

Indian Software Professional's Preferences of Print and Online Newspapers in India

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Abstract

The large-scale penetration of internet has resulted in the culmination of a new generation of readers in software professionals who prefer knowing news just at the click of a button. This slow transformation among news consumers from print to online newspapers has laid impetus to know what holds the future of print newspapers. Keeping in pace with developing news dissemination systems, although slower to adapt, print newspapers are now embracing innovative technologies to enhance their business. In this backdrop of a transition from the traditional print media to the digital enterprise, this research focusing on the software industry, which plays a major role in the growth of Indian economy, becomes necessary to study the preferences of educated and a niche segment of the news consumers. A useful outcome of the study is that though there is tremendous digital penetration in a Tier II city like Coimbatore, the traditional print media still continues to hold its dominance. Unlike the Western countries, where the digital influence has been remarkable, it's a different scenario here with most people still preferring to read through print newspapers.

Introduction

The large-scale penetration of internet has resulted in the culmination of a new generation of readers in software professionals, who prefer knowing news just at the click of a button. In the backdrop of a slow and steady transition from the traditional print media to the digital enterprise, this research focuses on the short comings in both print and online media, besides preferences of news consumption by software professionals, who play a major role in the growth of Indian economy.

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It is on realizing the tremendous potential of online medium in disseminating news that most of the English and even regional newspaper organizations have begun their online versions, despite them remaining just a replica of the print. Apart from the online newspapers, the increasing use of social media like face book, twitter, blogs and besides cell phones has also begun to give a cutting edge competition to the traditional newspaper industry, which has now been adopting various innovative means to sustain its readership. Infact the news organizations have begun to use social media as a strategy to help “reach audience, especially when major news erupts” that is usually difficult to target.

While the tremendous growth of online newspapers has been a good sign for news consumers, this in-turn had given a death blow to the survival of the traditional print media. It cannot be denied that the introduction of online editions of newspapers may affect the circulation of newspapers in their hard forms. If this trend continues, a time may come, when print version of newspapers at a long run, if not now.

However, there are many advantages for a user switching over from the print newspaper content into an electronic format as online versions offer fast access and more updates compared to the print versions. More over the readers get more freedom as they can filter news according to their own preferences and tend to get an opportunity to give feedback on the articles. On the other hand, we also cannot rule out the fact that print newspapers continues to rule the roost in a developing country like India. Still a large number of people rely on the print newspapers to know news since age old times.

Considering the global scenario, where the newspapers are losing out to the new media, the Indian scenario presents a positive growth graph immaterial of the language in which it is published. The following figures will show that from the 2009 to the present, the Indian newspapers recorded growth while their counterparts in the West showed steep decline.

Table 1: Circulation Figures of top English Newspapers Published from Indian

Paper	2011	2008
The Times of Indian	4,090	2,951
Hindustan Times	1,263	1,251
The Hindu	1,500	1,453

Table 2: Circulation in 1000 *Global Circulation Figures of Print India

Region	2008	2013
Asia	301903	331520
Western- Europe	82763	62238
N. America	54069	47028
Europe –Others	37507	26255
Latin America	24390	24196
Eastern Europe	15384	11173
MEA	15292	16899
Australia NZ	3480	3515

In the backdrop of a transition from the traditional print media to the digital enterprise, this research gains significance as the software industry in India has been witnessing a phenomenal growth with software professionals likely to play a vital role in the growth of economy. It was the steady growth of India's software sector, which brought about several positive changes in the Indian economy. As it is strongly believed that software professionals are likely to become the future knowledge storehouse in taking the nation towards the path of growth trajectory, it becomes on the whole important to study their preferred source of information or news from the media. While most of the urbanites have an easy access to online media, the study chose to examine the preferences of software professionals, who have a constant exposure to web based services and also enjoy an easy access to print newspapers.

In a Tier II city like Coimbatore, where the traditional print media still continues to hold its dominance. Unlike the Western, where the digital influence has been remarkable, it's a different scenario here with most people still preferring to read through print newspapers.

