

Social News Site: People's Interest and Content Spreading

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Abstract

The background of this research is the presence of Social News Site in Indonesia. Contents could be viral as long as it is being shared. People will read the information if they are interested or if it is useful for them. This research aims to find out the people's interest of content on Social News Site and its spread. There are several factors that build the people's interest in consuming information. This research uses descriptive qualitative research method with data collection technique through interviews, online observation and literature study. This study focuses to analyze people's interest and content spreading. The researcher uses AISAS (Sugiyama & Andree, 2010) model to analyze this problem. AISAS stands to Attention, Interest, Search, Action, and Share.

Keywords: social news site, people's interest, content, viral

Introduction

Since the development of the digital era, mass media has not only been a medium for information but also an interaction. As the development progresses, the community can be actively involved in responding to an issue. New Media allows people to control issues as simple as typing in their gadgets. With this New Media, communication between sender and receiver can result into a two-way communication. In addition to the online news portal, the presence of blogs in this digital era is considered as a replacement to the position of newspaper because of its more segmented content comparing to conventional newspapers. It can be seen that many blogs are grouped into smaller segments which are very specific depending on the desire of the netter (Prisgunanto, 2014, p.37).

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The number of segmented blogs is also glimpsed as a potential by some media entrepreneurs up to the presence of the so-called 'Social News Site'. Social news sites are similar to blogs although managed by an agency (not an individual) with more features than the blog itself. In contrast to the online news portal, social news sites tend to provide light news (soft news) such as leisure, technology, music, movies, celebrities, hobbies, and tips. In addition, it also relies more on contributors to fill the news column, the news also tend to be soft news and interesting to viral news spread. Social News Site allows its readers to play a role as contributors in writing whatever is concerned with their interests.

This research discusses 'Social News Site : People's Interest and Content Spreading'. The background of this research is the presence of Social News Site in Indonesia. The content could be viral as long as it is being shared. In other words, Social News Site defined as a site that attracts readers to comment and make it viral on social media (Rizal, 2015). Social News Site combines online news portal with social media having the netter as the end user who specifies the agenda. There are several social news site in Indonesia such as Hipwee, Malesbanget.com, IDNtimes, Trivia and Brilio.net.

Literature Review

People will read the information if they are interested or if it is useful for them. According to Abugaza (2013, p. 155), the new media has a number of important features that distinguish it from the old media. First, there is great variation in the content, both in terms of variety (number of topics) and depth (amount of information on the topic). The old media has limited content, because there is consideration between space and time. Furthermore, new media provides users with greater control over what information they receive. In the broadcast model, the media determines what information will be transmitted, and people have few alternative sources of information. In new media models, people have more ability to pick their own resources and dig deeper if they feel the need.

The content processing in Social News Site consists of steps as; first, the contributor (citizen journalist) submits the article on Social News Site and then the article is reviewed by an editor. After that, the article will be published on Social News Site. The end user (viewer) could share the article through their social media, add comments, and also publish their article. The end user could make the news viral based on how much it is being shared. 'Uses and gratification' is completely determined by end user. This is different from the conventional media that sets the agenda, social news site which will display the most popular news and favored by readers, regardless of whether the news is important to know or not. The most popular news counted by the most viewed, so the more it is being shared, the more it is will be viewed.

This research aims to find out the people's interest of content on Social News Site and its spread. There are several factors that build the people's interest in consuming information. The contributors write with a content based on their interests. On the other hand, they also think about the viral potential of the content. In other words, contributors should also think about what others like in order to get the content spread as viral news.

This research also shows about the diversity of content in social news site. Social News Site become more engaging when it provides many kind of feature such as popular news, fashion, film, community, video, funny stories, public figure, romance, and Do It Yourself (DIY). Unlike

conventional media that has the characteristic to set the certain agenda settings, the independence of social news site makes people's interest towards something become more recognizable. Social News Site becomes a new public sphere that allows people to set the agenda on their own, let the other people acknowledge it, persuade them to share, give like, and comment. When questioning the public sphere in relation to the internet media, it can be equated with the use of mass media by humans. In research of the effects of mass media (Prisgunanto, 2014, p. 86) it is mentioned that there are 3 stages in absorbing information through mass media known as social learning process. First stage is Attention, which meant that the mass media keeps viewers interested in the content of the mass media or makes it unworthy to be considered. Second stage is retention, which meant that people always limit what they should process. Third stage is Motivation, which means that the underlying motivation of people to act in their daily life.

