Online Marketing for Media: The Case of Greek News Websites

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Abstract

Nowadays it is quite easy to create a news website and start promoting it online. However, the structure of a significant amount of news websites seems to have been changing, often deviating from trends of past years or even setting their own marketing direction. Based on seven hypotheses related with online marketing characteristics, the researchers gathered data from articles posted on Greek news websites that reported three major events. After visiting the websites for a second time in order to compare the data, they calculated our results. These results show a clearer picture of how the situation currently is for the top twenty Greek news websites according to Alexa.com. This paper also highlights newer trends in online news reporting, such as the elimination of the "like" button in favour of the shares, and also makes suggestions for further research.

Keywords: like button, online marketing, media website, digital marketing, communication

1. Introduction

In the contemporary era of the Internet, anyone with some basic technological knowledge is able to create and administrate a news website (Antonopoulos & Veglis, 2012). Whether the news content is original or reproduced, it is a factor that users often do not consider, because they are more interested on the validity and timeliness of the report. In order for someone to achieve these qualities (and more) for their website, they have to employ techniques of online marketing and make use of tools that might increase traffic (and probably make profit); techniques that researchers have taken interest on globally, as we see from relevant studies in countries like Malaysia (Hamed et al., 2010) or Nigeria (Gbadeyan, 2010). After all, users themselves create content as well, through comments and interacting with each other (a parameter that website administrators should take into consideration, and support it) (Antonopoulos & Veglis, 2013), since, apart from offering the opportunity of a discussion among users, such interaction contributes to the polyphony of a medium, thus making it more democratic. At the same time, personal opinions and choices of a user are, considered to be crucial elements on their own (Antonopoulos et al., 2015). Digital marketing is a practice that appeared in the field of marketing and involves the promotion of brands by making use of digital technologies in real time (Financial Times, 2016). With statistics that derive from such interactions companies analyze and monitor their brands but they are also able to provide their products or services on specific target audiences. Consumers use multiple channels every day and interact with each other and also with companies, and thus their attention and their needs constantly change. Researchers, developers and managers employ these data and create user-centered design systems (Hong, & Park, 2011) that provide satisfaction to users. (Healy & Herder, 2002; Malik, 2012) In addition, the use of digital marketing techniques in the construction and operation of news websites is of high importance, not only for the traffic, but also for the satisfaction of the visitors even for the word of mouth (Ghorban, 2012).

This paper addresses the use of the characteristics and online, digital marketing-based tools in Greek news websites. The study employed seven main hypotheses which were characterized as important by previous relevant studies. The hypotheses were put in to test using descriptive statistics as quantitative analysis, for an evaluation of the services provided for the users. Two topics with global impact were choosen: the death of Muhammad Ali and the 2016 United Kingdom European Union membership referendum. An additional topic, with impact on the Greek public opinion, the suicide of the well-known journalist Alexandros Velios was also included in the study. Each news article was examined, not in terms of writing, but in terms of its presentation based on the technological capabilities of its website. The results of the study highlight the current situation of media websites in Greece regarding the use of digital marketing techniques and tools, along with the way of presentation and commentary. The main finding is that media organizations use the majority of the available

digital marketing haracteristics, making them more friendly-to-use. However, some characteristics are being neglected, for example the "like" button in an article that tends to disappear from use.

2. Literature Review

News organizations, starting from their traditional form, have evolved to online media presenting their content mainly on digital form, sometimes having only web presence instead of a print one as well. This web presence can be studied as far as its effectiveness is concerned through the evaluation of the websites and the utilization of digital marketing techniques.

During the past years, researchers have been studying the development of marketing in digital devices, which has led to the formation of user-centered platforms. Already in 2002, Olsina and Rossi proposed the creation of a new evaluation method known as Web Quality Evaluation Method (WebQEM), while in 2006, Oppenhiem and Ward issued a method for the "evaluation of web sites for B2C e-commerce". Furthermore, on the field of web media sites in 2007 a new evaluation method was published in the article *Interface evaluation of Portuguese and international news websites*.

