

NEW POSSIBILITIES PROVIDED BY SOCIAL NETWORKS TO RADIO BROADCASTING PRACTICES: R@dio 2.0

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INTRODUCTION

The possibilities that new communication technologies provide to mass medium have created a great transformation and also have affected contents though indirectly. Moreover, it has caused changes in societies' perception of mass media in a social sense. The way and reason people use mass media have been changing. It has caused more complicated structure by diversifying expectations in the same direction. Radio, which is able to reach large mass as an oldest mass media after from printed press, is more affected from this process. While conventional radio broadcasting was able to carry out interaction with limited tools such as telephone and letter, interaction level increased considerably with possibilities provided by new communication technologies. Communication form which is high level interaction of social networks plays an important role on radio broad-casting nowadays. The way to communicate with audiences through social networks has provided much more individual connection to raise with a sense of belonging and community at a point beyond a mutual message sharing. Social networks equal to all kind of representation on the internet of a radio organization. Social networks which are also serving corporate image of radio are also a kind of a notice board is including audiences directly to the radio. Today Radio, which was asserted as a wish for that day by Bertolt Brecht's 'Radio Theory' article entitled in 1932, has become a communication tool instead of a transmission tool.

Digital communication technologies have led to transmission of conventional mass medium in various ways particularly since the year of 2000. Internet environment which has become common medium of basis for mass medium as newspapers, television and radio has provided opportunities to be formed new forms of all these communication tools in their own way. Radio with just technique based on sound is affected exceedingly from this process. In today's digital technologies, the way of achieving a sound quality and transmitting it to audiences has become much easier. The fact that radio has a technique just based on sound and thus is able to be listened through very small receivers; it has become easily adaptable media to environments

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doi: 10.17349/jmc114105

enabling to convergence. This feature also makes it easy to reach its audiences. New communication technologies do not only improve the relationship between the audiences and the radio at just quantitative context but also affect the closeness of qualification to connect audiences to radio.

Bertolt Brecht, who is opponent minstrel and author in titled article “Radio Theory” in 1932, emphasizes that radio ceases to be a trans-mission medium, needs to become a communication medium. According to Brecht, if radio did not only allow to send messages but to receive also and not only to hear but also to communicate and connect audiences rather than to isolate them from each other, then it could be the most effective link between people in public life. But the author admitted that it was not possible to be carried out these suggestions for that period and he added if all of these suggestions once were practiced it would help to be formed the other ones (Alankuş, 2005: 36). Today, there are available technologies to carry out almost all of expectations of Bertolt Brecht. Therefore, the importance of radio in social life becomes more significant.

While Brecht imagined a foresight for the future in the context of technological competence that new formations were able to establish strong bonds between individuals and institutions, today, as an active solution to meet the expectations of him, we observe that it has already been started to be used as social networks in radio broadcasting. Social networks are presented an important alternative for the relationship between the audience and radio programmer in order to strengthen the relationship between audiences and create a more intimate relationship, and diversify corporate images, corporate communications and advertising-promotions of the various areas. It is considered the social networks create a perception of friendly atmosphere due to the fact that social networks have occurred on the basis of interpersonal communication and people have created their own social environment through this social media. The environment has been shaped through the intimate social relationships; as a result of this the perception of people’s will manifest itself on the other professional activities on the environment.

In addition to these, social networks provide an important alternative for unique internet radios. In this study it is tried to be studied how and in what ways social networks are used in radio broadcasting. The relationship between social networks and radio will be examined in the next chapters of the study within the scope of broadcaster, audiences and company.

SOCIAL NETWORKS AND INTERACTIVITY

Heretofore, internet has become the fastest growing media among all media. While internet reached 40 million users only in period of 4 years, for television it took 13 years to reach this amount, and for radio 30 years (Holtz, 1999: 5). According to the latest figures released in December of 2011, the total number of internet users in the world passed two billion (<http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm> 28 October 2011). It can be clearly seen that the prevalence of internet using has increased rapidly over the years.

Interactivity which has included in internet is an important concept in the literature. Today, it has been interacted in more different ways than it was before thanks to new communication technologies. In the beginning, while the word “interaction” was used for human relations in conventional mass media, today; it has been used for technological devices with new technologies. Together with the interaction of people, there is also a kind of interaction of devices. In this sense, it can be asserted that interaction means a relationship between new communication technologies and networks linking the world.

