Information is the sine qua non for all activities in today's information society. Current information is the most demanded and needed one among various research groups and individuals. Newspapers and magazines are prominent sources for the current information. They bring to the readers the global information by overcoming all geographical limits. After the advent of World Wide Web many a newspaper and magazine have begun to publish their online editions. This helps a reader to access the newspapers and magazines of many foreign countries and thereby could be well informed on almost all events. Online Newspapers and magazines have brought the whole world in front of a reader’s desktop and make him aware of all subject fields. This article discusses the various aspects and issues regarding Online Newspapers and Magazines particularly with reference to India.

1. INTRODUCTION

Information is the backbone of today's information society. All human activities are dependent on information. Information has become so vital for all processes, without which any human activity can hardly take place. Among the several kinds of information, current information is highly demanded and needed by various research groups and individuals. Newspapers and magazines are prominent sources for the current information. They bring to the readers the global information by overcoming all geographical limits. After the advent of World Wide Web many newspapers and magazines have begun to publish their online editions. This helps readers to access the newspapers and magazines of many foreign countries and thereby could be well informed on almost all events.

'Information Democracy' and 'Right to Information' are the hot topics of discussion among the information professionals today. Online newspapers & magazines contribute a lot to these issues, since users can access them irrespective of their location. These online editions fulfill the law, 'Information for all' by their universal availability and access. This article
discusses the various aspects and issues regarding online newspapers and magazines particularly with reference to India.

2. GENESIS OF ONLINE NEWSPAPERS & MAGAZINES

Online newspapers began to gain popularity from the 1940's itself. Some radio stations in US send newspapers to home fax machines. They also made attempts to deliver them over phone line to the user's home TV sets. Companies like Compuserv offered electronic editions of national newspapers in the 1980's. They also posted their newspapers on Bulletin Board Services. Many of these attempts were only experimental. These attempts were not so popular since the cost was too high and also there were only a few subscribers. Technologists then thought that online editions of the print media couldn't become a successful one.

Advances in hardware and software technology and the advent of Internet during mid 1990's was a boon to the print media. Since then they started to publish their online editions. As the World Wide Web became popular new breeds of information providers, such as AT&T and Microsoft’s Slate, began providing online news. Newspapers had to keep in pace to the Internet. According to American Journalism Review NewsLink, the number of online newspapers rose from very few to 1,300 in 1996. In June 1997, it was reported that there were 3,622 online newspapers worldwide.

In 1995 many of the newspapers in Europe and US began to publish their online editions. Editors of online medium considered that many political, social and sport events could be published online quickly, competing with TV and radio. They had more contents, including an index, a package of articles and photos that could rival broadcaster’s work.

The online magazines also came along during 1995. Scientific journals were the first to get published online. Then the general interest magazines followed their footsteps.

3. NEWSPAPERS & MAGAZINES IN THE DIGITAL WORLD

Information dissemination has got a new dimension in this digital era. The transformation of the communications sector indicates a shift from mass broadcast media to interactive media. Digitized information is replacing the printed matter. Internet is providing it's users more choice and control of content, and offers individuals and groups the chance to produce and distribute information. As a result, Internet news is proliferating, produced by individuals, freelance experts, advertising agencies and traditional news organizations. Most of this information can be accessed freely.

The World Wide Web's role in the generation and dissemination of information and news affects the printed media in various ways. Due to this reason, the revenue base for the printed media gets threatened by decrease in the number of readership and advertising revenues, but at the same time many new opportunities for news production and distribution are also present. The transformation of newspaper publishing from a separate and independent enterprise into one of
the products of multi-media production houses is a very significant phenomenon. The software and telecommunications industries, and also the television industry, compete and co-operate with newspapers on different levels, bringing new issues about access and freedom of information to the fore. These processes are taking place at a rapid speed that there is little chance for public intervention or corporate analysis and strategy building.

The transfer of digitized information from the source to the destination is easy and less complicated when compared to the printed matter. Thanks to the Internet technology, the information transfer has become so fast. The effort and time needed for the transportation to get the information has minimized to a great extent in this digital era. The user population of Net has grown considerably; the population must be equivalent to that of the traditional media, if not more than that. All these factors have contributed to the emergence of the online newspapers & magazines.

4. ARCHITECTURE OF THE ONLINE NEWSPAPERS & MAGAZINES

Many newspapers & magazines are publishing their online editions. Many of them have key words highlighted in blue colour in their stories and these provide links to stories on the same subject. Some online newspapers & magazines customize the news to fit each user’s needs and wants. Information is provided here along with photographs and some times audio and video clips. This provides a comprehensive information and news to the users. According to the online experts, if the online newspapers & magazines are to reach the users of all types, then they have to change their mission, content, design and presentation of information. Many websites that contain online newspaper or magazine also provide archival collection of the past issues.