In December 2011 the Usability Research Laboratory from Wichita State University researched 259 responders on what they share and what interests them, while using a major communication tool, such as Facebook (Owens, 2011). The same year, the *Usability evaluation of on-line news websites: A user perspective approach* [6] was proposed (Qasem, Emad, Shaima, & Hani, 2011). Also in 2010, a research was conducted under the title: *Promises unfulfilled? "Journalism 2.0"*, user participation and editorial policy on newspaper web sites (Rebillard & Touboul, 2010). The research included four newspaper-based web sites and one of the conclusions was that user-generated content is crucial for such websites. However, their concern was how the user-generated content can be combined with traditional journalistic work (Rebillard & Touboul 2010). Another survey related to online social networks helped researchers understand the classification of web social networks through coherent analysis (Musiał & Kazienko, 2013), while Hasan, Morris and Probets examined the website usability evaluation in developing countries (2013), and Yu and Kong in 2016 examined on mobile-pages. Last, in 2016, a study was published concerning the evaluation of political leaning on news websites (Zhitomirsky-Geffet, Esther, Moshe, & Hodaya, 2016). Extensive research was also conducted regarding the viral marketing facet of websites and its evaluation (Fathollah, Aghdaie, Sanayei, & Etebari, 2012).

As for the Greek news websites, in 2002 researchers Zeimpekis, Palianopoulos and Papatheodorou have examined the topic of evaluation in studies like *News sites evaluation*. Also, in 2012, an evaluation of 25 media web sites in Greece was conducted, including five types of media web sites, based on 32 characteristics (Antonopoulos & Veglis, 2012). Consequently, there have been many endeavors to evaluate web sites, specifically those run by media companies that offer news reports, and these endeavors also take into consideration the opinion of the visitors and the traffic of each website. Research and Online marketing about websites has been developed in accordance to the statistics related to the users' experience. These statistics enable administrators to design more pleasant and interactive websites.

As mentioned before, user-generated content, like comments, is crucial for news websites: it allows for users to interact with each other, while at the same time it increases the participation as well as the traffic of the website (Antonopoulos & Veglis, 2013). In addition, the avatar user option allows visitors to personalize their participation in such a polyphonous environment (Nowak & Rauh, 2006), although it does not guarantee high participation and commenting activity. Another digital marketing technique employed by websites revolves around the use of tags; these tags categorize content, thus making it easier to find both by users and search engines (Antonopoulos & Veglis, 2012; Antonopoulos & Veglis, 2013). While it might be already obvious that social media are being used by news websites to promote their content, researchers also suggested that the number of shares each article has, make some people believe that other people are affected more than they do from the message, something they named "Web Third-Person Effect (WTPE)" (Antonopoulos et al., 2015). Apart from social media, the content promotion and distribution is also supported by the use of the "print" and "e-mail" buttons (Antonopoulos & Veglis, 2012). At the sime time, text enrichment elements like pictures or videos can draw the audience's attention and add value to the article by using information or social cuess as an online store (Koo & Park, 2017). Based on the aforementioned theory, we formulated a number of hypotheses which are presented in the next section.

3. Research Hypotheses

The study included four criteria that are related, either directly or indirectly, to the design of each website and its digital marketing techniques; they are considered to affect each website's traffic. The criteria are: 1) the tags included in the article, 2) the included multimedia content, 3) the interaction through social media, 4) the

comments section and its usage.

Particularly about tags, media websites use keywords to describe an article, helping categorize it properly. The inclusion of these tags in the articles not only makes them easier to be found, but also improves the usability of the respecting website. The selection of a tag prompts all articles with similar tags to appear in the website. As a result, users can take advantage of this article recommendation system either through the respective website or a search engine (Antonopoulos & Veglis, 2013). Regarding text enrichment elements (images, iframes and video files), this content is considered to add value to the article, since it draws the attention of the users more easily, and also allows them to interact with the website. Likewise, the attention of users is also drawn by the use of social media as promotional tool (Antonopoulos & Veglis, 2013; Salamah, 2017). The number of shares in an article can be used as an attention-drawer and can cause a mass communication effect like Web Third-person (WTPE). WTPE predicts that some users believe that online media messages (like articles in media websites) do not affect them but have a greater effect on others (Antonopoulos et al., 2015). The "like" button is a social plugin of Facebook which enables the linking of this particular social media with the websites (Veikko & Markku, 2015). This button is a recommendation system enabling users to express their preference over the content they consume, and at the same time distribute it to their connections on Facebook. Nowadays, the "like" button on Facebook has evolved and offers the ability for users to express sentiments (like anger or sadness) and create online social identity for the person (Banerjee & Dey, 2013). However, as a social plugin linking websites, this feature is only used for liking content and does not allow the expression of sentiments.