The literature of interactivity includes multiple concepts that help to explain how individuals perceive interactivity in the context of computer based communication. For example, Heeter suggested users exert more effort when they attend to interactive media than to traditional media forms (Heeter, 1989: 221). However, Mc Millan found it was difficult to operationalize this concept of effort in an analysis of web sites. Therefore, the relationship of effort to interactivity requires further examination (Downes ve McMillan, 2000: 159).

Steur defined interactivity as “the extent to which users can participate in modifying the form and content of a mediated environment in real time” (Steur, 1992: 84). Rice and Williams also focused on real time communication and suggested that media are interactive if they have the potential for immediate, two-way exchange. But not all observers agree about the importance of real time (Rice ve Williams, 1984). For example Rheingold suggested that the asynchronous characteristics of tools such as e-mail, newsgroups and listservs is one of the key benefits of these interactive media. The importance of time in interactive communication needs to be explored in more depth (Rheingold, 2000).

Interaction is seen as the biggest advantage of new media. According to this view, traditional media has one way flow of information, in spite of the fact that the information communication technologies have two-way free flow of information. This is the most important feature of its transforming potential. Thanks to the two-way free flow of information, amount of information will increase; its structure that allows to individual communication will provide advantages to interaction and universal access (Barnett, 1997: 193).

Role taking and feedback are two additional concepts that have appeared in several studies of interactivity. Rice suggested “fully interactive media imply that the sender and receiver roles are interchangeable” (Rice, 1984: 35). More than a decade later, Rogers echoed the same theme when he defined interactivity as the degree to which participant in a communication process can exchange roles in and have control over their mutual discourse (Rogers, 1995: 314).

Chen suggested passivity and interactivity are qualities of individuals making use of media, not qualities of the media per se (Chen, 1984). Other researchers also suggested that individual uses are more important than media features in determining interactivity. Some researchers, however, have argued that certain technologies permit

more interactivity than others. For example, Snyder focused on ways in which the non-linear nature of hypertext enhances interactivity (Snyder, 1996).

Before the internet, none of the previous technologies have provided opportunity to communicate as blogs and social network web sites provide today. Recently, a new trend which is defined social media has emerged as internet-based applications. These internet applications have provided interaction that is increasing more and more between users and applicants who are informed by other users and who are satisfied of these applications. This content includes in images, videos, text and mixed formations related to this media (Komito ve Bates, 2009: 233).

Widely used social networks provide communicate opportunities asynchronously as well as synchronously. The popular social networking sites Facebook and Twitter practice communication flow on real identities instead of virtual identities. All of these have rapidly increased the usage of these applications and web sites especially among young people. New generations who need more interactive communication forms and get used to that have started to leave their e-mail using habits which are generally carried out asynchronously. Social networking profiles almost have turned into virtual identity cards.

Qualman said that social networks were new inbox. Young generations have found e-mail old (Qualman, 2009: 32).

The form of social networks which has high interaction power has provided users to produce contents themselves. Alvin Toffler, in his book *The Third Wave*, which was published in 1980 (*The Third Wave*), argued that consumers were a phenomenon of particular to industry age. As society moves towards the post-industrial era, the number of those who are all consumers will also reduce. They will be replaced by prosumers who are producing their own goods and services. The word "Prosumer" was composed of a combination of the words producer and consumer (Toffler, 2008). Today we can see the effect of Toffler's argument in collaborative processes that provide opportunities to produce contents controlled by users. In this process, prosumer concept also means a professional consumer (prosumer) (Bruns, 2009). In this new case, producers may also consume their own productions and consumers may be in a production phase. For this reason, interaction has become a key precipitating element on consumers and producers.

SOCIAL NETWORKS AND RADIO AS COMPANY/ESTABLISHMENT

Today, social networks are used for many different purposes and there are many web sites in the sharing networks. Social networks whose main purpose is to provide interactive communication vary by customized target audiences and usage qualifications in formal. There are a lot of social networks like targeted professional life or established interpersonal special relations. Social networks have now become the most preferred form of online communication for people to communicate each other.

