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The Use of Facebook as a Source of News in Post-Revolutionary Egypt

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ABSTRACT

Social media, particularly Facebook, played a key role in the 2011 Egyptian revolution. Facebook was not only used to put forth the first call for revolution, but it also gave Egypt's youth a safe and user-friendly venue for exchanging political views, engaging in heated political debates, and obtaining up-to-date news from "citizen journalists"—namely, amateur reporters and Facebook users who posted status updates, pictures, videos, and notes concerning current events and breaking news. This research project investigates the use of Facebook as a news outlet for Egyptian youth in the 18 months following the revolution. The current study seeks to explore whether Facebook is becoming an alternative source of information for Egyptian internet users in replacement of traditional news media. It employs survey research as a primary method to answer the proposed research questions via a purposive sample of 360 Egyptian internet users. The findings of the survey – which support both the literature review and theories of uses and gratifications of online media – suggest a significant displacement effect of social media on the usage of traditional media.
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1. INTRODUCTION

The Egyptian revolution has been rightfully described as "Revolution 2.0" because of the internet’s tremendous effect in triggering the protests (Ghonim, 2012). Social media, particularly Facebook, played a leading role in mobilizing young people to join the uprising, spreading information, and enabling youth to convene without the security hazards of offline meetings. The Mubarak regime cracked down heavily on freedom of assembly and freedom of speech, allowing a small margin of freedom in the blogosphere and online media. They were unaware that the internet would become the catalyst for the revolution that toppled Egypt's long-time dictator in an 18-day stretch that began on January 25, 2011.

The first call for the revolution began on the "We are all Khaled Said" Facebook page (Ghonim, 2012). Social media enabled not only unrestricted cyberactivism, but also citizen journalism, empowering non-journalists to disseminate and stream live information and breaking news, footage, images, and opinions. This information would not have been published otherwise because of the government's control over mainstream media outlets and its repression of religious and political groups (Khamis, 2011; Khamis & Vaughn, 2011; Ghonim, 2012; Farrag, 2012). According to the Arab Social Media Report (May 2011), Egyptian activists used Facebook during the revolution mainly for organizing themselves and for spreading information about the protests. Likewise, the vast majority (94.2%) of respondents to an ASMR survey said they got their news and information about the events through social media. Therefore, social media was one key catalyst for the Egyptian revolution. Social media aided the revolutionary efforts in three important ways: enabling cyberactivism, encouraging civic engagement, and facilitating the transfer of

Prior to the revolution, online news was taking audience share from traditional news media, a trend that is expected to grow now that some traditional media outlets have ceased print editions to focus on electronic media (Ghannam, 2011). According to a survey by the Jordan-based Arab Advisors Group, internet users in the Arab world are turning to online news in massive numbers, and the numbers are expected to grow. The number of Facebook users in the Arab world has already surpassed the 14 million copies of newspapers sold in the region (Ghannam, 2011). According to a Google official, news was the most frequent Google search category for Egyptians in 2010, followed by images, music, and audio clips. A 2010 National Endowment for Democracy survey of 3,348 people in Egypt revealed that the number of online newspaper readers is at 50%, versus 34% for offline sources (cited in Ghannam, 2011).

This research project focuses on the third element of social media usage mentioned above—namely, the use of social media as a news source and for sharing information in times of political transition. The two main Facebook pages followed during the revolution were those of "Kollena Khaled Said" ("We are all Khaled Said"), which first mobilized the youth to join the protests, and the Rassd News Network (RNN), which was the revolution's primary social media news outlet (Ghonim, 2012; Farrag, 2012). As of March 2013, "Kollena Khaled Said" had 2,939,667 “likes,” while RNN had 2,428,966 million. The total number of Facebook users in Egypt in March 2013 was 13,010,580, the majority of whom were between the ages of 18 and 34. Egypt ranked twentieth amongst all nations in Facebook usage.
(“Egypt Facebook Statistics,” March 2013). The top Egyptian news page on Facebook (measured by the number of users) is RNN, followed by the daily newspapers *AlMasry Alyoum*, *Shorouk Newspaper* and the Satellite channels Al-Arabeeya and Aljazeera (Social Bakers, 2012).

These trends point to the significance of social media in Egypt, and underscore the importance of studying the use of social media as a news source and how this new form of news consumption is impacting traditional news organizations. The current research attempts to explore the motives of Egyptian youth for seeking news from Facebook, while examining the impact of that usage on traditional news media usage. In addition, the study examines how the youth are using Facebook for fulfilling these motives. The Uses and Gratifications theory has been selected as the study’s theoretical underpinning.

1.1. Social Media during the 2011 Egyptian Revolution:

The Egyptian 2011 revolution provides an interesting case study for examining how the internet and social media may mobilize people and facilitate political discussions. During the revolution, cyberactivism combined with offline political activism to contribute to massive mobilization of people (Khamis, 2011; Cottle, 2011; Ulrichsen et al., 2011; Howard et al., 2011; Ghonim, 2012). Although the main call for the revolution was sent out by the "We Are All Khaled Said" page on Facebook, this call was preceded by accumulated online efforts by the April 6 youth group, the National Coalition for Change, and independent bloggers (Ghonim, 2012; Cottle, 2011). These online movements have been active online since 2005, through their opposition to the Mubarak regime in various ways, as well as using the internet for exposing police brutality and human rights violations that were common under
Mubarak. As Khamis (2011) puts it, the role of social media was important for the revolution in various ways, including: "raising public awareness, testing public opinion trends, rallying support for a political cause, triggering public mobilization, boosting civic engagement, and enabling citizen journalism" (Khamis 2011, p. 6).

Along these lines, Simon Cottle (2011) writes:

"[N]ew social media and mainstream media often appear to have performed in tandem, with social media variously acting as a watchdog of state controlled national media, alerting international news media to growing opposition and dissent events and providing raw images of these for wider dissemination. International news media, in turn, including Al Jazeera, have distributed the flood of disturbing scenes and reports of the uprisings now easily accessed via Google's YouTube and boomeranged them back into the countries concerned. Mainstream newspapers and news broadcasters in their online variants also increasingly incorporate direct links to these new social media, effectively acting as a portal to their updating communication flows and near live-streaming of images direct from the protests themselves" (p.7).

This boost in social media use was partly due to the credibility crisis of state-run media, as it adopted the regime's rhetoric rather than reflecting what was happening in the streets (ASMR, 2011; Cottle, 2011; Ghonim, 2012; Khamis, 2012; Khamis & Vaughn, 2012). Aljazeera coverage, aided by online citizen journalists, was the main source of information for young people and protesters during the revolution (Pintak, 2011). The minute-by-minute coverage by citizen journalists, as well as the comprehensive and professional coverage of Aljazeera came in stark contrast to the propagandist misleading coverage of the official media, which
undermined the people's trust in those media and led to calls to dismantle the Ministry of Information that controlled these channels (Khamis, 2011; ASMR, 2011). Besides shutting down the internet, the government closed Aljazeera’s Cairo office and blocked its NileSat transmission, leaving Egyptians to resort to watching the network via Arabsat and HotBird. As Khamis points out, these assaults on online and satellite media reflected a "communication struggle" between the government and activists, not just a political struggle (Khamis 2011, p. 6). The activists were on the winning side of that battle, gaining immense credibility and popularity as a result (Farrag, 2012, Ghonim, 2012). The number of subscribers to the two main Facebook pages covering the revolution ("We are All Khaled Said" and RNN) skyrocketed after the internet ban was lifted. Moreover, the street protests were galvanized due to the internet blackout, since activists and citizen journalists had to take to the streets to observe what was happening in the absence of information they normally obtained from the internet. According to Khamis, "the Egyptian government combined its incompetent political strategy with an equally ineffective communication strategy that not only failed to halt political activism, but even fueled it" (Khamis 2011, p. 8).

1.2. The Internet in Egypt:

The first use of the internet service in Egypt dates back to October 1993, when the Egyptian Universities Network (EUN) -of the Supreme Council of Universities and the Cabinet Information and Decision Support Center (IDSC)’s Regional Information Technology and Software Engineering Center (RITSEC) - started a link (www.frcu.eun.eg) via an initial 9.6 kbit/s link to the European Academic and Research Network (EARN). Egypt Telecom provided the infrastructure for that
connection, when the internet users were estimated at about 2000 to 3000 of Egypt's above 60 million inhabitants at that time (Abdulla, 2005; ITU, 2001; IDSC, 2010).

The International Conference on Population and Development, held in Cairo 1994, was a key event in the history of the internet in Egypt. As a condition for hosting the conference, the Egyptian government was asked to provide 64 kbit/s internet connection during the event, which cost the government approximately USD 450,000 for nine days. Thanks to the event, the government decided after that to permit the IDSC and the RITSEC to provide free internet access to government agencies, NGOs and corporations in a bid to promote the development of the internet and encourage its use in various industrial sectors. Moreover, in 1995, the Chairman of Telecom Egypt decided to launch an open-door policy for commercial internet services, while Telecom Egypt announced that it would allow 12 ISPs to operate (ITU, 2001). The service became available to the public by 1996, when gateway speeds and user numbers were increased and ISPs started operating either through IDSC/RITSEC under the ‘.com.eg’ domain or through their own international gateways (Abdulla, 2005). According to the latest CIA figures, the internet users in Egypt exceeded 20 million in 2009, ranking 21 internationally (CIA Factbook, Egypt, 2009). The World Bank estimated the internet users in Egypt in 2010 at 30.5% of the population (World Bank, 2010).

1.3. Cyberactivism and online citizen journalism in Egypt:

a) The Rise of the Blogosphere in Egypt:

Perhaps the most significant developments in the history of Egypt's media occurred with the rise of internet activism and citizen journalism since 2004. This was initiated with the emergence of blogging in Egypt by anti-Mubarak activists. The
Kifaya movement, established in 2004, protested against the former President Hosni Mubarak and the possible inheritance of power by his son, Gamal Mubarak, and was instrumental in consolidating this phenomenon. Kifaya supporters turned to the blogosphere to express their views that would not otherwise be tolerated. The movement encouraged people to speak out against violations of human rights by Mubarak's regime, and that was reflected in the rise of internet activism that endorsed the demands of Kefaya (Radsch, 2008).

