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# Communication Revolution: Online Newspaper Media in Sri Lanka?

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## Abstract

Online mass media was often linked to the word with online newspapers in this study, which generally refers to an exchange of information. In the recent years there has been much debate on the impact of new communication media on the household online newspapers. In Sri Lanka, online newspapers have been rapid, but lack of work was done to test public acceptance of online news media with respect to printed newspapers. The present study deals with communication revolution of online newspaper media in Sri Lanka. Research was derived into several areas. Main focused area was to find out whether after communication revolution of online newspapers how it was affected the printed newspapers and find out, how readers perceive the credibility of online newspapers with the experiences with the Internet, online newspapers, and familiarity with printed newspapers sociologically analyzed in the study. According to study, a questionnaire for the users was emailed. In addition fourteen individual websites of newspapers were examined and Sri Lankan online news media was a symbol as well as a reflection of Sri Lankan society, finally extremely increasing trend was observed.

**Keywords:** Communication media; Online; Printed; Newspaper; Information technology

## Introduction

In the recent years there has been much debate on the impact of new communication media on the household. In Sri Lanka, where progress in the development and application of communications technology has been rapid, but lack of work was done to test public acceptance of online news media. This study was mainly focused on communication revolution of online newspaper media in Sri Lanka. Research was derived into several areas. Main focused area was to find out whether after communication revolution of online newspapers, how it was affected the printed newspapers. Second derived area was to find out, how readers perceive the credibility of online newspapers with the experiences with the Internet, online newspapers, and familiarity with printed newspapers. Some newspapers are free of charge and some have to subscribe monthly wise and yearly wise. Do people willing to pay and subscribe the online newspapers was the next study area. From this outcome future trend of online newspaper readers can be forecast. Final focused area was to concentrate on this research to find the current and future trend of online newspapers readers and predict the best forecasting method for online newspaper trend. Research survey was carried out in the form of a survey. A questionnaire for the users was emailed. In addition fourteen individual websites of newspapers were examined.

## Methodology

In this study we examined the newspaper reader's trend towards the online from the printed ones among Sri Lankan community. In Sri Lankan newspaper publishers doesn't use real time data to gather information. Actually, this study was more accurate and reliable but still they are not willing to use this kind of technology to gathering information because of speed of the Internet and lack of knowledge.

## Questionnaire used

A written questionnaire, developed by our team as part of the "*future newspaper reading may be depend on the online using information technology*". The questionnaire was made as user friendly and one version of it made by Microsoft office questionnaire in template format, which made easy for email recipients. It combines both fixed and free answer type questions. The questionnaire was used in the Sri Lankan community first time. Use of the questionnaire in this study was justified because it had been prepared by an experienced research group working in the mass media, especially newspaper industry. In addition, the questionnaire was designed to assess conceptual understanding of topics also included in Sri Lankan printed newspaper industry.

## Research context and participants

The study relies on the comparative descriptive method as it aims at monitoring and analyzing the uses of online newspaper and printed newspaper detecting the similarities and differences between those with respect to online becoming popular. Sri Lankan population was considered as the study population in this respect. Therefore, the study was applied on the two societies of the Sri Lanka Online and Printed newspapers. This research aims at describing the phenomenon that was to be studied in a detailed and accurate manner in order to facilitate its analysis and predict its development in the future aspect of printed newspapers [1]. Study was adopted the field survey method in this study by collecting the data by email and over the phone. This survey uses several tools, such as continuous observation, interviews, inspection and questionnaires, which are used in this study. The questionnaire was part of the methodology, through which was obtained accurate information related to the subject of the research [2]. The study covered 238 people sample size which used newspaper reading as online or printed version and participants were selected randomly.

Care was taken to avoid any exchange of information or ideas among participants.

## Data analysis

We analyzed our data as a balanced figure as percentage and the Forecasting methods, which took for select the best forecasting modal was as follows, Naïve method [3]. For statistical analysis, we transformed all our data using the basic statistical analysis package.

## Results

Considering the association between online newspaper readers and the printed newspaper readers when categorized into age groups can be interpreted that, there was an association between newspaper readers and the printed newspaper readers. (Chi-Sq=43.9, DF=2, P-Value=0.0). The pattern shows that, percentage wise 59% of online newspaper readers are younger (between 15–30 years of age) generation. From the results can be interpret that this younger generation were more educated people. (53% of them are degree holders). The middle age reader (age between 30–50) doesn't read the online newspapers as much as younger generation. (28.6%) Educational wise middle age readers are educated but they don't use Internet frequently as much as the younger readers did. The age category 50 years and older generation, only 11.6% of readers are used to read online newspapers (Figure 1).