Review of Related Literature

The strong and wide penetration of internet has taken forward the concept of online newspapers to every nook and corner of the society. In several countries, where internet has an influential penetration, the people tend to easily pick up using advanced technologies to consume news in contrast to India, where a vast majority still continues to rely on traditional news media like print for reliable information on the day's happenings.

However it would be absurd to say news consumption never happens through online newspapers in India. This view can be strengthened by taking a bird's eye view on the increase in number of online newspapers in the country.

Shawn P Kildea (2009) rightly underscores the growing familiarity of online newspapers by explaining that the student's familiarity with computer interfaces as likely reasons for rejecting the print paper and preferring digital format that replicated the print paper reading experience. A similar study by the Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology and University of Rajarata (2012) elaborates on the communication revolution underway in the island nation due to the escalating cost of printed newspapers, which has generally forced the youngsters to move positively towards online newspapers.

Though tall claims are made over foreign newspapers fruitfully tapping the potential of the online medium, the Indian scenario, in contrast, continues to remain grim. Mohamed Haneefa K and ShymaNellikka (2010) suggested that online newspapers should exploit the emerging internet and mobile platforms especially the Web 2.0 technologies to attract and increase readers. Whereas, the study of KC Panda and Dillip K Swain (2011) revealed that though e-news services provide immense opportunity to the readers and simultaneous access at infinite points and reading at ones convenience, still a few key technical challenges like, navigational support, hyper linking, and designing of e-newspapers needs to be properly taken care of and tackled in India. Yet another view point Christoph Neuberger, Jan Tonemacher, Matthias Biebl and Andre Duck (2006) together found that financing to be one of the main problems faced by firms involved in online newspaper production as advertisers are still very skeptical and users unwilling to pay for the service.

However, Olivia Halme (2011) came out with a valid research that no matter how great a new technology has been in delivering news, it is of no value as long as people don't adapt to it. Concerned over the failure in migration of traditional business model from print to digital media, Kalling Thomas (2007) of Lund University suggested that the media houses to have 24/7 commitment in publishing, creating thinking to sustain competition and meeting customer and advertiser demands on personalization. To attract online readers Jessica E. Smith (2005) made a strong suggestion to avoid repetition of news in online and print newspapers. Singer (2001) and Blake (2004) stated that half to three-quarters of stories in print had appeared again on the newspaper's web site.

Hans-Jürgen Bucher, Steffen Büffel, Jörg Wollscheid (2003) has reiterated on feeding e-paper into mobile receiving devices with an affinity to newspapers in order to sustain in the competitive media industry. Steen Steensen (2009) of Oslo University College suggested that for implementation of new genres in online journalism that might minimize the importance of immediacy and boost innovation.

Zaufishan Sajjad (2013) revealed that readers depend on e-technology for their perceived usefulness, eco-consciousness, social value, perceived enjoyment, perceived ease-of-use and diverse services. Sara Leckner and Ester AppelGren (2007) described the success of an e-paper edition to depend on three main aspects in the publishing strategies: sufficient device technology, a target audience, and timing, as the success in the end is dependent on the advantages for the customer: the level of convenience, cost and added values.

The Cambridge University Press (2000) gave out reasons for the declining newspaper readership by discussing its causative factors such as declining revenues, decline of traditional journalistic standards and the concentration of readership among the more educated and affluent sections of society, with a particularly marked hemorrhage of readers among the younger generation.

Markus Zinnbauer, (2003) made out a claim that newspaper and magazine publishers may be obliged to abandon their traditional and accepted print medium paper in the intermediate term and distribute their product via a modern and information technology based medium. When most studies came out in favour of online newspapers, Martin Langeveld (2009) interestingly surprised all by arguing that 'print is still the king' and online share of newspaper audience is only meager. His research claims that more than 96 per cent of newspaper reading is still done in the print editions and online share of the newspaper audience is only a bit more than a three per cent. In a subsequent study done in the same year, Martin explored the problems faced by newspapers and suggested that newspapers should become digital enterprises, even if they choose to continue to print, to sustain in this competitive media market.