Methods

This research uses constructivist paradigm. Crotty (1998) in Creswell (2014), the constructivist paradigm includes the following:

- Humans build meaning as they engage with the world that they interpret. Qualitative researchers tend to use open-ended questions so participants can share their views.
- Humans engage with their world and understand it from their historical and social perspective – which is with the notion where we are all born into the world of meaning granted to us by our culture. Thus, qualitative researchers seek in trying to understand the context or setting of participants through this context by visiting and collecting information in private. They also interpret what they find which is an interpretation shaped by the experience and background of the researcher himself.
- The basic understanding of a generation is always social, emerging and excluded from the interaction of the human community. The process of qualitative research is largely inductive; inquiries which generate meaning from data collected in the field

This research uses descriptive qualitative research method with data collection technique through interviews, online observation and literature study. According to Bungin (2007, p. 68), social research with qualitative descriptive format aims to summarize the various conditions, various situations, or various phenomena of social reality that exist in the community into an object of research, and attempt to draw the social reality to the surface as a characteristic, nature, model, sign or picture of a particular condition, situation, or phenomenon. The study conducted in Brilio.net, one of Social News Site in Indonesia that incubated by Kapanlagi Network. Brilio.net, is ranked first as a Social News Site in Indonesia, followed by IDN Times, Hipwee and Malesbanget (Data from Alexa, by February 2017).

This data is being analyzed through 'Coding'. According to Strauss (1987) in Neuman (2014) there are 3 Coding consisting of:

1. Open coding. The first encoding of qualitative data is to check data in order to summarize data from the beginning.
2. Axial coding. The second stage is the qualitative data encoding where the researcher organizes the code, connects them, and finds the category of key analysis category or analytic code.

3. Selective coding. The last stage in qualitative data coding that checks the preceding code to identify and to select data that will support the developed conceptual coding categories.

This study focuses to analyze people's interest and content spreading. The researcher uses AISAS (Sugiyama & Andree, 2010) model to analyze this problem. AISAS stands to Attention, Interest, Search, Action, and Share. AISAS model is usually used in digital marketing to analyze the effectiveness of shared content. There are several supporting theories such as :

1. New Media

According to McQuail (2011) in Mass Communication Theory, the new media is a diverse set of communication technology that can be used as a means of communication ("New Media", n.d.). According to Lievrouw (2011), the new media is a medium consisting of a mixture of various elements which means there is a media convergence within several medias which are put together (Afrilita, 2015).

2. Media Convergence

Media convergence is a phenomenon involving the interconnection of information and communication technology, computer networks, and media content. It unites "three C's" - Computing, Communication, and Content - and it is a direct consequence of digitizing Internet media and socialization of content. Media convergence transforms industry, service, and established work practices and enables the creation of new forms. This erodes the long standing media industry and is increasingly incompatible with the content of certain devices, which in turn presents a great challenge to public policy and regulation. The five main elements of media convergence are technology, industry, social, textual, and political (Flew, n, d.).

3. Social media

Abugaza (2013, p.16) explains that social media is a social structure consisting of individual elements, groups or organizations connected and interacted with each other by using information technology intermediaries. According to Kaplan and Haenlein in Abugaza (2013, p.16), social media is a group of internet-based applications that build on the foundation of Web 2.0 ideology and technology, and enables the creation and exchange of user-generated content.

4. Mass Media vs. New Media

According to Abugaza (2013, p. 155), the new media (social media) has a number of important features that distinguish it from the old media. Firstly, there is great variation in the content, both in terms of breadth (number of topics) and depth of depth (amount of information on the topic). The old media has limited content as a result of consideration in space and time. Secondly, the new media gives users greater control over what information they receive. In the broadcast model, the media determines what information will be transmitted, and people have few alternative sources of information. In new media models, people have more ability to pick their own resources and dig deeper if they feel the need.

5. The Migration of Mainstream Media to Social Media

According to Abugaza (2013, p.157) there are several reasons for the migration of mainstream media to social media. First, the cost shall be very expensive when advertised in the mainstream media. Second, in the mainstream media, media independence has decreased due to media ownership status.

Result and Discussion

Contributor as Sender

Based on an interview with Dimas Ragil Mumpuni, the contributor (citizen journalist) of WeWereHere.com, he mentioned, "I choose the theme based on my knowledge and interest. I love to write about economy, finance, technology, and travelling. First I consider about my skill and knowledge, after that I consider on what is interesting for me. I guess the combination between knowledge and interest could give 2 sides of satisfaction, both from the writer and the reader."

It can be analyzed that the contributor can write various category of content. The contributor will consider about his expertise before starting to write without forfeiting the reader's need. The contributor is aware about 'uses and gratification' theory. The audience is considered an active and purpose-directed audience. Audiences have a significant responsibility in choosing the media to meet their own needs. (Littlejohn & Foss, 2012, p. 426). Novita Maria, a blogger and content writer of Kompasiana.com, said, "I choose beauty and parenting category, but there is still a possibility in writing based on the current issue. For example, my article on Astra Group which can be categorized as economic article reached 22.577 readers."