There are social networks and mass groups in social media. People introduce their corporations, have friendly relationships, and show loyalty related to products,

services, ideas and content of the objects (Solis, 2010: 6). Social media is a common term used for interactive online tools and web sites that provide users to share information, thoughts and interests and thus create interaction opportunities. As it can be seen in the name of social media, it mediates to build community and network by encouraging participation (Sayimer, 2008: 123). Social media is one of the newest ideas that provide many opportunities as a new type of online media (Mayfield, 2010: 6).

In today's computer and internet technology, like Facebook, Twitter, Ning and other social online networks, blogs and other Web 2.0 tools have become the tools that are used frequently. Frequency of usage of social networks which are found in the user statistics has affected many various areas. In parallel with frequent usage of Web 2.0 tools, there have been different usage fields with the impact of the studies in the literature in relation with the subject recently. The definitions of Web 2.0 applications have diversified and new concepts have emerged based on Web 2.0 applications (Dawson, 2009: 13).

Web 2.0, which is used almost synonymously with social media, is the more natural and original form of next generation internet which is included economic, social and technological trends. Web 2.0's general features can be listed as user participation, openness, and display of network (spread) effect (O'Reilly, Fall, 2006). Social media has strengthened people as new active ones and has forced public relations and marketing professionals to include these powerful tools in advertising and marketing communication strategies by getting them to understand these tools. However, marketing professionals do not know yet how to adapt this new world of the social media (Solis & Breakenridge, 2009). While flow of information and news has been conveyed to audience/users in one way in traditional mass media, today social media users may become the ones that produce or collect and disseminate messages. Contents have reached to masses through shaping the guidance of audiences. People have produced and disseminated messages with their own personal identities as well as corporate identities in organizational structures. Content of a message as referred to guidance of audience content is not a new idea, in fact. In the past, the letters which had been sent to radio and television producers or editors, telephone calls to radio programs and song requests were the oldest examples of guidance of audience content (Schweiger & Quiring, 2006: 2).

Today, we have seen that radio organizations have been communicating with audiences through social media instead of letter, fax, telephone or e-mail which are ordinary methods. While many radio organizations have a social network profile, and also a radio programmer as an individual can communicate with his/her audiences through his/her own social network profile. Radio organizations have realized the importance of the social media environments which have high interaction power for they do not only use these social media environments for communicating with their audiences in a friendly and quick way but also for creating a point of corporate image by existing in these environments.

When a survey was conducted on the internet about the measurement of being listened to radio by KMG, which is a research company in Turkey, it was seen that 20 radios being mostly listened according to the report in January 2012 were using social networks actively such as Facebook, Twitter as a corporation or as a program/a programmer. These radios were Kral Fm, PowerTürk, Süper Fm, SlowTürk, Alem Fm, Best Fm, TRT Fm, Power Fm, Radyo D, JoyTürk, Show Radyo, Number One Fm, Radyo Viva, Metro Fm, Radyo Turkuvaz, Radyo 7, Kral Pop, Radyo Tatlıses, NTV Radyo, KanalTürk Radyo. If over 1000 radios in Turkey which are local, regional and national are included in this survey, it may set forth that almost all of these radios are using social networks as a corporation or as a program/a programmer

Today, traditional marketing messages can't affect consumers as much as it used to be. Moreover, it is known that traditional marketing messages are now disturbing consumers. Chaney has defined an advertising model as "an interfering marketing method" which is fictionalized to make people stop immediately from what they have been doing or thinking for nearly a hundred year and make them think something else and lead them to messages that encourage consumption. He has also pointed out that such advertisements include in mainly illusoriness, tempting messages and incorrect comparisons. Hence, it is getting more and more disturbing for consumers. Another aspect of this increasingly disturbance is that companies cannot manage to establish a humanistic relationship with their consumers. Whereas, the greatest promise of social media is to build a long-term relationship and trust by establishing real, honest, friendly, and humanistic relations between a company and its consumers (Chaney 2009: 5).

We are already seeing the economic potential of social media in its ability to reduce inefficient marketing and middlemen. Million-dollar television advertisements are no longer most important factor influencer of purchase intent. People referring products and services via social media tools are the new most important factor. It's the world's largest referral program in history (Qualman, 2009: Introduction, xviii).