Researchers Ester De Waal / Klaus Schönbach / Edmund Lauf (July 2005) revealed that visiting online newspapers does not seem to be a substitute for reading traditional newspapers

Apart from the threat of online newspapers, Heuvelman, Dr.O. Peters (2008) emphasized that paid newspapers are losing their charm particularly among young readers with the emergence of free newspapers.

Esther Thorson says that news quality is a primary driver of print newspaper readership. Bogart (1984) believe that electronic newspapers would be supplementary to the printed copies, but Mueller 1995 claims that both print and online newspapers would flourish together.

PanuUotila, a research scholar (2013) of Finland predicted online journalism and print journalism to have totally different formats in the future, like radio news journalism and television news journalism already do. The research predicted online news journalism to be more commercialized, more localized and softer, while at the same time opening up towards a more deliberative, and more opinion oriented approach to news.

SakariTaipale (2012) of Finland explains that internet use has a displacement effect on printed newspaper reading but only among male respondents. Niels Ole Finnemann (2007) revealed that the presence of online newspapers in Denmark not only added to the quantity and quality of the available news supply, but also initiated changes in the supply, production, management and use of traditional offline newspapers. The forums, chat facilities and e-mail contacts allow greater interactivity among the community members and between the readers and editors than the traditional print newspapers (Bogart 1985).

Research Methodology

As the investigation on the 'preference of software professionals in choosing print or online newspapers' requires understanding the type of news media difference among software professionals considering the diversity and demography, the researchers choose the gender, educational qualification and age of the respondents as independent variables and a) print newspapers and b) online newspapers that are categorized as dependent variables.

Research Questions

To understand what do the software professionals prefer and who among them prefer which medium, a set of research questions were generated.

- 1) Whether men and women software professionals differ in their perception in preferring online/printed newspapers.
- 2) Is there any difference in perception among engineering or non-engineering software professionals in terms of their preference towards preferring online/printed newspapers?
- 3) Is there any difference in perception between different age groups of software professionals in terms of preferring online/print newspapers?
- 4) Is there any perceptual difference of the software professionals in general in preferring the traditional print newspapers?
- 5) Is there any perceptual difference of the software professionals in general in preferring the online newspapers?
- 6) Who amongst them prefer which medium for what reason? In order to analyse these research questions, the researchers developed an instrument with corresponding items to test these questions. A pilot study was done among 60 respondents, applying a split-half. Correlation using Spearman Brown prophecy formula yielded a good correlation of 0.596complimenting the reliability of the instrument used.

For the study, three types of software industries in terms of small, medium and large scale in Coimbatore were chosen for the study of the total collected sample of 205 respondents, 185 respondents were included in the study as the left out were incomplete samples.

Findings

In order to analysis the respondents' characteristics in terms of various demographics variables, the age of the respondents is cross tabulated with the gender, education and experience of the respondents and that are analyzed and presented below:

Table.3: Sample Characteristics: Age vs. Gender Cross-Tabulation

Age group	Male	Female	Total
20-29 years	95	48	143
30-39 years	16	15	31
40 and Above	08	03	11
Total	119	066	185

In this analysis, it is observed that the major chunk of the respondents (n=185) belonging to the age group of 20 to 29 years with 143 respondents (79.8%) are men and 48 (72.7%) are women. Whereas, in the age group of 30 to 49, 16 of them are men (13.4%) and 15 (22.7) of them are women. In the senior category of 40 and above, 8 (6.7%) are men and 03 (4.5%) are women. The sample truly represents the young and vibrant age dynamics of the contemporary IT industry in terms of age, besides ample representation for others.