Based on this interview, it can be analyzed that the contributor has the possibility to write based on the current issue, whether by interest or not. Novita Maria is a beauty and parenting blogger and she did not expect that her economic article reached large amount of readers. Therefore it can be seen that the contributor does not have the power to control what the people read, share, and comment to the article. The contributor also cannot set a target number of reader.

As a motivation Dimas said, "In writing, we share knowledge, so I hope my article could be useful to add an insight to the readers. Furthermore it can also influence them to act". Based on this interview, it can be related to what Sugiyama & Andree 2010 explained on the AISAS model. The contributors have the AISAS strategy to influence people as seen in the table below

Table 1. Research Results

Attention	The contributors could start to set the theme and title of content. The contributor gets the reader's attention through various category of content.
Interest	The contributors set the similarity between their interest and reader's interest. This allows the contributors get more followers from readers. The reader who is interested to the issue of the article will finish their reading.
Search	The article could influence the reader to search more. Moreover, the reader will find any article that is related to the previous article.
Action	The contributors expect that the reader who has similar perception with them will do a certain action based on what he/she read
Share	The contributors expect that the reader who has read the article or act accordingly will share it to social media

Editor as Gatekeeper

Marta Marselina as the editor of Moeslema.com said, "There are few requirement that the contributor should fulfill in producing an article such as : the article must be suitable to the

categories available, it must be informative, and it is free from ethnic, religious, racial, and intergroup elements (SARA). For Moeslema.com that concern to halal fashion and beauty, there are some characteristic that should be fulfilled. The article should be written in some points, passes spelling and grammar check, the article written in more than 300 words.”

From the interview, it can be seen that the editor acts as a gatekeeper. Any person now had the ability to circumvent the traditional gatekeeper, shape the flow of news, and influence public discourse (Poor in Messner & Garrison, 2009, p. 392). Messner and Garrison (2009, p. 391) said that the editors did not view the selection process itself as their most important task, but the protection of news quality.

From the interview, it can be seen the difference between traditional media editor and the social news site editor. The traditional media editors could set the agenda for their media for next week's / next month's issue. In contrast to the traditional media editors, social news site editor can only select the information based on the company regulation of the contributor. The social news site editor cannot interfere the substantial content. Mc. Combs in Messner & Garrison (2009, p. 394) said that the importance of research on the agenda-setting role of internet formats as follows: "Blogs are a part of the journalism landscape, but who sets whose agenda under what circumstances remains an open question. Intermedia agenda setting at both first and second levels is likely to remain high on the journalism research agenda for a very long time"

The social news site editor only can set the article for marketing and promotional needs. “We provide the sponsored content for client who wants to promote their product.” said Marta. Based on this interview, the editor only can provide article for client but cannot change the overall agenda based on sponsored content. Readers will feel bored with the same product information continuously. In addition, this may result in the reader assessing the media is not objective in reviewing a matter. This can reduce the number of readers.

Some scholars in Messner & Garrison (2009, p. 397) mentioned that the future development of mass communication theory inevitably must include uses and gratifications dimension as it "has always provided a cutting-edge theoretical approach in the initial stages of each new mass communication medium: newspaper, radio and television, and now the internet." Nevertheless, the researcher added that the traditional uses and gratifications approach must incorporate the concepts of interactivity and hypertextuality as well as demassification and asynchronicity to account for a greater media selection menu and the breakdown of a set time scheme under which news was delivered in the past which gives the audience greater ability to choose its media usage (Messner & Garrison, 2009, p. 397).

The Content

As the social news site, Brilio.net provides various categories of content, such as Celebrity, LOL, WOW, Fail, and News. It is intended to meet all the needs of the reader. Brilio.net is also connected to some communities. According to Lindlof in Littlejohn & Foss (2012, p. 421), he highlighted 3 genres of interpretive communities such as content, interpretation, and social action. In 'content group', it is insufficient if the community has a common interest in one type of media content; the group must also have the same meaning for the content. In 'interpretation group' members of a community interpret the contents of programs and other media in the same way. The effect on their behavior, especially what they say about the media and the language used to explain is the same. Finally, 'social action group' is a set of shared

behaviors of the media concerned, including not only how media content is consumed, but also the ways in which they influence the behavior of members of the community.

Table 2. Category of News

Category	% of Total Views	Avg. Views Per Content
Celebrity	26.3%	60,664
LOL	20.5%	69,246
Wow!	10.7%	31,139
Fail!	9.8%	50,319
News	7.2%	28,355
Total Other	25.4%	NA
Total	100.0%	NA

Source: Brilio.net

In his interview, Joe Wadakethakal as the CEO and Co-founder of Brilio.net said, "Changes in content production control from media companies to users have made it more difficult to predict what content will be popular among readers. To put it simply, when you have an audience or reader focused on a limited set of channels, it is a pretty safe bet that one of those channels will become popular. Today, we effectively have an unlimited number of channels, and the next thing may come from an established media company or from a woman in Texas sitting in a car park outside Kohl's Department Store."