When we position the radio as a company we know that this company needs to use some marketing methods in order to supply its products to consumers. A radio organization has started to use social networks frequently as well as traditional marketing methods in order to convey its programs, programmers and all contents included in advertisements to audiences and to gain their interest and pursuit. Information about a program such as its date, time, content, guest information, currently playing song information, and introductory information of programmers, information of organization and above all online listening link of internet broadcast have found place directly in social network profiles. All of these are new marketing forms affecting customized audiences mass directly.

Today, there are a lot of radios in large or small scale in the internet environment within the framework of possibilities offered by new communication technologies. Today, even any simple home user can transform his individual computer to a radio (laptop or PC) via most simple methods and any basic devices. Social networks also have expanded promotion and operation field of this kind of small practices. Internet

radio practices have been seen positively in terms of providing opportunities to new discoveries on behalf of radio and polyphony.

There are several ways to use Facebook as an advertising tool. It is crucial to know that Facebook user groups have been primarily built on personal relationships and networks. When it is realized Facebook has an advertisement potential, the relationships between Facebook groups and marketing people have shifted towards a different direction. Therefore, it is important to manage this process carefully (Weinberg, 2009: 151). The most important point in following radio organization through a Facebook profile to which has to be paid attention is personal relationships and connections. Each of loyal listeners and followers can turn into an advertiser at this communication and marketing forms.

Negative comments and posts are easier for companies to find with social media. Hence those companies have more time to focus on the solution rather than spending time finding the problem (Qualman, 2009: 42). Audiences can put into words their likings as well as negative criticisms in a much more comfortable way through social network profiles and they can also share them with any programmer or representative of radio. Feedback process in the methods which need a little more time and labor such as telephone, fax or letter could perform in a much more delayed or inadequate way.

Open, two-way conversations are much more effective than unilateral communications to your audience, for politics and business. Social media enables these two-way conversations. Utilizing free social media tools and placements is more timely and cost effective than traditional advertising (Qualman, 2009: 87).

When it is considered from the point of public relationships, it is possible to build a confidence in the presence of symmetrical communication on employees who have an important role among stakeholders. Organizations implementing two-way symmetrical communication model by Grunig will develop open and trusted relations and so it will create possibilities to enable strategic collaborations with employees. Grunig has mentioned the most important factors of quality of relationships. These factors are arrayed as reciprocity, trust, credibility, mutual legitimacy, openness, mutual satisfaction, and mutual understanding. These factors are also valid in relationships that will be established with workers who are located in the first row in putting the target audience of organizations, target group or stakeholders in order (Grunig, 1992).

Today, many employees have an account on websites such as Facebook, Twitter, Myspace or share images, and videos about their own individual interests and have memberships on sharing websites and even have their own individual blogs. Hence, social media should not only be analyzed with customers' perspective, but also be considered as a powerful medium that employees are using effectively.

Most of the radio organizations in the world are commercial radios. Target audiences of these radios are generally young generation. It is known that young people have play role actively in using social networks. Based on this information, the ways of strengthen to relationships between audiences and radio through integrate radio with social networks should be studied more deeply.

Qualman emphasized that business models need to shift. Simply digitizing old business models doesn't work; businesses need to fully transform to properly address the impact and demands of social media (Qualman, 2009: 32).

RADIO "SOCIAL NETWORK"

Since the mid-1990s, deregulation of the radio industry has altered much of local radio's historical relationship with the public within an "increasingly competitive environment". Research has found that, in the post-consolidation decade, changes had the potential to create monopolies, while negatively impacting diversity, the number of listeners, the number of formats in a given market, and the level of competition and "new formats" within markets. Broadcasters are also faced with technologies such as satellite radio and portable digital audio devices that have been viewed by some audience members as alternatives to radio programming. Despite the emergence of alternative digital audio technologies, radio is still an important tool for local connections and was observed to be "a highly popular source of news for Americans in 2008". However, the importance of online communication for broadcasters cannot be ignored. More recently, radio stations and their on-air personalities are connecting to audiences online via Twitter, a social network system that provides both connectivity and glimpses at people's lives (cited by Ferguson and Greer, 2011: 33–34). In Europe and Turkey it is possible to see the stages of developments of the radio industry in U.S. Many radio stations in Turkey are sharing a broadcasting button with their online audiences through Facebook and Twitter or maintaining to communicate with them through the same media.