The early bloggers in Egypt were predominantly liberals or leftists who advocated rights of all political currents. Among most well-known English language blogs were The Arabist, Baheyya, and Zeinobia (Radsch 2008). Most of these blogs were aimed at a personal network of friends as well as English-speaking audiences. Others blogged in Arabic, including the Gharbeia Brothers, and Digressing, who addressed an Egyptian audience, and the Arabic name for Blog, i.e. Modawwana, was coined by one of these bloggers (Radsch 2008). Moreover, Muslim Brotherhood members started to blog in 2006, with Abdel Monem Mahmoud as the first to identify himself as MB member through his blog "Ana Ikhwan" (i.e. I am a Muslim Brother) (Radsch, 2008; Lynch, 2007). By early 2007, Egyptian bloggers reached 1400; and their categories included "citizen journalists, nondenominational activists, leftists, Muslim Brotherhood and Islamists, culture and art enthusiasts, open source technology activists, English language political commentary and strictly personal" (Radsch 2008, p.7).

The most common activity for bloggers in the year 2007 and afterwards was the solidarity campaigns with fellow bloggers who were arrested or harassed by state security police. Bloggers from across the political spectrum mobilized support for those who had their freedom of expression or human rights violated. The years 2006
and 2007 saw bloggers like Kareem Amer, Abdelmonem Mahmoud, Malek Mustafa, and Mohamed Sharkawy arrested for the opinions expressed on their blogs, and other bloggers campaigning for their release. This was accompanied by a crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood and Kefaya movements, and their bloggers (Lynch, 2007, b.). Moreover, in the year 2007, blogs exposing torture cases by Egyptian police started to receive world-wide attention, particularly when citizen journalist Wael Abbas publicized a video of policemen torturing an Egyptian bus driver, which eventually led to their prosecution (Radsch, 2008).

By April 2008, the number of Egyptian blogs reached 160,000, which equaled 30% of the total Arab blogs and 0.2% of all blogs internationally. The Egyptian blogosphere composes of multiple categories, 30.7% focus on miscellaneous content, 18.9% political, 15.5% personal, 14.4% cultural, 7% religious, and 4.8% social. Blogs on science and technology do not exceed 4% of the total number of Egyptian blogs (IDSC, 2010).

These blogs have significantly contributed to shaping Egyptian public opinion at politically turbulent periods, while mobilizing people to support the rising demands for political and social reforms (Hamdy, 2009; Radsch, 2008). This category of bloggers considered themselves activists, whose blogs were "a virtual extension of the street" (Hamdy, 2009, p. 14). Not all these blogs, however, were representative of the street. English-language bloggers, for instance, did not reflect mainstream opinion, despite their interesting content (Lynch, 2007, a.). The political bloggers in the Arab world have been classified by Marc Lynch (2007, a.) into three main types: 1) Activists: those who are part of political movements and use their blogs to spread information about them; 2) Bridge Bloggers: those who address Western audience and write in English in order to shed light on their societies; 3) Public Sphere Bloggers:
non-politicized bloggers who take part in public discussions on issues of public interest.

The Egyptian blogosphere has been dramatically affected by the emergence of social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter. These venues provided new media that converged blogging and social networking, allowing for more interaction and wider dissemination of opinions and information.

b) The Rise of Social Media in Egypt:

The social media scene that paved the way for the Egyptian revolution can be exemplified by three Facebook pages: first: "April 6 Youth Movement" as an example of political activism pages, second: "Kollena Khaled Said" represents the advocacy and public mobilization platform, and third: "Rassd News Network" (RNN), the leading social media news provider. The three pages are run by young activists who combined social media outreach with offline activism.

First, April 6 Facebook page - titled "April 6 Youth Movement"-, with 326,909 followers (when the study was initiated), marked a dramatic shift in the use of social media in Egypt for political purposes. The general strike on April 6, 2008, in Mahalla al-Kubra town in Nile Delta turned into a nationwide strike thanks to a Facebook page launched by internet activist Israa Abdel Fattah and her colleague Ahmad Maher. The page attracted 170,000 subscribers within a week and had a notable impact in the street on the day of the strike when millions of Egyptians responded to the call and stayed home in solidarity with the workers. The page urged its followers to wear black on April 6, and stay at home. Activists used Facebook and Twitter to report on the strike and the authorities' response to it. This incident reflected the power of social media to create a parallel offline movement fueled by online activism. The page turned to a youth movement that took part in organizing anti-Mubarak protests until
he stepped down in February of 2011, and remained active afterwards against the interim Military rulers who replaced Mubarak. The group currently split into two camps, Ahmad Maher Front, and the Democratic Front, each with a separate Facebook and Twitter pages. They remain proactive in protesting against the attempts to hijack the Egyptian revolution by Mubarak loyalists (Wolman 2008; Radsch 2008; 6April.org; "6th of April Youth Movement"; Ghonim, 2012).

We are all Khaled Said:

The Facebook page "We are all Khaled Said," currently having above two million subscribers (March 2013), took the lead in rallying for the revolution (Hennawy, 2010; Ross, 2011; Ghonim, 2012; Khamis, 2011). It was this page that first called for the January 25th revolution, leading to the outbreak of nationwide protests that toppled Hosni Mubarak, Egypt’s longtime dictator, after 18 days. The page was created in June, 2010 by Wael Ghonim, a Google marketing manager, in the aftermath of the torture and killing of Khaled Mohamed Said, a young entrepreneur who publicized a video on YouTube exposing police officials complicit in acts of corruption. Khaled Said was beaten to death in June 2010, and the pictures of his contorted face and dislocated jaw were widely shared on social media just days after the assault. Ghonim was among the young Egyptians who were dismayed by Khaled Said's photos published on Facebook. He immediately decided to create a Facebook page to protest against the brutal murder of Said by Egyptian police. The page got 36,000 followers in the first day, and more than 250,000 after three months without any advertising. The soaring number of its readership was alarming to mainstream media (Ghonim, 2012; Khamis, 2011).
Writing in the first person, Ghonim posted updates in the name of Khaled Said, such as "Egyptians, my justice is in your hands," which attracted thousands of sympathizers and activists to join the cause and lobby for the prosecution of Khaled's killers. Although many similar cases took place before Khaled's, this incident was brought to the public's attention thanks to social media, which spread the images and the news story like wildfire. Ghonim took advantage of the wide appeal of his page to raise awareness regarding human rights violations committed by Mubarak's police. He posted videos of similar torture cases, and mobilized people to join protests against the murder of Khaled. This was done in collaboration with April 6 Youth Movement and other activists. None of these activities were reported by mainstream media. It was only through the internet that the activists were able to convene and organize street activities.

The page soon turned to a media outlet about human rights abuses, and an advocacy platform promoting human rights causes. Aided with videos published in Misr Digital blog by Egyptian blogger Wael Abbas, Ghonim posted links to those videos to expose torture cases and denounce them. As Ghonim mentions in his biography of the revolution, he chose to write anonymously and in colloquial Egyptian dialect to be representative of the average Egyptian. The tone was inclusive, non-confrontational, and preserved its non-partisan nature in order to win the support of as many followers as possible. This set the page apart from other pages run by April 6 activists, whose tone was rebellious and used insulting language, which Ghonim rejected. Moreover, it relied on the participation of the page's members, and attempted to act as their voice, the voice of those who rejected injustice and human rights abuses. This social media world was a safe means for like-minded activists to convene, work jointly, and exchange views. As Ghonim states: "the virtual world
seemed further from the oppressive reach of the regime, and therefore many were encouraged to speak up. The more difficult task remained, though, which was to transfer the struggle from the virtual world to the real one" (Ghonim, 2012, p. 67).

The page was participatory in nature, frequently using Facebook questions (a polling feature) to survey the page members before reaching a decision. According to Ghonim, "the page resembled a product being marketed by its loyal users" (p. 73). Moreover, the page's followers suggested several ideas, such as the Silent Stands on the coast of Alexandria to peacefully protest Khaled's murder. The call for stands and protests was done using the "events" tool on Facebook (Ghonim, 2012).

The election fraud that marred the 2010 parliamentary elections was another focus of the page (Ghonim, 2012). Besides Rassd News Network Facebook page that reported heavily on the violations, "Kollena Khaled Said" helped disseminate videos and photos of vote rigging documented by citizen journalists in all cities. Later in December, AbdelRahman Mansour, Ghonim's partner in running the page, suggested to do something on the next National Police Day on January 25. His reason was the ironic nature of the day, since Egyptians were supposed to celebrate a national day for the notorious police apparatus despite the enormous violations committed by police officers in the past year. Young people were already familiar with Khaled Said case that took place in the past year, as well as the other torture cases exposed since then. The atmosphere was packed with anger and frustration from the abuses people saw on social media. Therefore, January 25 was a perfect day for venting out that anger, though in a peaceful way (Ghonim, 2012). Through "Google Chat", Ghonim communicated with April 6 Youth movement co-founder Ahmad Maher, and brainstormed what to do on that day. On December 30, he posted a "status" on the page reading:
"January 25 is Police Day and it's a national holiday… I think the police have done enough this year to deserve a special celebration … What do you think?" (p. 121).

Within two days, the Facebook event created to call for the January 25 demonstrations reached 500,000 users, while 27,000 confirmed their attendance. Page members were urged to promote the call through their offline networks and in the streets to reach all segments of Egyptian society. Contrary to speculations about the day's failure, the call resonated in the streets thanks to the efforts of supporters who spread the word among citizens in all neighborhoods of Cairo and other cities. Despite low turnout at the beginning, the high numbers at the end of the day in Tahrir square were indicative of the rising momentum among young people (Ghonim, 2012).