Newspapers & magazines have been a passive medium in the past years. But after the publication of their online editions, users want responses from reporters, editors, online staff and departments and they want appropriate response. Email has become a great way to get the response and feedback. Online newspapers and magazines should give it's readers an alternate route to respond to particular columns or information since a user might not have a e-mail facility. If a popular columnist or reporter receives many mails, an assistant can screen it and pass on the interesting messages or encourage the columnist or the reporter to take part in an online discussion where they can post a response to a user’s message and everyone can read it. Forums and chat rooms also help the journalists to get the feedback and queries from their users.

Since there are millions of pages of information on the Net, online newspapers and magazines are collecting, filtering, recording and distributing information at many levels and many places around the world. Journalists have to prove the authenticity of their information, since there are numerous unauthentic information provided in the Web. To improve the content of the online newspapers & magazines, they have to provide information that users can’t get elsewhere, such as current happenings, a particular industry, sports etc. For a new publisher it is better to publish a popular section or a new supplement online, rather publishing the entire newspaper or a magazine. Depending upon the response, the number of hits and the feedback, a full-fledged online newspaper or a magazine can be published.
Online newspapers & magazines are indispensable resources. They act as a community encyclopedia. The online newspapers & magazines have to compete with other newspapers & magazines, and also with large news organizations, such as BBC, CNN etc. So a few online newspapers have begun updating information 24 hours a day instead of a newsroom's daily deadline; this is a big change, as compared to print media.

5. ECONOMIC ISSUES

Newspapers and magazines as carriers of information in today's digital environment are expected to provide various services that should be equal to radio and television services. Online editions of the newspapers & magazines have become successful in the Western countries, while in India it is slowly gaining popularity. The printed paper risks losing revenue generators such as classified and personnel ads, and thus runs the risk of becoming less profitable. Competitors now fight in the same field for the user's attention and the limited advertising money available. The World Wide Web allows the existing and new media outlets compete for advertising revenues, and also provides a new range of advertising based services. Ads can be put on free communication services, on search engines and directory services, on free homepage services and on e-commerce sites. The difficulty in attracting users to a particular website results in growing advertising budgets from these online editions. Many e-commerce companies spent on average over 8.6 million dollars per year each on ads, marketing and branding, of which a large part is going to existing print and broadcast media. The fragmentation of the online public gives more prominence to the gathered audiences of print and broadcasting.

New services, such as interactive features, guides to information sources and community building are new to online newspapers & magazines, since it is the continuous production cycle that the Internet requires. Economically, the option of multiple revenue streams means that the entire publishing industry should turn to a database model, by which generated information or content can be marketed and sold in different formats. This offers interesting new opportunities for the printed media, which has many advantages in its trusted content, a well-organized news production model, and access to both readers and advertisers, but it also means that the press needs to invest substantially in research and development. Long-term strategies and large financial commitments are needed, which may be hard to come up with for small individual newspapers and magazines.

Internet allows for user involvement. This is an advantage to the online publications. Through its low barrier to entry, it offers publishers the opportunity to develop additional revenue streams based on their core product, the collection and analysis of information. The interactivity of the medium has proven to be attractive for many, drawing the audience away from television to return to a largely text-based medium.
6. ONLINE NEWSPAPERS & MAGAZINES - ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

6.1. Advantages

Since the online editions of newspapers and magazines are seamless, there is no need to cut paragraphs or quotes. A story can be as long as it can be, and features, related articles, maps and charts can be linked to it. They can also add technology such as full screen photos, videos, forums and polls that users can participate in. They open the way to upgrading the news with full screen photography and video, while hugely enhancing the richness and the timeliness of the news. The sites of online newspapers and magazines also allow the users to browse and select stories and advertisements at their own time and place.

Online newspapers will attract users if they create a series of sites about the metropolitan region. Then the paper will act as a chamber of commerce. They also allow for discussion beyond the Letter to the Editor page, for example, contact between journalists, editors and readers, and for relevant information regarding readers’ preferences and choices.

6.2. Disadvantages

It is hard to recognize online newspapers & magazines on the World Wide Web. Unlike print, the online versions have to compete with Web competitors, to provide the best news content. Also the customizing of news to a user’s preferences and searching for something on the online newspaper or magazine’s site could harm the privacy of the users. This is because of the use of cookies. The type of news or information that a user wants varies from time to time. Since it is very difficult to assess the user needs, the presentation style does not impress all users.

Users may not pay subscription, if there is any, since they already pay for their Net connection as well as for the telephone. Uninterrupted power supply and Net access should be there; if not, a user can hardly read an online newspaper or a magazine.