Music was the first sector to recognize the potential of social networks, with many bands building a fan base through MySpace. Facebook is built around networks of special interest groups, originally based on the university or college the member attended, but now including thousands and thousands of niche groups. In addition, users can add a range of applications to incorporate other forms of rich interactive content (Philips and Young, 2009: 26).

The indisputable role of music on radio broadcasting has provided a possibility to create a new existence of its own through social networks around music. Social networks offer important chances for internet radio practices based on technology as well as advertisement and for reaching wider groups. As a result of the increase of social networks' server capacity, the opportunity to reach more people directly and effectively has been raised.

Social networking around music has emerged as a class of Web service. While terrestrial radio has yet to fully embrace this, music social networking represents a large opportunity for terrestrial radio stations to gain relevance and currency online. Fundamentally there are two functions around music that social networking can fulfill: One is to enable people to connect with others and show that they belong to a certain tribe represented by the music and bands they follow. Social networks also offer important opportunities for the increase original internet radio stations and adopted (Gupta, 2007). It is known in Turkey, audiences can ask questions to radio

representatives in social networks about the songs played by radios such as Power, Virgin, Capital radios, which are generally broadcasting foreign music. In such cases, they have a great curiosity to learn the song's or singer's name since they do not know.

Some broadcasters are present and active on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and others. New programme formats have been developed that use these platforms to enable listeners and viewers to directly and easily interact with the running radio or television programmes. The primary objective is to create programme associated communities and facilitate the link between the audience and the main audiovisual service and to promote the broadcaster's brands and content (Technical Report, 2011: 19). Radio programmers have tried several ways to strengthen their relations with audiences through social networks. Music lists are shared through Facebook or Twitter; also various gifts are given to audiences. Most radio practices which had been carried out through telephone or letter in the past are today carried out through social media and in particular through social networks.

Research company which is carried out radio audience measurements in Turkey use the widely accepted universally standard of weekly diary method. Total sample is distributed equally into each week of 1 month's reporting period. Diaries cover one total week from Monday to Sunday divided into 15 minute time slices. Station, program type, place and means of listening and time information is recorded for listening longer than 5 minutes. Sample consists of 15.468 individuals and represents a population of 20 million in 24 cities urban and rural areas. Sample is randomly distributed with respect to area population and controlled by socioeconomic status and household size parameters (Ipsos KMG, 2012). It is considered to results of online listening rates, it would make out regular raise over the years. However, if we regard as exceptional to 2011, it would make out regular raise over the years for listening radio via mobile phone. Data of research results are shown below in more detail through graphics.