In the evening of January 25, the government blocked Facebook and Twitter. However, after January 25, "the people in the street had started to move at a faster pace than the activists. The mob was now in charge," (Ghonim, 2012, p. 189). On January 28, Ghonim launched another event with the title "The Friday of Anger: a Revolution against Corruption, Injustice, Torture, and Unemployment". That was the day when the protests witnessed massive turnout, leading to the overthrow of Hosni Mubarak after 18 days of continued demonstrations and sit-ins (Hennawy, 2010; Ross, 2011; Ghonim, 2012; Khamis, 2011).

c) RNN: Journalism via Social Media

As of February 2012, RNN ranked first as the top Egyptian media brand on Facebook (Social Bakers, 2012). As its founders describe it, RNN represents an alternative news outlet based on volunteer participation that combines citizen journalism with social networks on Twitter and Facebook (Farrag, 2012). Besides its
mission to raise public awareness of current affairs, RNN aims to encourage non-journalists to become reporters by documenting eye-witness accounts and presenting them instantly to the public. The purpose of RNN, according to its founders, has been to create an alternative form of journalism that covers events subject to state censorship, or the self-censorship of established media that was prevalent during Mubarak's reign.

The first generation of RNN was founded in 2010, prior to Egypt's parliamentary elections, which were the last elections to take place before the revolution. The elections were marred with widespread voter fraud, irregularities and vote rigging, documented by citizen journalists across the country. While mainstream and state-run media attempted to conceal any reports of vote rigging in order to legitimize a planned National Democratic Party (NDP) victory, RNN took the lead in exposing all violations documented by its huge network of amateur reporters spread across the entire country. The first RNN page on Facebook was named "Wehdat al Rassd al Maydani" or "Field Monitoring Unit". During the 2010 election campaign, a total of 1500 videos and pictures were uploaded on that page, and the Facebook page’s membership rose to 80,000; RNN received 700 news stories daily, and published an average of 400 items, compiled from all over Egypt. During this time, RNN grew to include 30 reporters and expanded its contributor base to almost all governorates in Egypt (Farrag, 2012).

On the eve of the January 25 revolution, Wael Ghonim suggested to RNN founders launching a new page with the Arabic name Rassd (i.e. monitoring) because it sounded more neutral. Founders of the page were young men who were known to be supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood, despite showing no such bias in their
reporting (Ghonim, 2012; Farrag, 2012). They were young people who supported and took part in the revolution. Nevertheless, they attempted to report news about the protests with accuracy and balance, and without sacrificing journalistic standards of truthfulness and objectivity. As Ghonim narrates, he coordinated with the page's admins to be the main news outlet of the revolution, while the "Kollena Khaled Said" page would remain the advocacy and mobilization platform. "[RNN] had to be a source of information and not a source of analysis or bias," Ghonim said in his memoirs (Ghonim, 2012, p.170). So while Khaled Said rallied for the people to join the street protests, RNN focused on reporting information as accurately as possible, and with supporting documentation to garner credibility. Ghonim helped them promote the new page on Khaled Said page before January 25. On January 24, the administrators of RNN were given access to help administer "Kollena Khaled Said" page, and Ghonim gave them the right to update the page with news in parallel with RNN whenever urgently needed (Ghonim, 2012; Farrag, 2012).

On January 25th, 2011, the founders of the page created a new Facebook page named "Rassd News Network" with the motto “Rakeb, Sawwar, Dawwen”, i.e. “Observe, Photograph, Blog”. The date coincided with the outbreak of the revolution, and since then RNN has been considered the main news outlet of events related to the revolution. Like the old page, the new page relied on citizen journalism and encouraged citizens to take an active part in reporting the truth about rapidly unfolding events all across Egypt. After an agreement with the “Kollena Khaled Said” Facebook page’s administrator, Rassd was endorsed as the “official” news-source for the online community of activists and young people who were deeply involved in the momentous events rocking Egypt. Rassd became the most prominent news provider for the young and revolutionary online public, establishing itself beyond ideological
divides as the place to share and to obtain vital and instantaneous news. RNN was considered by sociablemedia.me -a social media monitoring tool- as the first on the list of "top influencers" in the Middle East social media world in June 2011.

Within the eighteen days of the revolution, RNN subscribers reached 500,000. The number of reporters also increased to reach 50 reporters spread in all cities. The network received an average of 6500 news items daily, 4000 of them were published. A news story was posted every minute, since RNN was almost the only page covering what was happening in the streets. The page attracted an average of 40,000 more followers per day. Officials at the Ministry of Information stated that RNN was one of the main reasons for the government's suspension of internet services during the revolution (Farrag, 2012). On January 27th, citizens who had connections with the ministry of interior contacted RNN's hotline service leaking news that the internet would be cut off the next day. It was the first to report this piece of news on its page. Two of the network's founders were based in the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, which helped them maintain coverage while the internet was down in Egypt. One of them was hired by Aljazeera channel in Qatar to assist in reporting during the internet blackout. RNN continued to grow after the overthrow of Hosni Mubarak, and reached a million followers by August 2011. At present, RNN is made up of RNN Arabic, RNN English, RNN Turkish, RNN French and RNN SMS news service. In total, it counts 2million followers and an average 10 billion views. Content posted on RNN was used by top news networks, including Aljazeera, CNN, MSNBC, and Al-Arabiya. Moreover, the network expanded to Syria, Libya, Yemen, and Palestine. The Syrian counterpart of RNN, namely SNN, is now considered the primary source of footage about the Syrian revolution (Farrag, 2012). Aljazeera aided RNN journalists
based on Qatar with media kits and phone lines to help in covering the protests during the internet blackout (Farrag, 2012).

From the start, RNN laid out guidelines for reporting. Volunteers were encouraged to give direct testimonies and not to report hear-say. Self-imposed rules for RNN staff were not to side with any given political party, movement or faction, as well as to consistently verify information through any possible means, and if all else failed, to post unverified items with the mention “Unconfirmed”. Excessive exaggeration and inflammatory reports were avoided. According to its founders, RNN sought to uphold ethical standards in reporting, remaining objective at the same time as it took a clear stance in favor of the Revolution. "RNN has sought to uphold these standards throughout, and with respect to every area it covers" (Farrag & Fakharany, 2012).

The administrators of RNN posted the news with one of the three attributes: news items were verified, semi-verified, or not verified. "Verified" meant the source is one of the admins; "semi-verified" news are those received via the network's hotline or email from several eyewitnesses; "not verified" are those received from only one eyewitness and without supporting documentation. The administrator had to post one of the three verification measures in order to maintain credibility.

RNN founders consider "the internet and social capital" as their two main assets; both are costless. Currently, the network relies on roughly 200 volunteer reporters and a small core editorial staff. Moreover, any citizen can send in text-messages, pictures, and videos of events witnessed firsthand. These material are received through multiple channels, including email, hotline, Twitter, and Facebook. The network's reporters double-check and verify the news they get from citizens, and
then send to the editors, who then post the news in a shortened format (Farrag, 2012). Besides RNN exclusive stories, news posts can sometimes include the editor's picks from mainstream media sources, while giving credit to the source. In that sense, RNN also acts as a news aggregator. The posts can be in the form of texts, images, or videos. Opinion articles by both professional writers and bloggers are posted on a daily basis. Additionally, the network publishes a daily blog post containing general knowledge about historical figures. Moreover, the page has entertainment content, such as posting songs or documentary movies, and joking material.

RNN developed an internal organizational structure to sustain its professional practice. It consists of a board of directors who are elected by the 18 founders of the network. The board of directors has five members who are the chairmen of the publishing department, the reporters, public relations, and media departments; and finally, the chairman of the board. The publishing department is in charge of posting news and updates on a regular basis. The reporters department manages two types of reporters: 1) certified reporters who contribute regularly to the network; 2) citizen journalists who contribute real-time updates from all Egyptian governorates. Third, the public relations department reaches out to both Egyptian and international circles such as NGOs, political parties, and embassies. Fourth, the media department is responsible for photography and videography, while ensuring they meet professional and ethical standards. The chairman of the board has two deputies, and the three are in charge of financial management. The board holds a weekly meeting to follow up on the week's activities (Farrag & Fakharany, 2012).
2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The following literature review provides an overview of previous literature on social media history and definitions, online news and citizen journalism as alternative news.

2.1. History and Evolution of Social Media:

Scholars differ as to when the first social media tool in history was developed. Andreas Kaplan and Michael Haenlein (2011) stated that the era of social media started in the early twentieth century when Bruce and Susan Abelson founded "Open Diary," a social networking site that provided platform for diary writers to communicate in one place. A few years later, Duke University students Tom Truscott and Jim Ellis created "Usenet", a global discussion system that enabled internet users to post public messages. Others argue that SixDegrees.com, launched in 1997, was the first identifiable social network site. The site allowed its users to have a personal profile and a friends list. While several other sites like AIM and ICQ provided users with a list of friends, SixDegrees.com was the first to combine various features like creating a profile and having a list of friends that is visible to others (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). The site closed in 2000 after failing to become a sustainable business.

In a different narrative, Peter R. Scott & J.Mike Jacka (2011), state that the first social media tool was developed in 1978, namely the "Computerized Bulletin Board System", introduced by Ward Christensen, a former IBM engineer. The CBBS enabled users to post messages to others in the system instead of placing phone calls. As Scott and Jacka put it:

"This was the first real case where an offline group used broadcast technologies to enable people to move beyond one-on-one conversation to "one-to-few." It also allowed for the democratization of their content, allowing
members to post content as publishers and deliver value through conversation and collaboration with other group members" (Scott & Jacka 2011, p.7).

When internet access became available to everyone in the US between 1993 and 1995, two other social networking sites, Prodigy and CompuServe, were created and ready for use by both commercial and in-home spheres. America Online (AOL) also drew significant attention in the mid 1990s (Scott & Jacka, 2011). These early websites were the precursors to the sizable social media markets in the world today. Despite being primitive in nature, they allowed million of users to interact with others virtually, and facilitated e-mail communications that transformed the way people of the world connect with one another.