Based on Fish in Littlejohn & Foss (2012, p. 196) on reader-response theory, this is not "What does a script mean?" but "What does a script do?" Fish taught that the reader is a member of the interpretive community - a group that interacts with each other, shapes reality and general meaning, and uses it in their reading. According to Littlejohn & Foss (2012, p. 201), even if the message actually has certain structural features, you cannot separate messages from the communication of the sender and receiver. The structural features of the message certainly reflect the rules of interpretation, but these rules arise from social interactions in groups or societies as well as a part of the cognitive resources possessed by everyone.

The End User Habits to Spread Content

Brilio.net released the info graphic about 'Indonesian Millennial Social Media Habits' that involve 729 respondents on July 21, 2017. According to the research, 31% of respondents spent 1-2 hours on social media and 66% spent their spare time on social media. In frequency of posting, 77% of them do not always posts every week and 13% of them posts 1-3 times a week. For news sources, 89% of millennials get their news online. For content-sharing behavior, 43% share the content based on their hobbies and interest and 25% share the content which they believe will be useful for others.

Table 3. Distribution Platform

Distribution Platform Type	% of Total Views
Social	23.5%
Chat	20.9%
News Aggregators	34.4%
On-Site	21.2%
Total	100.0%

Source: Brilio.net

Based on news sources, it can be seen that 89% got their news online, and 76% from it, got the news from news portal (including social news site). Joe Wadaketakal as the CEO and Co-founder of Brilio.net in his interview said that "In Brilio, we believe that the most important thing to maximize the popularity of your content is distributed through various platforms." As social news site, Brilio.net distributes the content through 3 platform as social media (such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter), chat application (LINE Today), and news aggregator (such as UC News, Babe, Kurio).

Tasha Heydifa, 18 years old millennial that usually read the 'Life and Showbiz' content of social news site through LINE Today (chat application) said, "I will read the information that I like. If it contradicts information from my beliefs and my experience, I will ignore it". In this situation, Tasha as a reader limits the information that she will receive. Based on Baran & Davis (2009, p. 185), there are 3 forms of selection: exposure, retention, and perception. Selective exposure is a person's tendency to expose himself or to consume media messages in accordance with his interests and attitudes as well as the same tendency to avoid messages that can lead to dissonance. Selective retention is the process when one tends to remember the best and longest of messages consistent with the interests and attitudes that he has had before. Selective perception is the mental or psychological change of a message so that its meaning is linear to one's beliefs and attitudes.

Tissy Bunga Ananda, 23 years old a reader of 'Life and Showbiz' content said that if there is an information which contradicts to my beliefs, I will search another article/review to confirm its legitimacy. Based on this interview, it can be seen that 'search' in AISAS have a role before the reader decides an 'action'. Many sources of information provide readers with many references in determining his/her actions.

Conclusion

The contributor can write various category of content. The contributor will consider about his expertise before starting to write without forfeiting the reader's need. The contributor is aware about 'uses and gratification' theory.

The contributors have the AISAS strategy to influence people

1. The contributor gets the reader's attention through various category of content.
2. The contributors set the similarity between their interest and reader's interest
3. The article could influence the reader to search more.

4. The contributors expect that the reader who has similar perception with them will do a certain action based on what he/she read
5. The contributors expect that the reader who has read the article or act accordingly will share it to social media

The contributor also has the possibility to write based on the current issue but the contributor does not have the power to control what the people read, share, and comment to the article. The contributor also cannot set a target number of reader. From this research, it can be seen the difference between traditional media editor and the social news site editor. The traditional media editors could set the agenda for their media for next week's / next month's issue. In contrast to the traditional media editors, social news site editor can only select the information based on the company regulation of the contributor. For content, according to Littlejohn & Foss (2012, p. 201), even if the message actually has certain structural features, you cannot separate messages from the communication of the sender and receiver.

According to posting frequency and content-sharing behavior, it can be analyzed that more people are using their social media to get content (acting as a receiver) rather than producing content (acting as sender). In Indonesia, social media replaces the conventional mass media. In the other words, social media provides the 'social learning process' effect (Prisgunanto, 2014, p. 86). People will pay attention based on their interest. After that, they will limit what information they want to process (retention). According to the diversity of content in social news site, people can choose what kind of information they will consume. After that, people will act based on what they follow on social media, what they read on social news site / online news portal, in addition based on shares and comments on issues of their friends on social media. It is called motivation, which means that the underlying motivation of people to act in their daily life. The reader limits himself to receiving information based on what he believes, but the reader can also obtain other information about the truth of information. Ultimately, this does not guarantee what the reader will interpret and what he will do.

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