The capability of printing an article and the capability of distributing it through e-mail are two features that used to be considered significant in the past, since they encouraged the promotion of content. Furthermore, websites need to interact with their audience through the use of a comments section, since the availability of a comments section on those websites could affect slightly the traffic and also aid to its democratization. However, the number of comments is difficult to be predicted and the use of a profile avatar and text enrichment elements in the comments section might be irrelevant to the commenting activity (Antonopoulos & Veglis, 2012; Antonopoulos & Veglis, 2013).

These criteria were used as analytical categories which lead to the following hypotheses:

H1: Greek news websites use tags in their articles quite often.

H2: Articles on Greek news websites feature text enrichment elements.

H3.1: Greek news websites use social media to promote their content, but not all of them to the same extent.

H3.2: The number of shares (facebook, twitter, etc.) should be available, therefore possibly causing the "Web Third-Person Effect".

H3.3: News websites tend to not use the "like" button.

H3.4: Printing and distribution of an article (e-mail) is being featured in contemporary news websites.

H4: Greek news websites employ comment sections, along with avatars and text enrichment elements, but this does not necessarily mean that they have more comments as well.

4. Method

The sample of the study includes twenty (20) Greek media websites with the highest traffic in Greece (according to Alexa ranking on the 3rd of June 2016). On the 20th of September 2016 the Alexa ranking was checked again as well as the 20 websites, in order to check their position based on their traffic. It is worth noting that ss news websites or media websites, we define news websites that are -frequently but not always- owned by media companies (portals, newspaper, radio, TV, etc.).

To answer our questions, we selected three major events that created wide interest around them, and were reported by all websites. We found out that each event had been reported on every website, and on the same date. The first event was the death of Muhammad Ali, and more specifically, the first announcement about it on the 4th of June 2016. The second event was the announcement of the results of the United Kingdom European Union referendum of the 23rd of June 2016. The third event was the suicide of Alexandros Velios, a Greek journalist, reported on the 5th of September 2016.

The study is based on experiential observation and listing of the data by the researchers, without being registered on the websites. The browser used was Google Chrome in incognito mode. The research process was organized as a four-step procedure: a) the websites were monitored and cross-examined, b) there was a first visit into the relevant websites and the first results were gathered c) a few hours after the first visit, a second visit took place and defined the final results to each question d) finally, descriptive statistics and quantitative analysis formed the

relevant conclusions.

Table1. Alexa ranking of the media website sample

Alexa highest	Website	Alexa 3rd of June 2016	20th of September 2016
1	fanpage.gr	5	5
2	protothema.gr	10	14
3	makeleio.gr	11	12
4	tilestwra.com	13	11
5	sugklonistiko.gr	14	8
6	dikaiologitika.gr	15	15
7	gazzetta.gr	16	17
8	sport24.gr	17	19
9	iefimerida.gr	18	21
10	newsit.gr	19	23
11	sport-fm.gr	20	24
12	tro-ma-ktiko.blogspot.gr	21	30
13	diaforetiko.gr	23	33
14	voicenews.gr	25	44
15	news247.gr	27	28
16	alfavita.gr	29	20
17	zougla.gr	30	6
18	lifo.gr	32	37
19	in.gr	33	42
20	newpost.gr	34	41

Out of the twenty (20) news websites, fifteen (15) of them have exclusively online prescence, whereas three have also a print form (one magazine and two newspapers), one has a radio station, and one is a part of a big media corporation. This shows that the media under examination are focused more on attracting an online audience.