The currently popular social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook are mainly a result of gradual development of earlier tools. For instance, in 1996, the instant messaging service ICQ was introduced and purchased by AOL which turned it to the AIM that is still widely used today. This was considered the earliest form of micro-messaging adopted by Twitter today as its backbone. Moreover, acronyms and emoticons started to appear through these early instant messaging tools (Scott & Jacka, 2011).

In 1998, the first blogging tool "Open Diary" was developed to host thousands of diaries, enabling readers to comment on blog posts. This was followed in 1999 by "Live Journal" and then the most popular blogging site "Blogger" which was obtained by Google in 2003 (Scott & Jacka, 2011). In the meantime, sites like AsianAvenue, BlackPlanet, and MiGente emerged in 1999, allowing the creation of personal, professional, and dating profiles (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). Moreover, Cyworld, a Korean virtual world, was launched in 1999 and added social network features in
2001. Similarly, the Swedish social network "LunarStorm" emerged in 2000, combining features like Friends list and diaries (Boyd & Ellison, 2008).

The years between 2000 and 2004 witnessed an incredible boom in social media sites and user-generated content. Ryze.com came out in 2001 as a business networking site that attracted mainly business and technology users. In 2002, Friendster launched as the social media platform that complemented Ryze (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). Designed as a competitor to the dating site Match.com, Friendster aimed at facilitating networking between friends-of-friends as potential couples. The site attracted 3 million users in the first six months of its launch. Currently, Friendster is still one of the leading social media sites in Asia (Boyd & Ellison 2008; Scott & Jacka, 2011). It was at that time when the terms Web 2.0 and User-Generated Content began to catch on as collaborative content and information sharing were widely enabled.

Simultaneously, LinkedIn was launched in 2003 as a social networking platform designed to facilitate networking based on common business and professional interests (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). Besides its social networking features, it enables communication between industry professionals, employees, and job applicants. As of March 2012, LinkedIn claimed to have more than 150 million users (LinkedIn.com, 2012).

Wordpress also appeared in 2003, and credited with allowing individual users who are not experts in programming to create a customizable personal page –or blog–online in few minutes. The site was yet another example of the development of Web 2.0, user-generated content, and also citizen journalism. Additionally, Wordpres is an
open source website, which means that external web developers can create "widgets" that enable users to control and design their web pages (Scott & Jacka, 2011).

The year 2003 also saw the launch of one of the most popular social network sites: MySpace. It was built on the earlier social network attempts, with more social features and greater interactivity, allowing users greater ability to personalize their profiles and control their content and privacy. MySpace quickly gained massive popularity, and its users outnumbered its predecessor Friendster, drawing the attention of users from all ages and professions. Even business and political organizations started to establish profiles on the site to reach out to young users (Scott & Jacka, 2011).

The photo-sharing site Flickr was launched in 2004 and swiftly grew to host billions of photos and video content. Its target user is the photographer and videographer, professional or amateurs. Flickr was established with two main goals: 1- to help people make their photos available to the people who matter to them; 2- to enable new ways of organizing photos and video (Flickr.com, 2012).

The video-sharing site Youtube was established in February 2005 by Chad Hurley, Steve Chen, and Jawed Karim, three PayPal employees at that time. It was created to enable users to upload, view and share videos (YouTube.com, 2012). In 2010, YouTube was still the world's leading video site, with 14.6 billion viewership in May, which is equivalent to 100 videos per viewer (comScore, 2010).

In March 2006, Jack Dorsey created the micro blogging site Twitter that quickly gained worldwide popularity. In March 2012, after six years of operation, Twitter reported having over 140 million active users, and an average of 340 million tweets daily (Twitter.com, 2012). The micro blogging service allows users to post
short messages no bigger than 140 characters. Twitter developed its own terminology that explains how the site is used. A post is called a "tweet" and the author is called the "tweep"; the list of other's activities is called the "timeline"; while a "hashtag" refers to the hash ' #' sign that is used to categorize topics by adding it to the beginning of words, while also facilitating search on these topics; the "mention" is the '@' sign which is used to address a twitter user's profile. Additionally, to subscribe to updates from other user's profiles, the user "follows" these profiles, and then gets automatic updates on the timeline (Twitter.com; Murthy, 2011; Scott & Jacka, 2011).

**Facebook:**

In 2004, the world's most popular SNS, Facebook, was launched solely for Harvard students, with users required to have a Harvard.edu email address. Then the site, which was founded by Harvard students Mark Zuckerberg, Eduardo Saverin, Dustin Moskovitz and Chris Hughes, expanded to include other universities, but still required a university email address for access (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). Eventually, Facebook emerged as the most popular SNS in the world, and the second most popular website globally, following Google.com (Alexa, 2012). As of February 2012, Facebook had more than 845 million active users, 2.7 billion Comments and Likes per day, 250 million photos uploaded per day, and 100 billion Friendships (Securities and Exchange Commission, 2012).

The Facebook profile, according to Lampe, Ellison, and Steinfield (2007), is composed of four main elements: first, "Control elements", which include gender, since when the user started the profile, and the name of the institution to which the user is affiliated. Second, "referents elements", which include more background on the user such as address, field of study, hometown, and high school. Third, "Preference elements", which refer to the user's personal interests like music, books,
quotes, and the "About Me" section, provide a brief self-description of the user. Fourth, "contact elements" include contact information such as email address and instant messenger name, as well as relationship status and birthday. Profile pictures can be uploaded and changed anytime (Khe Foon Hew, 2011). Facebook users can view and search for other users' profiles, send messages to anyone, and ask if anyone agrees to be friends. This can also be done through the "poke" feature (Ross et al., 2009). However, the privacy settings enable users to control the visibility of their profiles to non-friends. Facebook Pages and Groups enable users to become fans or subscribers to pages of particular interest, such as political figures, celebrities, and political parties. The Groups can either be public or closed, depending on the wish of their admins. Besides networking features, Facebook also serves as an entertainment site. Some of the world's most popular games were created on Facebook, such as Farmville.

Facebook enables multiple forms of communication among users. This includes private messages, wall messages which are posted on the other user's profile, comments on wall posts, images, and links or any shared information. The Wall is the profile page of another user that is visible to all Friends. In March of 2012, Facebook Inc. announced the launch of Timeline, which replaced the earlier form of Facebook Wall, with a historical timeline in a reverse chronological order by year which can be browsed to return to any older activity in the profile since it was established. Besides the profile picture, Timeline added the Cover Picture feature, which enables users to upload a picture to serve as the profile cover displayed horizontally on top of the page, on the left side of the timeline.

The Timeline displays user info below the profile picture, such as work and education info. Besides the info box, there are other four elements, including List of
Friends, Photos, Map locations, and page Likes. Other features include the friends' birthday calendar, events calendar, and the chat function. Moreover, the News Feed is what displays all Friends' recent activities (Khe Foon Hew, 2011).
Figure 1: Timeline of the launch dates of many major SNSs and dates when community sites re-launched with SNS features (Boyd & Ellison 2008. P.212)
2.2. Social media defined:

The term social media refers to those online technologies that empower users to be creators (or co-creators) of content rather than mere consumers, thus leading to the "democratization" of the internet (Scott & Jacka 2011; Boyd and Ellison, 2008). The term is closely associated with Web 2.0 and User-Generated Content (UGC), the two concepts upon which social media are founded (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Web 2.0, a term first used in 2004, refers to the participatory World Wide Web whereby users can modify content, interact in a two-way approach, and publish own material. This includes tools like wikis, blogs, and collaborative projects. For Web 2.0 to function, it needs several technologies such as Adobe Flash (a multimedia application that enables websites to add animation, video, and interactive features); RSS (Really Simple Syndication, a family of web feed formats used to publish frequently updated content, such as blog entries or news headlines, in a standardized format), and AJAX (Asynchronous Java Script, a technique to retrieve data from web servers asynchronously, allowing the update of web content without interfering with the display and behavior of the whole page) (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Web 2.0, as Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) put it, is the ideological and technological backbone of social media. On the other hand, User-Generated Content (UGC) represents the way these social media are used (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), UGC can be named as such if it has the following characteristics: 1- content available publicly on the Internet, 2- done creatively, and 3-created in an independent, not routine, fashion (OECD, 2007). Although there is no single agreed definition of UGC, it usually refers to any web content created by internet users who are not necessarily
professionals, and that content can be subject to scrutiny and rating by other users. UGC has several formats and platforms (OECD, 2007). Formats include text, music and audio, video and film. Platforms include blogs, wikis and other text-based collaboration formats, Group-Based Aggregation and social bookmarking, podcasting, social networking sites, and virtual world content.

Attempting to explain the social media user experience, Kietzmann et al (2011) identify seven essential functions of social media: 1) identity (the extent to which users show their identities in a social media platform); 2) conversations (the extent to which users interact with other users in a social media setting); 3) sharing (the extent to which users exchange, distribute, and receive content); 4) presence (the extent to which users can know if other users are available and where they are); 5) relationships (the extent to which users can be related to other users, i.e. that two or more users have some form of association that leads them to talk, socialize, meet up, or just become virtual friends; 6) reputation (the extent to which users can identify the status of others in a social media setting); and 7) groups (the extent to which users can form communities and sub-communities) (Kietzmann et al., 2011).

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) divide Social Media into six main categories: collaborative projects, blogs, content communities, social networking sites. First, Collaborative Projects enable the co-creation of content by multiple users. Within collaborative projects, there are two categories. First: Wikis, namely websites which allow users to add, modify, or delete text-based content; and second, social bookmarking applications- which enable internet users to organize, store, manage and search for bookmarks of resources online. The online encyclopedia Wikipedia is an example of the first category, and the social bookmarking web service Delicious is an
example of the second. According to Kaplan and Haenlein, collaborative projects are the most democratic forms of UGC, since they emphasize joint efforts and collaboration rather than one-way flow of information, while also benefiting from the collective wisdom of groups rather than individuals.

