

# Antecedents and Consequences of the Growing Popularity of Digital Consumption

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## INTRODUCTION

There is something addictive and enthralling about the world where everything is digital (Hoffman, Novak and Stein, 2012). Splurging a large amount of one's time online, executing more than one task simultaneously and acquainting with new technologies easily are all testimonies to the increasing digital nature of everyone's daily life. Hoffman et al. (2012) further stated that new media has become an inevitable part of consumer's daily life and routine. It is influencing, altering and transforming the way they communicate, work, play, read, write, watch, listen, retain, explore, browse, shop, collaborate, produce and create. Each of these actions in the post-digital era was quite different when compared to the pre-digital era. New media has completely revamped people's everyday lives. For majority of people now, logging in is the foremost thing in the morning even before getting up (Hoffman et al., 2012). Stone (2009) commented in his study that those days are gone when newspaper was the only source of distraction while having first meal of the day with family. Majority of people now have replaced newspaper with mobile phones, tablets, laptops and other technological devices during breakfast with the family which was once known as the family time. People may spend the day on their smartphones using various applications either to browse restaurants, book movie tickets, view television shows online, listen to music, shop online, play games or to keep track of their daily exercise (Hoffman et al, 2012). Technology is present and apparent in every aspect of people's daily lives. Now, they have become addicted and dependent on new media to such an extent that they may become restless and feel panic if their internet connection is down for even a short period of time (Hoffman et al, 2012).

Thus, seeing the growth rate in the new technology and consumption of the internet, the current chapter tries to explore the reasons for the growth of digital consumption and consequences due to its over consumption. Till date, majority of studies have focussed on the factors which lead to internet addiction in general (Griffiths, 1995; Beard, 2005; Young, 1998; Caplan, 2005; Kim, LaRose & Peng, 2006). However, aspects of digital consumption like online television, online games, etc. have not been explored much. Therefore, the chapter tries to bridge the gap by taking into account 'internet television', a significant area under digital consumption. The present chapter seeks to draw attention on the following aspects of digital consumption:

- It will elaborate upon the concept of digital consumption and its growing popularity.
- It will focus on the meaning of internet television and reasons behind its growth.
- It will throw some light on the behavioural and physiological consequences of internet television consumption.

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- It will include a conceptual model and its implications followed by some recommendations, insights about future scope of the study and conclusion.

## BACKGROUND

### Digital Consumption: It's Growing Popularity

With proliferation of digital devices and increasing internet penetration, today's consumers are more connected than ever. The increase in internet penetration and information and communication technology has given rise to new distribution channels, making online presence a requisite condition for marketers to extend their geographical boundaries (Narang & Trivedi, 2016). Earlier, content was available only through few mediums such as print, radio and conventional television but now it is also available through numerous multiple connected devices. This has revolutionised the media world and obscured traditional media definitions (Nielsen, 2014). The internet is widely used these days, with more than 3.75 billion people online today (Digital in report, 2017). Internet use continues to grow all over the world, with global users rising at the rate of 8 per cent per year. Today, nearly two-third of the world's population use smartphone and majority of the world's web traffic comes from smartphones. There are around 4.92 billion people across the globe that uses mobile phones which is equal to 66 per cent penetration (Digital in report, 2017).

Billions of people throughout the length of the day are continuously engrossed in the consumption of the internet, social media, mobile applications and other digital communication technologies (Stephen, 2015). This digital nature of people can be observed by looking at the time they are spending on the internet and the way they are embracing new technology (Belk and Liams, 2013). For instance, the internet usage rate among Americans is close to 87 per cent (Pew Research Center, 2015). Majority of people now have smartphones, high-definition televisions, computers, laptops, wi-fi networks due to which they are spending on an average of 60 hours per week on the consumption of content across various platforms or screens (Nielsen, 2014). In India, around 180 million people view online videos through YouTube on mobile alone (Chaturvedi, 2017). According to State of digital downloads research report (2017), over 62 per cent of European respondents prefer to download or watch TV shows and movies online. France has witnessed the highest streaming rate i.e. 49 per cent when compared to the UK and Germany who have witnessed 42 and 40 per cent respectively. Around 37 per cent of German consumers, 36 per cent of UK consumers and 30 per cent of French consumers prefer to download books and magazines. Similarly, 34 per cent of Germany and UK consumers choose to download music, on the other hand 56 per cent of French consumers more likely to stream music. In fact, social media has witnessed tremendous growth worldwide; more than 2 billion people are using it among which Facebook alone has 1 billion active users per day (Stephen, 2015). Nowadays social media usage has become an inevitable practice in consumers' daily lives. The number of social media users across the globe grew by more than 20 per cent over the past 12 months, with well over one-third of the world's population now using social media every month. Mobile social media use is growing even faster, with global monthly active user numbers up 30 per cent year-on-year to reach more than 2.5 billion (Digital in Report, 2017). Around 64 per cent of total social media users stated that they use these sites at least once a day through their computers and 47 per cent of smartphone owners stated that they spend time on these sites every day (Nielsen, 2014).

Initially, only the developed countries indulged in digital consumption but now even the developing countries are consuming it. As per the KPMG International Report (2013), people of China, Brazil and

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