate our SOCIAL with. This way, we can transcend the usual audio-visual medium and explore media like podcasts and audiobooks. It's definitely a way forward; something that we weren't privy to during college!"





Aroush Kumarr

Public Relations, 2019

“In Public Relations, staying on time for your game at all times is necessary. There are a few applications that we didn’t know about in college, that are very helpful in this regard. Like, the Slack app that’s great for addressing

different teams with their respective responsibilities, following up and overall having a space for professional, work - related conversations. Or Freepik, which is great because they offer a plethora of content, real and vector files in all formats for you to choose from and work with. As a PR professional, one needs to have the best tools to yield the best results.



Shamani Joshi

Journalism, 2018

“In Journalism, social media emerges as an easy-to-use yet underrated tool: from efficient news coverage to visually powerful yet relatable on-ground reporting, to user-generated content that can make the audience feel like they are part of the story you want to tell. The biggest takeaway that working in digital media gives you is the ability to sell yourself; to package a story, and build on it with enticing visuals in order to give it more of a takeaway than just the information it gives out.”





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