Blogs are other social media platforms that enable users to post content, whether text, images, video, or audio, or a combination, in a reverse chronological order in the user's personal webpage or a blog host (OECD, 2007). Blogs are usually free, user-friendly, and can be interactive if the user enables comments. The more interactive blogs are, the more popular they become. That is why most bloggers allow other users to post comments and share their content in other places online. Text-based blogs are the most common (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010). However, other forms of blogs emerged with the availability of a multitude of social media technologies, such as video blogging, where users broadcast their personal views in a video rather than text format, which amplifies personal perspectives and inserts more life into the blogging experience.

The third type of social media is content communities, whose main purpose is the sharing of media content such as videos (e.g. YouTube), photos (e.g. Flickr), texts (e.g. BookCrossing), or even PowerPoint presentations (e.g. Slideshare). Content communities do not require a personal profile page; only basic information is needed to set up an account (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010).

Virtual worlds represent another manifestation of social media. Kaplan and Haenlein describe virtual worlds as "platforms that replicate a three-dimensional environment in which users can appear in the form of personalized avatars and interact with each other as they would in real life" (Kaplan & Haenlein 2007, p. 64).
Virtual worlds are either game worlds or social worlds. First, virtual game worlds "require their users to behave according to strict rules in the context of a massively multiplayer online role-playing game (MMORPG)" (p. 64). For example, "World of Warcraft" is a virtual game whose users "explore the virtual planet of Azeroth in the form of humans, dwarves, orcs, or night elves, to fight monsters or to search for treasure" (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010, p.64). The second group of virtual worlds, virtual social worlds, allows users to live a virtual life similar to their real life, using avatars to represent their preferred identity, and interact in a three-dimensional environment without strict rules. The most known example of virtual social worlds is Second Life, launched by Linden Lab in 2003. Second Life users, called "Residents" can interact with each other through avatars, explore the world (known as the grid), meet other residents, socialize, participate in individual and group activities, and create and trade virtual property and services with one another.

Fifth, Social Networking Sites (SNSs) are probably the most popular form of social media, and they will be the focus of this research. SNSs, as the name indicates, enable virtual social interactions via personal profiles, such as Facebook and MySpace, where users post personal information and connect with friends who are either real life friends, or merely internet contacts whose profiles are interesting for the user. The content posted in SNSs can be any type of information including photos, videos, blogs, or audio files. SNSs can integrate all the various functions and manifestations of social media. SNSs can serve as blogs, vlogs, content communities, but are less public than the others. SNSs consist of private content that can be selectively available to specific users (Boyd and Ellison, 2008; Boyd, 2006).
Boyd and Ellison (2008) define "Social Network Sites" as online services that enable individuals to obtain a public or semi-public profile page, share this page with others who are presumably in the user's social network, and view the others' lists of connections. The backbone of SNSs is the personal "profile", which articulates the personal information of each user, highlighting basic info such as name, gender, age, education, religion, and interests. A profile picture is usually required to complement basic information. Privacy can be customized according to the user's preferences, either allowing all the network, or specific "friends" to view the user's profile and interact with him/her. The scale of interaction can also be controlled based on what the user wants to allow. For instance, some friends can be able to post public messages or comments on the other's profile, while others cannot due to certain privacy settings. Besides the personal profile, the SNS user adds friends to his/her network, thus enabling them to interact and have access to the profile. Not all "friends" are actual friends in offline spheres, therefore the term "friends" can sometimes be misleading (Boyd, 2006). The friend-adding feature is essentially two-way, namely both sides are allowed access to each other's profile as soon as friendship is confirmed from by the user who received the friendship "request".

Communication on SNSs happens through multiple means, both private and public. Private communication is enabled by "private messages", while users can interact publicly through posting public messages, or comments on the other's profile. Some SNSs, such as Facebook, allow users to control the private/public nature of posts by selecting who can view a specific post.
2.3. Online Journalism, Citizen Journalism, and Social Media as alternative new outlets:

Studies on internet news have discussed the merits of the World Wide Web in facilitating two-way communication and overcoming time and space limits. The internet enables news producers to distribute their information in convergent ways – including multimedia forms, e-mail, blogs, and recently social media – and also allows for interaction with news consumers, a reality which leads to improvements in content and increased audience satisfaction. Most news organizations in Western countries launched online outlets for their newspapers and television news shows, although their full adoption of the interactive features of the internet and social media is yet to happen (Neuberger et al., 1998; Quandt, 2008; Himelboim, 2010; Harper, 2010; Abdulla et al., 2005).

Studies on the impact of the internet on traditional news media have often yielded conflicting results. Some scholars questioned the validity of the argument that online journalism is effectively displacing traditional news media. For instance, Althaus & Tewksbury (2001) suggested that using the internet as a news source remained unlikely to diminish use of traditional news media. This was still the case even with increased internet access and computer knowledge among the population. The findings show that the internet is only supplementary to traditional news media, but a tough competitor to entertainment programs in traditional media. Entertainment, not news programming, was found to be losing audience to the internet.

Douglas Ahlers (2006) downplayed the arguments that traditional news media have lost their audience to online news. As the study concludes, "there is a broad range of news consumption behaviors. Some users will go online only for their news, others will never abandon the traditional news media, some will be light users of all
media, and still others will embrace all media and be multichannel news consumers. For only a small group, the online news media will act as a substitute for the traditional news media. For the majority, it will act as a complement," (p. 1).

Mitchelstein and Boczkowski (2010) assessed the main findings in online news consumption research, reaching the conclusion that there was no drastic difference between the consumption of online news and traditional media. The main arguments in past research on that topic were that online news either supplements or displaces traditional news. The dilemma confronted by researchers is that they studied the different types of media separately, disregarding the fact that consumers use multiple media interchangeably.

Chyi and Lasorsa (2002) suggested that news consumers use print and online media simultaneously, which proves that both complement each other. Flavian and Gurrea (2007) found that users access online news seeking specific or up-to-date information. On the other hand, Flanagin and Metzger (2001) concluded that users turn to online or offline news driven by certain objectives, not the characteristics of the medium per se (cited in Mitchelstein & Boczkowski, 2010).

Other research findings contend that online media have displacement effect on traditional media, particularly with the diffusion of internet penetration (Gentzkow, 2007; Gunter et al., 2003; Kaye & Johnson, 2003; Lin et al., 2005). Results of a study by Dimmick et al. (2004) showed that the internet is increasingly displacing traditional media in daily news coverage. Mitchelstein and Boczkowski cited a 2008 Pew survey which showed that "Americans who read a newspaper ‘yesterday’ fell from 40 to 34 percent between 2006 and 2008, whereas the percentage who accessed their news online ‘yesterday’ rose from 23 to 29 percent in the same period" (p. 4).
This further supports the displacement hypothesis. Moreover, displacement has to do with age (Ahlers, 2006; Coleman & McCombs, 2007; Lee, 2006; Ogan et al., 2008). For instance, Diddi and LaRose (2006) concluded that the younger generation is less likely to read newspapers than the older generation.

Scott Maier (2010) explored the differences between newspaper stories and online news stories. He concluded that daily newspapers remained the top source of in-depth news. Online news, on the other hand, neglect topics like business, health, and sports which are covered more frequently in newspapers. Stories on education and religion were found to be underreported in online news. Online newspapers were more "sensationalist" than the print newspapers. The average length of online news is 664 words, but their content was found to be more extensive than television and radio news. The average time spent reading online news was considerably less than the time spent reading newspapers. News content dominated both online and print newspapers, with minimal focus on opinions and analysis in the front page.

Nguyen et al. (2005) found that the internet is achieving mainstream status in terms of its adoption and utilization by the audience, promising higher usage in the future. For instance, in Canada and the US, the percentage of online news consumers dramatically increases annually, as indicated by polls. Moreover, in Australia the internet was found to have become a major news source by the time of the study. This is attributed to the advantages sought from using the internet for getting news. These advantages include the low production costs of online news, the massive global audience, immediacy, interactivity and two-way communication, ease of search and overall use, and permanent availability and accessibility of news. These represent a competitive advantage over traditional news source like print newspapers, which
foresees the decline of traditional news readership/viewership in the future (p. 3). As Rupert Murdoch stated in his comment on the new digital news revolution:

"What is happening right before us ... is a revolution in the way young people are accessing news. They don’t want to rely on the morning paper for their up-to-date information. They don’t want to rely on a Godlike figure from above to tell them what’s important ... Instead, they want their news on demand, when it works for them. They want control over their media, instead of being controlled by it. They want to question, to probe, to offer a different angle" (quoted in Nguyen et al. 2005, p. 3).

Other findings indicated that online news production is a joint effort between journalists and consumers (Bentley et al., 2007; Boczkowsk 2004; Deuze, 2003; Pavlik, 2000; Russell, 2007). Regarding blogs, some studies showed that bloggers rely on journalists for public affairs content, which they tend to reproduce rather than create (Daniels, 2006; Deuze et al., 2007; Haas, 2005; Reese et al., 2007).

Access to political information is influenced by online news availability (Bimber, 1998; Neuman, 2001; Weber et al., 2003). On the other hand, some argued that exposure to print news is more likely to enhance political knowledge than exposure to online news (Althaus & Tewksbury, 2002). Other studies disproved that argument (Drew & Weaver, 2006; Kenski & Stroud, 2006; Xenos & Moy, 2007). Others argued that the internet provides incidental news knowledge, and therefore leads to increased public affairs awareness (Lupia & Philpot, 2005; Salwen, 2005).

Concerning civic participation, some researchers saw no relation between online news and civil participation (Bimber, 2001; Kenski & Stroud, 2006; Margolis & Resnick, 2000; Weaver & Drew, 2001), while other studies showed the opposite
(Amadeo, 2007; Johnson & Kaye 2003; Norris, 2003). Esser and de Vreese (2007) concluded that young people's political engagement is related to their use of mass media, particularly two-way communication and interactive media. Some argued that online news consumption and civil participation can be mediated by political discussion, which enhances participation (Eveland & Dylko, 2007; Hardy & Scheufele, 2005; Nisbet & Scheufele, 2004; Xenos & Moy, 2007).