An important issue that online newspapers & magazines face is the culture of the Internet itself. Unlike the printed media, which is operated by commercial enterprises, the Internet is decentralized, open, autonomous and anarchic. This contrast and the printed medium’s dislike of change has left Web critics to have the opinion that newspapers & magazines do not belong to the Internet at all.

It is easier to pick up a newspaper, glance through all the headlines, pictures and articles and get a limited idea of the events & news in the world. To read an online newspaper or a magazine, a user has to turn on a computer, dial on the Internet provider, search for the newspaper he wants and scroll and click through all the articles and photos.
The contrast between the commercialism of a newspaper and culture of the Internet has created a financial problem for online newspapers. Advertisers are afraid to put their product online because there is more competition to deal with. When the news incorporate links paid for by corporate clients, credibility will get jeopardized. Newspapers & magazines are also afraid that if their advertisers put their product online, then they may withdraw from their print parent.

A popular way to increase the time spent on the online newspaper or a magazine site is to use contests, games and activities that can only be accessed by clicking on an ad icon. If the online newspapers or magazines look at Net positively as said above, then they can survive easily in the digital environment.

7. ONLINE NEWSPAPERS & MAGAZINES IN INDIA

A list of websites in which online newspapers and magazines are published is given below.

7.1. ONLINE NEWSPAPERS:

1) Full text of 'The Hindu' can be accessed at the website http://www.the-hindu.com/
2) 'The New India Express' can be read at http://expressindia.com/
3) 'The Times of India' can be accessed at http://www.timesofindia.com/
4) 'Deccan Herald' is given online at http://www.deccanherald.com/
5) 'The Hindustan Times' is available online at http://www.hindustantimes.com/
6) 'The Asian Age' can be read at http://www.asianage.com/
7) 'The Statesman' can be accessed at http://new.thestatesman.net/
8) 'The Telegraph' a leading English daily in the North Eastern part of India is available online at http://www.telegraphindia.com/
9) 'The Kashmir Times' can be read at http://www.kashmirtimes.com/
10) 'The Deccan Chronicle' is available online at http://www.deccan.com/
11) 'Gomantak Times' an online newspaper from Goa is available online at http://www.gomantaktimes.com/
12) 'The Economic Times' a financial daily is available online at http://www.economictimes.com/today/pagehome.htm
13) 'Business Standard' a business related daily can be read at http://www.business-standard.com/
14) 'The Assam Tribune' can be read online at http://www.assamtribune.com/
15) 'Daily Excelsior' is available online at http://www.dailyexcelsior.com/
16) 'The Tribune' can be read at http://www.tribuneindia.com/
17) 'Business Line' a financial daily from the Hindu group of publishers is available online at http://www.hindubusinessline.com/
18) 'Dinamani' a Tamil daily can be accessed at http://www.xpres-net.com/dinamani/
19) 'Dinakaran' a Tamil daily is available at http://www.dinakaran.com/
20) 'Malayala Manorama' a Malayalam daily is available at http://www.malayalamanorama.com/
21) 'Mathrubumi' a Malayalm daily can be read at http://www.mathrubhumi.com/
22) 'Kerala Express' a Malayalam daily is available online at http://www.keralax.com/kxp/kxp.htm
23) 'Deepika' a Malayam daily is available online at http://www.deepika.com/home.asp
24) 'Prajavani' a Kannada daily is available online at http://www.prajavani.net/
25) 'Kannada Prabha' a Kannada daily is available at http://www.kannadaprabha.com/
26) 'Sambhaav' a Gujarati Daily is available online at http://www.sambhaav.com/index.html
27) 'Akila Daily' a Gujarati daily can be read at http://www.akiladaily.com/
28) 'Sandesh' a Gujarati daily can be read at http://www.sandesh.com/
29) 'Andhra Jyoti' a Telugu daily can be accessed at http://www.andhrajyoti.com/
30) 'Andhra Bhoomi' a Telugu daily can be accessed at http://www.deccan.com/bhoomi/
31) 'Vaarta' a Telugu daily can be read at http://www.vaarta.com/
32) 'Andhra Prabha' is available online at http://www.andhraprabha.com/
33) 'Lokmat Times' a Marathi daily can be read at http://www.lokmat.com/
34) 'Naidunia' a Hindi daily is available online at http://www.naidunia.com/
35) 'Dainik Jagran' a Hindi daily can be read at http://www.jagran.com/
36) 'Hindimilap' a Hindi daily can be read online at http://www.hindimilap.com/
38) 'Dainik Bhaskar' a Hindi daily can be read at http://www.bhaskar.com
39) 'Pratidin' a Bengali daily is available online at http://www.pratidin.com/
40) 'Suprovat' a Bengali daily can be read at http://www.suprovat.com/
41) 'Sambad' a Bengali Internet newspaper can be read at http://www.sambad.com/
42) 'The Munsif Daily' an Urdu daily can be read at http://www.munsifdaily.com/
43) 'Lashkar' an Urdu weekly newspaper is available online at http://www.lashkar.com/
44) 'The Siasat Daily' an Urdu daily can be read at http://www.siasat.com/