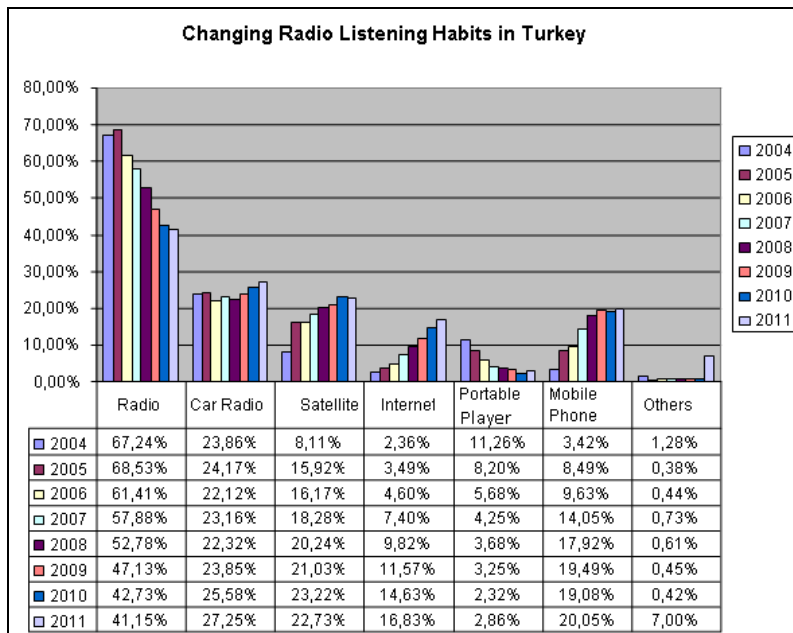


Figure 1: Changing Radio Listening Habits in Turkey *

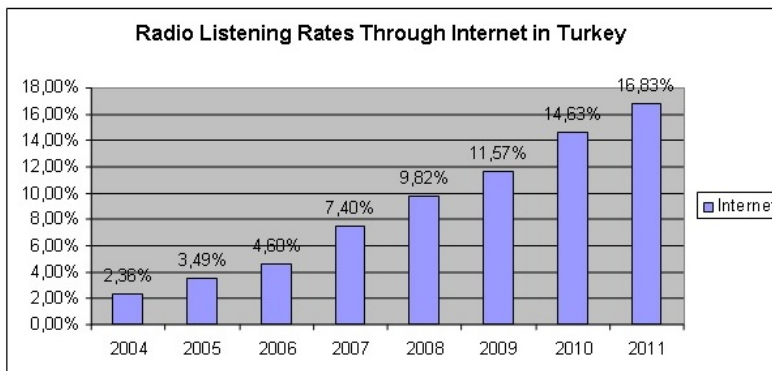


Figure 2: Radio Listening Rates through Internet in Turkey **

As it is understood in the graphics, while it is seen a regular decline on traditional radio listening habits, radio listening habits based on new technologies developing with internet is increasing rapidly. It is possible to develop predictions about that radio will be a part of integral of internet environment and it will become integrated with this

* The graphic is formed based on data IPSOS KMG Research Company.

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environment in the next years. It also wouldn't be wrong to say that radio integrated with internet environment will continue its function with an integrated structure with social networks owing to fact that it will meet on social networks with their most of audiences.

IN LIEU OF CONCLUSION

While the starting point of social networks are that interpersonal social ties provided and developed on virtual environment too, when we look at the present situation, social networks with its content and its technology are seem undertake a mission much more beyond a point than the provision of interpersonal communication. Advertisers have carried actions of advertisement and marketing practices in real life to social network environments in which millions of people are meeting.

Social networks as a mass media are according as reach wider audiences, broadcasters have resorted to use advantages of multimedia and convergence practices own computer and internet technology. As a result of the social networks that allow to share and broadcast texts, audios, videos, photos and all kinds of documents; radio broadcasting has started to use communication advantages falling to its share in this environment.

Social networks not only give an opportunity to radio broadcasting practices just within the context of broadcasting technology through internet, but also strengthened corporate image of radio as well as advertisement and promotion activities of radio for its product and serving, internal communication, public relationships practices. Above all, it has provided important opportunities for establishing communication with audiences much faster, friendly and steady.

Radio broadcasting via the internet has caught an advantage making more visible and known itself through a media which is more visible increasingly. Each radio in a network with millions of people can share broadcast button as online and reach to target audiences directly anymore. In the same way, it also can share all kinds of broadcast content through social networks. Radio had found opportunity carrying out to advertisement and promotion activities on customized groups, so this provided very important advantage for its brand recognition. Communication with audiences is not one way anymore. Audiences have more advantages about to reflect their expectations to broadcast contents. It is inevitable that audiences have a voice much more about at many practices of radio albeit in directly in this communication form which is high interaction. This situation may affect to broadcast contents in next days.

Social networks mostly will affect radio broadcasting practices carrying out on the internet because of its medium. However, when we consider today's practices that almost all radio organizations have reached broadcast to audiences via internet. This can be as terrestrial, cable or satellite broadcasting simultaneously on the internet as well as radio broadcasting or it can be practices being formed only on the internet environment and in more original forms.

Today, in conjunction with it is known there are hundreds of thousands radio practices, it is observed most of them are just music-content radios. However, practices of thematic and original radio broadcasting which are real practices can also increase fields of practices via social networks. It has seen clearly, according as social networks are more widespread and stronger, all kinds of radio broadcasting will strengthen.

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