Concerning credibility, studies cited by Mitchelstein and Boczkowski show that online news is higher in credibility than television and radio and lower than newspapers (Flanagin & Metzger, 2000; Kiousis, 2001; Schweiger, 2000). This is contrary to findings from Abdulla et al. (2002) that rated online news as most credible compared with other media. Web sites belonging to traditional media outlets were more credible than independent sites (Flanagin & Metzger, 2007; Kiousis, 2006; Pew, 2008). Younger internet users are more likely to consider online information credible than do the older users (Bucy, 2003; Metzger et al., 2003).

Abdulla et al. (2002) explored the factors affecting credibility of three news media: newspapers, television news, and online news. The research found that the credibility of the three news media is dependent on currency, timeliness, and up-to-date. The credibility of newspapers was found to be dependent on balance, honesty, and currency. Television news credibility had to do more with fairness and currency. Online news credibility was related to trustworthiness, timeliness, and bias. Results showed that online news was considered timely, current and up-to-date. Additionally, the responses indicated that online news has to be trustworthy and believable in order to be considered credible. Moreover, the online news users expressed concern for bias and lack of objectivity, due to the ease of creating news sites or blogs by non-
professionals. As Abdulla et al state, "This seems to underline the importance of branding in online news. Readily identifiable news organizations that have moved to a Web presence or Web sites that use existing and know news brands (such as the Associated Press or other news services) have this advantage over news sites that are only on the Web and do not offer branded news," (p. 17). The difficulty of identifying the originators of online news content might also be a problem, since the internet does not require self-identification when establishing web sites or posting news online.

Tsfati (2010) studied the concept of trust in relation to mainstream and online media, suggesting that mistrust of mainstream news is negatively associated with exposure to online news. The study found that exposure to mainstream media is related to trust in that media, while exposure to online non-mainstream media is related to media skepticism. Tsfati contrasted online news with traditional news in four main qualities: "connectivity, interactivity, boundlessness, and lack of hierarchy" (p. 3). Unlike traditional journalism, online news is characterized by boundlessness, that is, no space constraints, which allows for a limitless number of news stories. Additionally, the internet diminishes the hierarchy that exists in traditional media. Almost all stories can be placed in an equally visible place on the internet site, while audience can also select the favorite beats and highlight them for future reference. This contrasts with the concept of "front page" in newspapers, which gives prominence to specific stories depending on the editor's selection. Online news consumers, on the other hand, became the de facto editors, selecting what to read and when. Moreover, the internet is characterized by "connectivity," that is, the ability of the internet to provide readers with "hyperlinks" to the source of information (Himelboim, 2010; Tsfati, 2010). Contrary to traditional news where the reporter is the only available source of information, this feature of online allows the users to
verify the truthfulness and originality of news stories, and thus assess their credibility. The fourth element that sets online news apart from traditional news is "interactivity". Professional journalism is inherently one-way and lacks the interactive nature of the internet. As Tsfati (2010) states, "When audiences think the stories they read are unfair, biased, or simply inaccurate, they respond. Their response is read by others, thus eroding the authority of the news text. Hence, the interactivity of the medium stands in contrast to the top-down mode of conventional journalism," (p. 4).

Furthermore, Tsfati adds that online news presents a diversity of voices and viewpoints, unlike the uniform nature of professional journalism. Every internet user can report news, which adds to the variety of opinions represented on the internet.

The attributes of journalism objectivity according to Mindich (1998) include detachment, nonpartisanship, presentation of facts in order of importance (inverted pyramid), accuracy, and balance (cited in Figdor, 2010). Challenging the concept of journalistic objectivity, Wiesslitz and Ashuri (2011) proposed a new journalistic model, namely "the moral journalist," which emerged with the advent of digital media. This model holds that "the 'moral journalist' witnesses events that involve the suffering of others with the aim of changing the witnessed reality" (p. 2). This is different from the "objective" journalist who is expected to be detached from the news reported. This model has flourished thanks to the internet. For instance, online non-professional journalists do not necessarily receive training and can freely and easily publish any material online. The cost of distributing news online is minimal, and no sophisticated skills are required. The notion of "mediation" does not exist in cyberspace, that is, there is no barrier between the sender of the message and the receiver. In addition, the internet allows users to voice their opinions freely and advocate for controversial causes (Wiesslitz & Ashuri, 2011).
The most popular online news sites according to Nguyen et al. (2005) were newspaper websites, followed by accumulated news sites (e.g. news.yahoo.com), then web sites of traditional broadcasters, then news agencies. Additionally, non-mainstream web sites, like blogs, personal, groups and citizen journalist sites also gained rising popularity among internet users. Search engines were the most popular source of news on demand, followed by email alerts. The majority of respondents in the study indicated they shared information with others utilizing the participatory features of the internet. The most important feature of online news according to the results of this study is "immediacy". The disadvantages of online news according to 38% of internet users was the overwhelming information, while one-third felt tired from reading news on the computer screen. Approximately 50% of users believed online pop-up ads were annoying (Nguyen et al., 2005).

2.4. Citizen Journalism:

Citizen Journalism, also called Participatory Journalism (Tilley & Cokley, 2008; Lasica, 2003), refers to the practicing of journalism by non-journalists through web-based technologies. This includes activities like news reporting, video blogging, text-based blogging, public affairs commentaries, video and photo sharing. Goode (2009) argues that citizens' participation in online news either by commenting, rating, tagging, reposting, and modifying can also be considered citizen journalism. Bowman and Willis (2003) define citizen journalism as citizens participating in the news process from the collecting of information through the dissemination of that information. The news media scene now comprises several groups of actors, including the professional journalists, the news publishers (companies), and the citizen journalists "who read, watch, listen to and—importantly—create news content in the form of conventional news and feature articles (or programs), email newsletters,
blogs, social networking sites and channels, and a range of other products such as SMS, MMS, and now television" (Tilley & Cokley 2008, p. 97).

In his comparison between online newspapers and online citizen journalists, Carpenter (2008) concluded the following:

1) "online newspapers were more likely to rely on routine external sources than online citizen journalists"; 2) "online newspaper journalists were more likely to behave as observers, rather than interpreters of content"; 3) "Online citizen journalists' acknowledgement that they relied more on press releases may indicate that they are more transparent than online newspaper journalists"; 4) "Online citizen journalists were more likely to cite unofficial sources" (pp. 540-542).

Models of citizen journalism include the following: 1) readers commenting on already published articles, 2) a professional journalist posting a small story and then allowing citizens to post their experiences that pertain to the story, 3) stand-alone citizen journalism sites made up of contributions from citizens that are edited before publishing, 4) combined citizen journalism and professional news sites, e.g. the Korean citizen journalism site Ohmynews.com and the Egyptian Rassd.com, 5) blogs created by citizen journalists, with multiple content including news, analysis, and commentary, e.g. Arabist.net. 6) social network sites, e.g. Facebook, where citizen journalists can have own "page" or "group" whereby multiple news forms can be disseminated virally on the internet. (Johnson & Wiedenbeck, 2009; Outing, 2005), 7) Wikis, collaborative information websites, e.g. wikinews.com, 8) news sites that utilize social networks for curating (i.e. aggregating) news, e.g. Storify.com and Storyful.com, which "uses the power of social networks to create an authentic,
cooperative and socially useful journalism," as mentioned in the "About us" section of Storyful.com.

According to Tilley and Cokley (2008), citizen journalism has less bias and more truthfulness than traditional journalism sources, because of the freedom the citizen journalist enjoys and the diversity of views it represents. Citizen journalism is also characterized by "unpaid work, absence of professional training, and often unedited publication of content, and may feature plain language, distinct story selection and news judgment, especially hyper-local issues, free accessibility, and interactivity", in contrast to professional journalism, which refers to "news content produced by paid, trained, and supervised journalists delivered via media outlets, including newspapers, television, radio, and the Internet, who work within established editorial norms." (Kaufhold et al., 2010). Moreover, findings of the study by Kaufhold et al. (2010) indicated that political knowledge is enhanced by professional journalism, while citizen journalism enhances political participation online and offline. Additionally, findings from (Carpenter S., 2010) show that online citizen journalism articles were more likely to feature a greater diversity of topics, information from outside sources and multimedia and interactive features. The findings suggest online citizen journalism content adds to the diversity of information available in the marketplace.
3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1. Uses and Gratifications Theory:

Since the study aims at investigating the motives of Facebook users and their patterns of usage, the theory of Uses and Gratifications has been selected as a relevant framework for the study. The Uses and Gratifications approach was first introduced by Elihu Katz (1956) who argued that mass communication researchers should find answers to the question "What do people do with the media?" instead of the traditional question "What do media do to people?". In that sense, the media users were perceived to be active, rather than passive recipients of content, representing a departure from earlier Media Effects research that dealt with media as a bullet or hypodermic needle having one-way effect on receivers. As Severin and Tankard (2001) state: "the uses and gratifications approach involves a shift of focus from the purposes of the communicator to the purposes of the receiver. It attempts to determine what functions mass communication is serving for audience members" (p.293).

In their article summarizing U&G research up to that time, Katz et al. (1974) suggested that the earliest studies on the subject appeared in the works done by Herzog (1942) about the gratifications obtained from listening to soap operas, Suchman (1942) on radio music listening motives, Wolfe and Fiske (1949) on children's interest in comics, and Berelson (1949) on newspaper readership. The gratifications identified in these studies included information seeking, cultural knowledge, and pastime. Later on, As Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1974) explain in their paper, the focus of previous U&G research had been the following: (1) the social and psychological origins of (2) needs, which generate (3) expectations of (4) the mass media or other sources, which lead to (5) differential patterns of media exposure (or engagement in other activities), resulting in (6) need gratifications and
(7) other consequences, perhaps mostly unintended ones (p.3). Additionally, the authors cited the five elements of the "uses and gratifications model" mentioned by Lundberg and Hulten (1968), namely: "1. The audience is conceived of as active, i.e., an important part of mass media use is assumed to be goal directed. 2. In the mass communication process much initiative in linking need gratification and media choice lies with the audience member. 3. The media compete with other sources of need satisfaction. The needs served by mass communication constitute but a segment of the wider range of human needs, and the degree to which they can be adequately met through mass media consumption certainly varies. 4. Methodologically speaking, many of the goals of mass media use can be derived from data supplied by individual audience members themselves-i.e., people are sufficiently self-aware to be able to report their interests and motives in particular cases, or at least to recognize them when confronted with them in an intelligible and familiar verbal formulation. 5. Value judgements about the cultural significance of mass communication should be suspended while audience orientations are explored on their own terms" (Katz et al., pp. 3-4).