7.2. ONLINE MAGAZINES

1) 'Frontline' is available online at http://www.the-hindu.com/fline/
2) 'India Today' can be read at http://www.india-today.com/
3) 'Outlook' can be read at http://www.outlookindia.com/
4) 'The Week' is available online at http://www.the-week.com/
5) 'Femina' can be read at http://www.feminaindia.com
6) 'Manushi' (a journal about women & society) is available online at http://www.freespeech.org/manushi/
7) 'Voyage' a travel magazine is available online at http://www.voyage-india.com/
8) 'The Sportstar' can be read at http://www.the-hindu.com/tss/
9) 'Indian Journal of Pharmacology' is available online at http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Delphi/2038/
10) 'Neurology India' the official journal of the Neurology society of India can be read at http://www.cpindia.com/neurologyindia/
11) 'Indian Pediatrics' a journal of the Indian Academy of Pediatrics is available online at http://www.indianpediatrics.net/
12) 'Indian Journal of Gastroenterology' can be read at http://indianjgastro.com/
13) 'Bride and Home Online' an Online Fashion Magazine can be read at http://www.brideandhome.com/
14) 'Down To Earth' a science & environment fortnightly is available online at http://www.oneworld.org/cse/html/dte/dte.htm
15) 'IndiaStar Review of Books' a literary & art review magazine can be read at http://www.indiastar.com/
16) 'Raganet' a e-zine for the music and fine arts of India is provided at http://www.raganet.com/RagaNet/
17) 'Ever Changing Universe' an Astrological magazine is available online at http://homepages.together.net/~vedic/newslet.htm
18) 'Computers Today' is available online at http://www.india-today.com/ctoday/19991201/index.html
19) 'Express Computer' is available online at http://www.expresscomputerindia.com
20) 'PC Quest' is available online at http://www.pcquest.com
21) 'PC World' is available online at http://www.pcwindia.com
22) 'Chip Online' can be accessed at http://www.chip-india.com
23) 'Computers@home' is available online at http://www.computersathomem.com
24) 'Silicon India' can be read at http://www.silicon-india.com/magazine/index.html
25) 'Ad-Mag' is available online at http://www.ad-mag.com
26) 'Data Quest' is available online at http://www.dqindia.com/
27) 'Cine Blitz' is available online at http://www.internetindia.com/CineBlitz/
28) 'Film Fare' can be read online at http://filmfare.indiatimes.com/
29) 'Bangalore Weekly' is available online at http://www.bangaloremag.com/
30) 'Ananda Vikatan' a Tamil weekly can be read online at http://www.vikatan.com
31) 'Kumudam' a Tamil weekly can be read online at http://www.kumudam.net
32) 'Kalki' a Tamil weekly is available online at http://www.kalkiweekly.com
33) 'Karnataka Patra' an online Kannada Monthly Family Magazine is available at http://www.members.tripod.com/~karnataka_patra/
34) 'Vishva Kannada' a Kannada magazine is available at http://www.indianlanguages.com/kannada/
35) 'Pandita Puta' a magazine on Kannada language, literature, science, technology, education and culture is available at http://www.indianlanguages.com/kannada/
36) 'Udgam' a monthly Hindi literary magazine can be read at http://www.udgam.com/
37) 'Bharat Darshan' a Hindi literary magazine is available online at http://www.bharatdarshan.co.nz/
38) 'Parabaas' a Bengali e-zine is available at http://www.parabaas.com/
39) 'Chitralekha' a Gujarati magazine is available at http://www.chitralekha.com/
40) 'Yugantar Punjab' an online Punjabi magazine can be read at http://www.yugantar.com/
8. CONCLUSION

The advent of Internet has made a deep impact on all information-related products and services. This has not spared the newspapers & magazines. The increasing user population in the Net has attracted the traditional newspapers & magazines to publish their online editions. In India, these online medium has a long way to go when compared to the western countries. It should be designed in such a way that users of all age and interests get attracted by them and derive benefit from it. Online Newspapers and magazines have brought the whole world in front of a reader's desktop and make him aware of all subject fields. They have also destroyed all geographical limits and transformed the whole world into a global village.

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6) http://www.sentex.net/~mmcadams/invent/invent1.html