Table.4: Education vs. Gender Cross-Tabulation

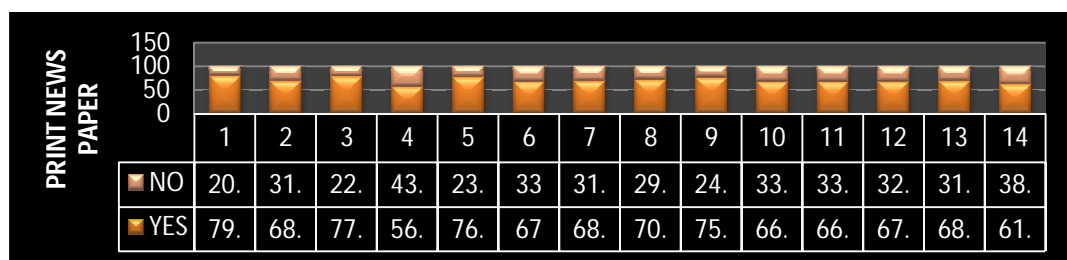
Education group	Male	Female	Total
Engineering	84	22	106
Non- Engineering	35	44	79
Total	119	66	185

The table above reveals that respondents with Engineering Graduates are 106 (57.3%) the number of male engineering graduates is 84 (70.6%) and female engineering graduates are 22 (33.3%). The number of non- engineering Graduate qualification are 79 (42.7%) whereas 35 (29.4) are male and 44 (66.7) are female respectively. Yet again, it can be seen from the above table, the dynamics of the IT industries with engineering graduates dominating it.

Table.5: Experience vs. Gender Cross-Tabulation

Education group	Male	Female	Total
Above 10 years of Experience	100	49	149
Below 10 years of Experience	19	17	36
Total	119	66	185

In this table it can be seen experience greater than 10 years are 149 (80.5 %) which comprises 100 (84.0) are male and 49 (74.2) are female. Those below 10 years of experience are 36 (19.5%) that includes 19 (16 %) are male and 17 (25.8%) are female. This goes to show that those with more than 10 years of experience form a major chunk of the respondents.

Figure.1: Percentage Analysis for Print News Paper

Majority of the respondents 79.5 % agreed that a print newspaper gives more in-depth coverage of stories.

Regarding portability, 68.6 % of the respondents said that the print newspapers are found to be easily transportable and can be accessed anywhere.

In terms of achievability, 77.3 % of the respondents have agreed that print newspapers can be archived in libraries and used for historical references.

A slight majority of 56.2 % of the respondents have said that print newspapers are more accurate than their online counterparts.

A newspaper, print or online, can be valued only by its better coverage on news items. On the aspect of better coverage on local and community based news, the print newspapers have scored well with a majority 76.2 % of respondents approving it.

Almost 67 % of the respondents have agreed that readers of print newspapers are at an advantage of following media cues like the placement of stories, story size and photograph.

Among the respondents, 68.1 % of them claim that that print newspapers are read more frequently and for longer period than online newspapers.

A majority of 70.8 % of the respondents agree to the fact that print newspapers do not require any sophisticated or cumbersome technical equipment for a reader to know news.

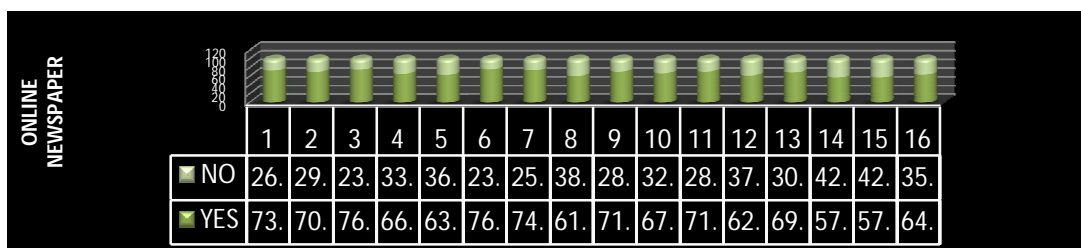
75.7 % of the respondents claim that they can absorb information from a print newspaper at their own pace.

Almost 66.5 % of the respondents believe that interactivity is not instant and minimal in the print media and more over reading print newspaper is time consuming as stories are too long.

67.6 % of the respondents feel that print newspaper readers are confined to a specific location and hence readers are at a disadvantage of knowing more news.