The question asked how many online Readers willing to pay annually. Most of the readers like to pay annually (65%). The readers who prefer to pay monthly are only 35%. The average cost of online subscriber's willingness to pay annually or monthly was calculated. By analyzing the results most of the readers are willing to pay amount between $12 and $14 (Table 1). The current amount was between $9-$11.

The predicting model was considered several factors to be choosing a forecasting method. The level of detail must be considered. The Forecasting methods, which took for select the best forecasting modal was as follows, Naïve method [3] assumes that recent period are the best predictors of the future,

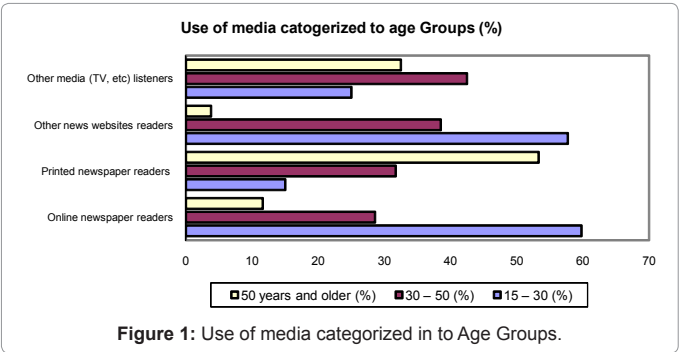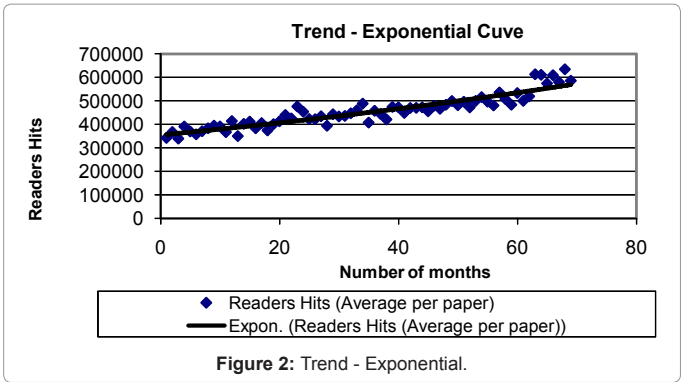The modal was $\hat{Y}_{t+1} = Y_t$



**Figure 1:** Use of media categorized in to Age Groups.

| Willing to pay Annually (N = 136) | Subscribers |
|---|---|
| Below $6 | 4.4 |
| Range between $6-$8 | 21.3 |
| Range between $9-$11 | 22.8 |
| Range between $12-$14 | 33.1 |
| Range between $14-$16 | 16.9 |
| Greater than $16 | 1.5 |

**Table 1:** Percentage of Subscribers responses for amount which willing to pay annually.



**Figure 2:** Trend - Exponential.

$$\hat{Y}_{t+1} = Forecast\_value\_for\_the\_next\_period$$

$$Y_t = Actual\_Value\_at\_period\_t$$

Sample data gathered for 6 years, the average readers who read daily online newspapers. The sample data were collected by monthly wise. So the number of months for this forecasting is 69. Sample number of newspapers is 6. In this sample data the mean was 513992. Standard error was 9552.65. Standard deviation and sample variation as 53186.9, 2828846560. This forecasting should be calculated according to the timeline. So, the two variables should be Willingness to pay (Y) and Months (X). So, from a hypothesis test it can be found that, if there was a relationship between the willingness to pay and the time (Months). Independent variables (Y)–Hit rate; and Dependent variables (X)–Months (Time), Willingness to pay. So, considering the hypothesis test, the Ho (There is no relationship between the online hits and time) has been rejected. (P=1.53E-28, P<0.05) means that, there was a relationship between the daily online newspaper readers according to the time. Considering the Correlation, it's very high. (R2=0.84). So, the model prediction power is high (Figure 2).

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the online newspapers approach continues to play a unique and important role in Sri Lankan communication industry. In particular with the increasing adoption of internet to all household, the increasing cost of printed newspapers, except the elderly the rest are moving positively towards online newspapers. The argument advanced in this article is that the online newspapers influences charging for monthly or yearly must be bring down, and it may be increase further acceptance towards online newspaper. Comparing the online newspaper reader's trend and printed newspaper reader's trend daily basis, current trend was positive relationship towards online. The Daily printed newspaper reader's trend is decreasing due to mainly the cost, and younger people prefer to read online due to fast and reliable. Positive forecast model approach seems promising in providing a theoretical framework from which to examine what kinds of newspapers will be accepted by the population, and what gratifications individuals obtain from their use of various social media platforms, sites, and services.

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