For the evaluation of the websites, four thematic categories were defined. The questions included in the thematic categories, examine each of the selected events (the death of Muhammad Ali, the British referendum and the suicide of Alexandros Velios) on every website of the sample. All the questions are based on factors like the rules of digital marketing and the usability of the websites, reporting ethics, and the question whether they serve the primary target for which they were created (Antonopoulos & Veglis, 2012).

The first thematic category examined the existence (and visibility) of tags in the articles. The second thematic category examined the inclusion of multimedia content, such as pictures, videos and inline frames. The third thematic category was entitled "share to social media" and investigated whether the websites of the sample provide tools for interaction through different social media, along with the number of times an article has been shared (Antonopoulos et al., 2015; Choudhury & Sundaram, 2011; Mislove et al., 2007; Vries, Gensler, & Leeflang, 2012). The last thematic category examined the comments section (Markellou, Rigou, & Sirmakessis, 2009) in the articles. Apart from looking at whether the user can comment or not, it was also examined the number of comments, the use (or not) of avatars and the possibility of using images and/or videos in the comments.

5. Results

In order to respond to the questions data regarding each question posed earlier was collected. First, the number of followers, each website had on social media (Facebook, Twitter, Google+), was calculated

Table 2. News website followers on Facebook, Twitter and Google+

Website	Facebook followers on the 21st of September 2016	Twitter followers on the 21st of September 2016	Google+ followers on the 21st of September 2016
fanpage.gr	315 795	180	173
protothema.gr	239 103	205 000	147
makeleio.gr	7118	7277	Not available
tilestwra.com	931 014	9317	Not available
sugklonistiko.gr	539 659	Not available	Not available
dikaiologitika.gr	180 515	4402	803
gazzetta.gr	385 528	22 800	Not available
sport24.gr	448 461	52 600	Not available
iefimerida.gr	125 523	73 800	838
newsit.gr	195 734	53400	293
sport-fm.gr	428 076	26 800	Not available
tro-ma-ktiko.blogspot.gr	480 783	22 600	Not available
diaforetiko.gr	413 807	Not available	Not available
voicenews.gr	35 862	4322	Not available
news247.gr	225 805	86 700	Not available
alfavita.gr	123 343	9838	Not available
zougla.gr	121 236	34 600	Not available
lifo.gr	664 033	203 000	Not available
in.gr	204 566	90 100	Not available
newpost.gr	134 811	17 100	Not available

Following are the results of each question separated by each event. First are the results regarding the articles about Muhammad Ali's death (A). Second the results regarding the articles about the (B) British referendum (Brexit) and finaly, the results regarding the articles about the suicide of Alexandros Velios (C).

Table 3. Results of each question separated by each event (presence=✓ or absence=✗)

Total Results
(A) Results regarding the articles about Muhammad Ali's death.
(B) Results regarding the articles about the British referendum (Brexit).
(C) Results regarding the articles about the suicide of Alexandros Velios.

Research questions	A,B,C	Results Presence=✓ Absence=✗	fanpage.gr	protothema.gr	makeleio.gr	tilestwra.com	sugklonistiko.gr	dikaiologitika.gr	gazzetta.gr	sport24.gr	iefimerida.gr	newsit.gr	sport-fm.gr	tro-ma-ktiko.blogspot.gr	diaforetiko.gr	voicenews.gr	news247.gr	alfavita.gr	zougla.gr	lifo.gr	in.gr	newpost.gr
Tags	A,B,C	✓=65% ✗=35%	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓
Text enrichment with Pictures	A,B,C	✓=100% ✗=0%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Text enrichment with Videos	A	✓=45% ✗=55%	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗
	B	✓=35% ✗=65%	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓
	C	✓=65% ✗=35%	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
Text enrichment with iframe	A	✓=10% ✗=90%	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
	B	✓=30% ✗=70%	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓
	C	✓=0% ✗=100%	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Number of shares on facebook	A,B,C	✓=90% ✗=10%	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Button "like" on Facebook	A,B,C	✓=40% ✗=60%	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗
Share articles with Twitter	A,B,C	✓=95% ✗=5%	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
E-mail distribution of the article	A,B,C ✓=55% ✗=45%	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Printing of the article	A,B,C ✓=45% ✗=55%	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓

Column commenting systems (Way of commenting): A,B,C 1.Facebook Plugin=35% 2.Website system=20% 3.Disqus.com=20% 4.Comments are disabled=25%

Columns: 1. Facebook Plugin, 2. Website comment system, 3. Website comment system, 4. Facebook Plugin, 5. Facebook Plugin, 6. Comments are disabled, 7. Website comment system, 8. Facebook Plugin, 9. Disqus.com, 10. Facebook Plugin, 11. Comments are disabled, 12. Facebook Plugin, 13. Facebook Plugin, 14. Comments are disabled, 15. Disqus.com, 16. Disqus.com, 17. Comments are disabled, 18. Website comment system, 19. Comments are disabled, 20. Disqus.com

Total number of comments		1	2	3	4	5	7	8	9	10	12	13	15	16	18	20
A	Total comments=80	0	12	0	0	0	20	1	1	0	0	0	45	0	1	0
B	Total comments=629	0	490	0	0	0	40	0	39	22	0	0	1	1	33	3
C	Total comments=549	1	186	54	0	0	6	0	53	8	1	0	226	1	13	0

| Are avatars available? | A,B,C ✓=65% ✗=10% / Comments are disabled=25% | ✓ | ✗ | ✗ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

Only text in the comments (Comments are disabled=25%):

		1	2	3	4	5	7	8	9	10	12	13	15	16	18	20
A	✓=30% ✗=45%	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗
B	✓=40% ✗=35%	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
C	✓=50% ✗=25%	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗

The research also found that on the examined websites and articles, no comment was filled only with pictures, while out of the three articles only one comment -about Muhammad Ali's death (A)- included just a video and no text at all (news247.gr). On the same, two comments (news 247.gr) combined text with video, one of them referring to Muhammad Ali (A) and the other one to Alexandros Velios(C). Additionally, there was no comment that combined picture and video, whereas only one comment (iefimerida.gr) included text and picture and was referring to the British referendum (B).

6. Discussion

When examining the use of tags (H1), the results are mixed. 65% of the websites use one to four (visible) tags. The rest of the sample employed almost no tags. Articles on Greek news websites feature text enrichment elements (H2), like pictures (100%) or videos. According to our findings (H2), all websites use pictures in their articles, sometimes even more than one. However, not the same can be said for iframes and videos (see Table 3).

Focusing on the online presence, all of the websites seem to have understood the importance of using social media for promoting their pages (H3.1). All of them have a Facebook page, however not every website maintains a Twitter or Google+ account, thus creating doubts whether the latter social media are useful for news promoting in Greece. Tilestwra.com had 931 014 followers on Facebook when the research took place, which accounts for almost the one tenth of the Greek population. Lifo.gr had the second biggest number of followers with 664 033, with makeleio.gr being the one with the least followers (only 7118). Twitter is not widely used, since the website with the most followers, protothema.gr, had only 205 000, with lifo.gr in second place with 203 000 followers, while the rest of them had 90 100 or less followers, or not even used a official Twitter account. In addition, Google+ is used even less, since iefimerida.gr had 838 followers, while fourteen of the websites do not even promote their Google+ account on their main page. The availability of the number of total shares of an article could possibly cause the Web Third-Person. When examing the interaction, it was found out that the majority of the websites show the total number of shares for an article, along with Facebook and Twitter shares separately (H3.2). However, what was found mostly underused during our research was the number of "likes" in the articles. Only eight websites used the "like" button for their articles (H3.3). While it would be expected that printing and e-mail distribution of an article would be easy (H3.4), only seven of the websites offer both choices.

Its eems like that such functions are considered outdated and probably insignificant.