Moreover, Lasswell (1948) proposed that media fulfilled four functions, that is, "Surveillance, correlation, entertainment, and cultural transmission (or socialization)" (Katz et al., p.5). Similarly, McQuail, Blumler, and Brown (1972) suggested the following four categories: "diversion (including escape from the constraints of routine and the burdens of problems, and emotional release); personal relationships (including substitute companionship as well as social utility); personal identity (including personal reference, reality exploration, and value reinforcement); and surveillance" (cited in Katz et al., 1974, pp. 5-6).
Furthermore, Katz, Gurevitch, and Haas (1973) put forward 35 social and psychological needs for using mass media, summarizing them in five categories:

1. Cognitive needs: acquiring information, knowledge, and understanding.

2. Affective needs: emotional, pleasurable, or aesthetic experience.


4. Social integrative needs: strengthening contacts with family, friends, and so on.


3.2. Criticism of the theory:

The U&G approach has drawn criticism for relying on self-reports to determine motives, vagueness in defining the social origin of needs, being non-theoretical and focusing too narrowly on the individual, and neglecting the fact that mass media can impose their own interpretations of the culture which the audience can hardly avoid (Katz, 1987; Severin & Tankard, 2011). For example, (Kubey & Csikszent, 1990) considered the notion of "active audience" misleading if applied to television watching (cited in Severin & Tankard, 2011). The findings of their study indicated that television viewers of all ages are passive users of the medium (p. 298). Likewise, Davenport, LaRose and Straubhaar (2012) state that "creators of media content have a preferred reading that they would like the audience to take out of the text. However, the audience might reject it, or negotiate some compromise
interpretation between what they think and what they text is saying, or contest what the text says with some alternative interpretation" (p.414). The data derived from U&G research reflect self-narration of personal needs, which makes the data difficult to measure objectively (Katz et al. 1974).

3.3. Uses and Gratifications in the age of the internet and social media:

Chang (1998) studied the uses of online news sites by university students and found that the attributes of "immediacy" (knowing something immediately) and "stability" (obtaining news whenever they wanted) were the most important to users of online news sites, while "interactivity" (interacting with journalists and news editors) was the least important. Concerning "exposure situations", most respondents stated that they used online news sites "to learn things", while very few mentioned that they do it for "companionship". As for the "accessibility" factor, students referred to "economics" (because the medium is cheap) and "convenience" (because it is easy to get online news) as two important reasons for visiting online news sites (cited in Severin & Tankard 2001, p. 376). A 1998 survey of internet users in the US indicated that young adults use the internet for entertainment and socializing more than they use it for news and information. The opposite is true for older adults who used the internet mainly for news and information (82%) (Cited in Severin & Tankard 2001, p. 376 ). Althaus and Tewksbury (2001), in their survey of 520 undergraduate students, found that the majority of respondents used the internet mainly for entertainment, and only secondarily for getting news.

Nevertheless, research conducted since 2005 has yielded different findings indicating higher percentage in consumers of online news, which could be attributed to the increasing use and penetration of the internet in the last ten years (Purcell et al,
According to a Pew Internet study conducted in 2011, the majority of Americans who went online considered the internet as the top source of information, while 41% are "local news participators" as they used social media and other online sources for adding their own information and contributing content. In addition, 16 percent of adults said they shared local information via social media like Facebook (CBS, 2011). A report conducted by the Pew Internet and American Life Project in December 2009 and January 2010 revealed that sixty-one percent of Americans get their news online, compared with 54 percent for radio and 50 percent for newspapers. Three-fourths of the surveyed said they get news via email and social media (CNN, 2010). Likewise, in its eighth annual State of the News Media survey, a research conducted by the Project for Excellence in journalism in 2011 showed that online news consumption increased 17 percent between 2009 and 2010. That was partly due to the growth of smartphones and electronic tablets and the declining audience of television news, newspapers, radio, and magazines in the same year (Pew Internet, 2011).

Nguyen et al. (2005) studied uses and gratifications of online news in Australia. The findings indicated that the internet had reached "mainstream status" as a news source, predicting greater potential in the years to follow. Above half of online news users considered news either "essential" or "important" part of their internet usage, while two-thirds said the internet contributed to their understanding of public affairs. Moreover, results of the study indicated the most important features of online news for respondents were "immediacy", the "multi-tasking nature of internet usage", 

2010; Abdulla et al., 2005; Nguyen et al., 2005; Mitchelstein & Boczkowski, 2010; Althaus & Tewksbury, 2001).
the "permanent availability of in-depth/background information", "more news choices", and "the fact that news can be consumed on demand" (p. 12). The most important gratifications obtained from online news usage were getting international news, then news about entertainment and sports, then science and medicine, then national politics and social problems, then economics, then culture and arts, and lastly local news.

Quan-Haase and Young (2010) studied the uses and gratifications of Facebook in comparison with Instant Messaging, concluding that the main gratifications obtained by university students from Facebook were pastime, affection, fashion, sharing problems, sociability, and social information. The quantitative data suggest that gratifications sought from Facebook highlighted the user's need for inclusion in one's society and among peers. Facebook also fulfils a utilitarian purpose, which is finding valuable information about friends, social events, and other activities in which peers are involved. Qualitative data results identified peer pressure, social connectivity, and curiosity as the three major gratifications students sought from joining Facebook.

In his review of previous literature on Facebook uses by college students, Khe Foon Hew (2011) identified nine motives for Facebook use. These include 1) maintaining existing relationships  2) meeting new people, 3) using Facebook for fun, 4) to make oneself popular  5) as a pastime, 6) for self-expression, 7) for learning purposes, 8) for task management, e.g. storing photos and contact information of oneself and friends, 9) for student activism, e.g. political awareness campaigns. Of the nine motives identified, the most popular one is social interaction with existing friends, regardless of learning or teaching purposes, and that interaction is rarely with
new people or strangers. The average number of Facebook Friends is between 150 and 350 friends. Concerning the time spent on Facebook per day, previous research indicate that students spend between 10 and 60 minutes per day.

The most common activities on SNSs, according to the results of a study conducted by Subrahmanyama et al. (2008), are reading/responding to notes/messages, reading comments/posts on their profile page/wall, browsing friends' pages/profiles/walls, and writing comments on friends' pages/posting on other people's walls/tagging photos. The study found that reading and responding to comments/posts on one's page/wall was an extremely popular activity among the participants in the sample, and 60% chose it as their most frequent activity. Browsing friends' profiles/walls and sending/responding to messages were the second popular activities. Concerning motives for SNS use, participants in this study reported using social networking sites primarily for social reasons that involved people from their offline lives, such as keeping in touch with friends they do not see often, because all their friends had accounts, keeping in touch with relatives and family, and making plans with friends they see often. Using social networking sites to look for new people was a less frequent activity, as reported in the sample. (Subrahmanyama et al., 2008)

Additionally, Foregger (2008) found 9 factors of Facebook use by university students: Pass Time, Connection, Sexual Attraction, Utilities and Upkeep, Establish/maintain old ties, Accumulation, Social Comparison, Channel Use, and Networking.

Guosong Shao (2008) found that individuals deal with user-generated media in different ways for different purposes which he considers interdependent. These
include information seeking, entertainment, mood management, enhancing social networks, self-expression, and producing own content.

Bakker and Vresse (2011) tackled the relationships between various types of media use and various forms of political participation for young people aged 16 to 24. It found that media use is positively linked to political participation. The "non-informational" uses of the web, such as online social networking and entertainment were also found to be positively related to diverse forms of participation. The study concludes that the overall effects of media use on political participation are positive ones. Online communication positively impacts offline forms of participation. Moreover, the online news use combined with other forms of online communication also has positive relationship with most types of political participation.

3.4. Using Facebook as a source of news:

The current study concentrates on the usage of Facebook as a news source. Facebook enables users to post news content in a variety of ways. First, users can produce news in multiple formats, including text, videos, and images. The average Facebook user can produce an original news story and publish it via the "status" feature, or the "note" feature. Videos and images can be uploaded and posted with a caption or commentary. In addition, users can share with others the news published on their friends' pages. On the news feed, all updates from friends are displayed, and the user can either "Like", "Comment", or "Share" the story. Facebook Pages are another source of information. Different news providers such as newspapers, television channels have Pages on Facebook, through which they can republish or live stream their content. Like other Facebook content, interactive features are available. Similarly, an average Facebook user can create a Page for any purpose. This led to the
emergence of citizen journalism Pages where users post original news stories without the need to be professional journalists.

Some studies suggested little role of news content in social networks (Thelwall, 2008), while others found that internet users rarely seek out political information from social networks (Raine, 2008; Harper, 2010).

Lee and Ma (2011) explored the motivations and gratifications of sharing news on social media, and found that respondents driven by gratifications of information seeking, socializing, and status seeking were more likely to share news in social media platforms, while prior experience with social media was also an essential factor of news sharing intention.

Besides the role played by social media in mobilizing people to join protests in the Arab 2011 revolutions, news sharing was also a significant factor in keeping young people informed about the offline world. Social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter helped spread news about the protests, not only for the domestic audience, but also for the entire world (Lee & Ma, 2011). This demonstrates the pivotal role of social media in sharing and creating news. According to a Pew Internet survey by Purcell et al. (2010), 37% of internet users in America have contributed to the creation of news, commented about it, or disseminated it via social media sites like Facebook or Twitter. As Lee and Ma (2011) put it, "social media empower individuals to create, share and seek content, as well as to communicate and collaborate with each other. These features afforded by social media have the potential to change the nature of news sharing."