Also 61.6 % of the respondents have agreed that reader's feedback is subjected to scrutiny unlike online that offers free expression of thoughts to readers.

Figure.2: Percentage Analysis for Online Newspapers



A majority of 73.5 % of readers claim that online newspapers allow more interactivity than their counterpart in print.

70.8 % of the respondents agree that online newspapers are mostly accessed free and 76.2 % believe that online newspapers have constantly updated news.

On the news format, 66.5% of the respondents believe that online newspapers deliver brief articles and save readers time.

Almost 63.8 % agree that online newspapers can be archived and retrieved easily, while a majority of 76.8 % that reaching out to a wider spectrum of newspapers is possible online.

74.1 % of the respondents claim that search engine and links are useful while reading online, but 71.4 % readers said that there are too many distractions like e-mail and advertisements.

In terms of accuracy, 61.6 % of respondents think that reports in online newspapers contain more mistakes and lacks accuracy than print.

A 67.6 % of respondents said that it is too tiring to read online for long hours, while 71.4 % believe that online newspapers don't deliver local and community based news.

Almost 62.7 % of respondents find that technological interface affects the fulsome emotional reading experience in online newspapers. Also 69.2 % of readers think that reading online newspapers is possible only with the availability of latest electronic devices.

A slight majority of 57.3 % respondents said that downloading a newspaper takes too much time and besides the cost of internet access to be a serious setback in reading online.

Among the respondents, 64.3% think that online newspapers provide only a selection of articles available in newspapers.

Table.6: 'T' Test for Print Newspapers

Variable	T	Df	Sig.
Gender	1.824	183	Ns
Education	0.240	183	Ns
Experience	0.486	183	Ns

Though there is no significant difference between the gender, education and work experience of the respondent and print newspaper score, it has been inferred from the table of mean that men respondents, engineering graduates, and those with more than 10 years of experience choose to read traditional print newspapers.

Table.7: T' Test for Online Newspapers

Variable	T	Df	Sig.
Gender	1.824	183	Ns
Education	0.240	183	Ns
Experience	0.240	183	Ns

Though there is no significant difference between the gender, education and work experience of the respondent and online newspaper score, it has been inferred from the table of mean that female respondents, non-engineering graduates and those with less than 10 years of experience choose to read online newspapers.

Table.8: T-Test for both Print and Online Newspapers

Variable	T	Df	Sig.
Gender	0.175	183	Ns
Education	0.496	183	Ns
Experience	2.060	183	Ns

Though there is no significant difference between the gender and education of the respondent in both print and online newspaper score, it has been revealed from the table of mean that female respondents and non-engineering graduates have some influence towards choosing the print and online newspaper.

Meanwhile the results of 'T' test show that there is no significant difference in perception of the work experience of the respondents and both print and online newspaper readers. The table of mean reveals that those with more than 10 years of experience are more inclined to read both print and online newspapers compared to those with less than 10 years of experience.

Table.8: ANOVA for Print Newspaper

	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2.993	2	1.497	.472	Ns
Within Groups	576.866	182	3.170		
Total	579.859	184			

PRINT Newspaper Score	Mean	S.D	No.
20-29 yrs	8.40	1.67	143
Age 30-39 yrs	8.55	2.10	31
40 & above	8.91	2.21	11
TOTAL	8.45	1.78	185

The findings of ANOVA show that the age of the respondents in terms of reading print newspaper is not significant, however it is evident that the higher the age, the higher inclination towards reading print newspaper is noticed.

Table.9: ANOVA for Online Newspaper

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	25.089	2	12.545	3.213	*
Within Groups	710.565	182	3.904		
Total	735.654	184			

Online Newspaper Score	Mean	S.D	No.
20-29 yrs	8.27	1.97	143
Age 30-39 yrs	9.26	1.98	31
40 & above	8.45	2.07	11
TOTAL	8.44	2.00	185

*Significant at the 0.05 level

The findings of ANOVA show that the age of the respondents in terms of reading online news paper is significant. Particularly those in the age group of 30 to 39 have more inclination towards reading online newspapers rather than those in the age group of 20-29 and above 40.