Furthermore, three quarters of the websites had a comments section available for their audience (H4), thus appearing that their administrators understand its importance, although in some occasions no user had commented yet (at least on the date of the research). It is worth noting that some of the websites are embracing interconnectivity, allowing for users to comment using their Facebook or Disqus account, while a few persist on using their own commenting system (20%). Regarding the content of the comments, the visitors inserted text, and even though it was allowed, no images or videos (or any combination of them) was employed in the comments.

Although the comments option was available on 15 out of 20 websites, some of the top-rated websites had no comments (or very few of them) made by users (H4). This means that probably their traffic is not heavily dependant on the comments section. The only exception was protothema.gr, which had 490 comments for the British referendum and 186 for the suicide of Alexandros Velios. This possibly suggests that readers prefer to comment on popular, well-established websites (protothema.gr is based on a well-selling newspaper) reporting on important, national events.

Finally, the option of an avatar use (H4) does not necessarily make commenting more attractive to the users, nor the use of elements such as images and videos. As we noted earlier, a significant amount of websites supports avatars, but had few (or zero) comments. For instance, news247.gr had 226 comments regarding Alexandros Velios but only one about the British referendum. In addition, as mentioned above the use of pictures and/or videos in the comments was almost nonexistent.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study showed that the top twenty (20) Greek news websites seem to be quite aware of website (online) marketing techniques and that awareness could probably increase their traffic and the spread of their content. Such techniques, though, are not obligatory; they can bring positive results to news websites that employ them. It is crucial that news websites take into consideration more features that are already being utilized in online commerce, lfor example features that promote ease of use, security (Yulihasri, Aminul, & Ku Amir, 2011) and interactivity.

However, one might argue that the techniques themselves are also evolving and changing. As it was highlighted, the number of Facebook "likes" is not used widely, showing that websites tend to not prefer focusing on such strategy, giving more attention to other features. The same could be said for the use of Twitter and Google+. It becomes evident that the best way to promote a news website in Greece is through Facebook, probably because of Facebook's usefulness and convenience (Banerjee & Dey, 2013). One might also argue that the "like" button appears to be problematic because of two distinct factors. The first one concerns the fact that news websites appear to care less about the number of "likes" each of their article recives but care a great deal about the number of "shares". The second one has to do with the use of the "like" button on posts about unfortunate events (such as the death of Muhammad Ali): it appears that users "like" the fact that somebody has died. Facebook has already implemented buttons that express numerous sentiments, but media websites do not offer that option yet (Veikko & Markku, 2015).

Also, all websites employ text enrichment elements, with at least one picture in every article. That shows that nowadays articles are more preffered when they include audiovisual content. After all, the convergence of text, images, video and audio is what makes online news reporting different from tradional newspapers. On the other hand, not all kinds of text enrichment are used, with pictures being preferred significantly than videos and iframes.

Another worth noting finding is the lack of commenting. A significant number of articles, although they offered a comments section, quite often had very few comments (or no comments at all). With the exception of one website which had over 400 comments concerning the British referendum, the rest could not gather similar number of comments, with users sometimes preferring to comment on the website's Facebook page instead, regardless the use of avatars or not. It is worth mentinong that, although websites allow for interconnection with Facebook, meaning that anyone with a Facebook account can also comment on those websites, sometimes people might avoid it, because on Facebook their real name and pictures are often visible. On the other hand, websites that are using a different platform for commenting can grant anonymity -something that can prevent isolation and/or mockery from other users (Hong & Park, 2011). Commenting is another feature non-present in traditional forms of news reporting, and more emphasis should be put on it, in favour of democraticizing the medium.

Moreover, it becomes apparent that the use of the "like" button tends to become extinct. Website administrators

seem to have realized that the "like" button's presence is unnecessary, along with printing and e-mail distribution functions. After all, the "share" button brings much more exposure to their website (and subsequently profits).

Of course, this research has some limitaions, since other areas could be researched further. For instance, other types of news reporting, local politics or editorials to name a few, might produce somewhat different results on a similar study. This means that this research is indicative of a very specific phenomenon that can spark interest for more study on Greek news websites. And although this research was focused on Greek websites, media websites in other countries can benefit from this too, since the concepts and techniques discussed here could be applied to them as well.

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