Table.10: ANOVA for both Print and Online Newspapers

Total Newspaper Score		Mean	S.D	No.
	20-29 yrs	16.66	2.39	143
Age	30-39 yrs	17.81	2.43	31
	40 & above	17.36	2.50	11
TOTAL		16.90	2.43	185

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	35.776	2	17.888	3.103	*
Within Groups	1049.272	182	5.765		
Total	1085.049	184			

*Significant at the 0.05 level

The findings reveal that the age of respondents in terms of reading both print and online news paper is significant. It has become evident that those in the age group of 30 to 39 have more inclination towards reading both print and online newspapers rather than those in the age group of 20-29 and above 40.

Table.11: Co-Relation between Print and Online Newspaper

	Total Newspaper score
Print Newspaper Score	.586(**)
Online Newspaper Score	.694(**)

**Significant at the 0.01 level

The findings of co-relation reveal a significant level of positive relationship between the total perceptions of both the media to that of the medium per se. It is interesting to note that the software professionals attach equal importance to both the media with their high co-relation levels.

Table.12: Inter Co-Relation between Online and Print Newspaper

	Online Newspaper score
Print Newspaper Score	-.176(*)

*Significant at the 0.05 level

The findings of inter co-relation between the scores of print/ online newspapers reveal a negative co-relation. Hence it can be observed that the software professionals do not see any positive reciprocal relationship between the media.

Discussion

With an intense penetration of the digital media, it can be perceived that there has been a slight transition from the traditional print newspapers to the advanced online newspapers among the Indians. The software professionals in particular have easy access to the online newspapers at their office and also receive print newspapers at their homes.

From this research, it has been discovered that print newspapers are preferred by software professionals for their in-depth coverage of stories, easy portability, archivability, accuracy and better coverage on local and community based news. It can also be known that readers of print newspapers are at an advantage of following media cues like the placement of stories, story size and photograph. However the minimal interactivity and the perceived scrutiny of reader's feedback, unlike the online newspapers, are some of the disadvantages faced by online newspapers.

On the other hand, the respondents find online newspapers more appealing as it allows for better interactivity, free access without subscription charges and have constantly updated news.

As a disadvantage, majority of the respondents feel that online newspapers contain more mistakes, lacks accuracy and there are too many distractions like e-mail and advertisements besides they don't deliver local and community based news. The respondents also pointed out that the delay in downloading of a newspaper, cost of internet and the need for latest electronic devices to be some of the setbacks for online newspapers.

By analyzing the pros and cons of print and online newspapers, it can be presumed that both the media play a significant role in disseminating news to the consumers. Even though the online newspapers have set a strong base of readers, particularly among the software professionals, the traditional print newspapers still continue to remain their favourite.

What so ever be the penetration of digital media, it should be understood that the traditional print newspapers may never lose their importance and continue to play a significant role in the news consumer market.

Conclusion

Interestingly, the Indian media presents a complimentary scenario when it comes to comparison between the new and old media. The following comparative figures of print media vis-a-vis the online media shows a unique Asian phenomena, where, in spite of access to online news, the Indian population still attaches importance to reading the hard copy of the newspapers.

The influence of the English newspapers in India on the readers and especially on the educated population is greatly felt. Further, if read properly, the ownership patterns, it is in reality, the English newspapers set the agenda for the rest of the regional newspapers to spiral and calibrate public opinion down to the grassroots level as, most of these English dailies are national in character and part of the conglomerations that publishes regional language newspapers (C. Pichandy, 2011). All the more, this can be witnessed in terms of skyrocketing ad revenue that the print media command comparatively speaks volumes about print media sustainability in India (C. Pichandy, 2011). Hence, the influence of print media, especially English newspapers complimenting online newspapers is evident in this study.

By analyzing the pros and cons of print and online newspapers, it can be presumed that both the media play a significant role in disseminating news to the consumers. However, it should be noteworthy to mention that print newspapers should spruce itself to keep in pace with the emerging competition from the online newspapers to sustain in the competitive media market.

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