Some studies explored motives for the news sharing behavior online. For instance, Ames and Naaman (2007) and Goh et al. (2009) found that the main
motivations for information sharing online are status attainment and information seeking, while Hsu and Lin (2008) added building social relationships as another motivation. Other studies suggested that entertainment and socializing are essential gratifications (Dunne et al., 2010; Park et al., 2009).

However, it is necessary to distinguish between news stories as informational content and other forms of knowledge and non-news information also available online. This research will attempt to study the uses of social media news content, rather than knowledge seeking in general terms. A news story mainly reports recent events through media interpersonal communication (Simpson & Weiner, 1981). Moreover, News content contributes to shaping public opinion and influencing political and social realities (McCombs & Reynolds, 2009; McCombs & Shaw, 1972). The value of a news story is measured according to how timely, accurate, and objective it is, which differentiates it from other types of information (Sundar, 1999).

3.5. Research Questions:

Based on the theoretical ideas discussed here, this research presents the following research questions:

RQ1: Is Facebook displacing or supplementing traditional news media for Egyptians?

RQ2: What motivates Egyptian youth to seek out news from Facebook?

RQ3: How do Egyptian youth use Facebook for acquiring news?

RQ4: How has the use of Facebook as a news source been affected by the January 25 revolution?

RQ5: How is Facebook enabling citizens to be news producers (citizen journalists)?
4. METHODOLOGY

4.1. Research Methodology:

To answer the aforementioned research questions, the researcher used both a qualitative and a quantitative method. Prior to the primary study—a survey—the researcher conducted a pilot study in which she held in-depth interviews with a purposive sample of 16 Egyptian Facebook users. The interview questions aimed at exploring different patterns of Facebook usage. This method was conducted over a one week period in early February 2012, and enabled the researcher to determine the questions to include in the questionnaire.

Survey research was selected as the primary method in this study. A questionnaire was distributed via the website Survey Monkey in September and October 2012. Surveys are appropriate for assessing media use and attitudes, and provide the advantage of being able to acquire large amounts of data about a sample group (Wimmer and Dominick, 2006; Williams et al. 1988; Comstock 1988). A non-probability purposive sample of Egyptian Facebook users was drawn. The purposive sample by definition "includes subjects or elements selected for specific characteristics or qualities and eliminates those who fail to meet these criteria" (Wimmer and Dominick, 2006, p. 92). Thus, it was considered the most appropriate for this study because the researcher sought to include only Egyptian Facebook users. Survey Monkey allowed for inexpensive distribution of the survey, and yielded a high number of responses in a short time.

A web link to the online survey was distributed in various ways. First, the researcher sent out the link via email to a list of contacts, providing them with a background on the study and asking them to access the webpage and fill in the survey. The main collection method, however, involved posting the survey link in 20
Egyptian Facebook groups and asking subscribers to respond to the survey. Facebook groups, as defined on Facebook.com, "are close circles of people that share and keep in touch on Facebook". Each of these groups had between 50-50,000 members. In order to avoid sampling bias, effort was taken to include groups representing a range of Egyptian political ideologies. A total of 360 valid responses were collected over a period of two months (September-October 2012). Afterwards, data analysis was carried out via the statistical tool SPSS. Descriptive statistics (tables, means, and standard deviations) were used to describe the data numerically and graphically. Inferential statistics (t-test & anova) were used to test null hypotheses related to age and gender.

4.2. Survey Design:
The questionnaire is composed of 23 questions. Below is a breakdown of all research questions and their corresponding survey questions.

4.2.1. Filtering questions:
The first three questions in the questionnaire aimed to filter responses. The first question simply asked respondents to indicate whether they followed news on Facebook. The second question gave an opportunity for those who do not follow news on Facebook to explain the reasons for this. The third question is an open-ended question aiming to explore the different Facebook pages followed by the respondents. In the data analysis phase of this study, all responses to the second question were crossed out from the total number of valid responses. The third question was also disregarded in the analysis phase because of the insufficient information presented in it, since most of the pages mentioned in the responses were included in questions 9 and 15 of the survey.
4.2.2. Variables and measures:

RQ1: Is Facebook displacing or supplementing traditional news media for Egyptians?

The first research question aims to measure the frequency of exposure to different mass media, in addition to the influence of using Facebook on the frequency of exposure to traditional media. In communications research, the assumption that some new media can displace other older ones is usually referred to as the "displacement hypothesis" (Gentzkow, 2007; Gunter et al., 2003; Kaye & Johnson, 2003; Lin et al., 2005). To measure the displacement hypothesis, the researcher used two different scales. The first are interval level 6-point rating scales to measure frequency of different mass media use, and the second are five point Likert scales to measure level of increase/decrease in traditional media use, and level of agreement with various reasons for increase or decrease of traditional media use.

RQ no. 1 was measured by four consecutive survey questions. Below is a breakdown of all questions.

Survey Q4. Please indicate how often you use the following media as sources of news.

Dependent variable: Frequency of exposure to different mass media

Operational definition: this variable refers to how often each respondent uses the following mass media: Television, Print Newspapers, Online Newspapers, Radio, Twitter, and Facebook.

Level of measurement: this variable has been measured using interval-level 6-point rating scale as follows:

5=Very Frequently, 4=Frequently, 3=Occasionally, 2=Rarely, 1=Very Rarely, 0=Never.
Survey Q5. Since you started using Facebook, has your use of traditional news sources like newspapers and television increased, decreased, or remained constant?

**Dependent variable:** Influence of Facebook usage on other media usage

**Operational Definition:** this variable refers to the level of increase or decrease in traditional media usage, viewed as an influence of Facebook usage.

**Level of measurement:** this variable has been measured using 5-point scale including the following answer choices: 2=Greatly Increased, 1=Slightly Increased, 0=Remained Constant, -1=Slightly Decreased, and -2=Greatly Decreased.

Survey Q6. In case your use of traditional news sources has increased after starting to use Facebook, please indicate why.

**Dependent variable:** the reason why some respondents indicated an increase in traditional media usage even after using Facebook.

Survey Q7. In case your use of traditional news sources has decreased since you started using Facebook, please indicate why.

**Dependent variable:** the reason why some respondents indicated a decrease in traditional media usage after using Facebook.

**Level of measurement:** the scales used in this question and the previous one is a Likert scale composed of five answer choices as follows:

2=Strongly agree, 1=Agree, 0=Neutral, -1=Disagree, and -2=Strongly disagree

In question no. 7, the Likert scale was used to measure respondents' level of agreement with the following eight statements:

Q7.1. Facebook is more credible than traditional media

Q7.2. Facebook news format is brief
RQ2: What motivates Egyptian youth to seek out news from Facebook?

The second research question examines the gratifications sought from using Facebook as a source of news. Questions from 8-11 aim to thoroughly answer this research question. Below is a breakdown of the questions and the operational definitions.

This research question aims to explore the gratifications sought from following news on Facebook. This has been examined through four survey questions (8,9,10,11). Questions 8 and 9 measure the participants' agreement with the importance of several credibility criteria that motivate them to use Facebook as a source of news. Specifically, question 9 attempts to evaluate the credibility of the 11 most followed news pages on Facebook. The researcher has selected these 11 pages for two reasons. First, at the time the survey was conducted, they were the most followed Facebook pages in terms of number of followers and hits, according to Socialbakers.com. Second, they represent a variety of news pages, including citizen journalism news pages (e.g. Rassd), online newspapers (e.g. Almasry Alyoum), and
online news channels (e.g. Aljazeera Mubasher Misr). Question 8 uses a five-point Likert scale to measure the credibility criteria of Facebook news content. These criteria, derived from the News Credibility Scale model by the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (1986), include fairness, telling the whole story, accuracy, presenting factual information, having well-trained journalists, caring about public interest, separating fact and opinion, and respecting the privacy of individuals. Question 10 uses 6-point scale including: completely not credible, mostly not credible, somewhat credible, credible, very credible, and NA as a sixth option for those who may not be subscribing to any of the 11 news pages.

Questions 10 and 11 use 5-point Likert scale to measure the level of agreement with advantages of Facebook in general, and advantages of Facebook news pages in particular. The two questions aim to examine the gratifications obtained from Facebook usage as a news medium.

RQ3: How do Egyptian youth use Facebook for acquiring news?

The third RQ examines the different patterns of Facebook usage. This is measured by six survey questions (12-17) covering a wide range of usage habits. Questions no. 12 and 13 measure the frequency of exposure to Facebook in general, and to Facebook news in particular. The two questions use four answer choices as follows:

1. Less than one hour
2. 1-2 hours
3. 3-5 hours
4. More than 5 hours
Questions no. 14 and 15 measure the frequency of exposure to specific Facebook pages through listing different types of Facebook news pages (Q14) and specific names of Facebook pages (Q15). The respondents were asked to rate the different pages using 6-point scale as follows:

0=Never; 1=Very rarely; 2=Rarely; 3=Occasionally; 4=Frequently; 5=Very frequently

Question no. 17 measures the frequency of different news sharing activities by 6-point scale as follows:

0=Never; 1=Very rarely; 2=Rarely; 3=Occasionally; 4=Frequently; 5=Very frequently

The respondents were asked to rate the frequency of their news sharing activities exemplified in the following six activities:

1. Reading the entire news story
2. Reading part of the story
3. Reading the headline only
4. Looking for the author's name
5. Measuring the story's credibility
6. Fact checking
RQ4: How has the use of Facebook as a news source been affected by the January 25 revolution?

The fourth RQ explores how Facebook usage has been influenced by the January 25 Revolution. The aim of this question was to investigate whether the increase in Facebook news consumption is linked with the revolution or is simply a function of time. Questions 18 and 19 are used to measure this variable. This has been done by asking respondents to rate the frequency of using different types of Facebook news pages during the revolution. Question 19 asks whether using Facebook as a source of news has increased, decreased, or remained constant since the revolution.

RQ5: How is Facebook enabling citizens to be news producers (citizen journalists)?

The fifth RQ examines the different news-making activities which the respondents engage in. It aims at exploring whether Facebook users are increasingly resorting to news-making activities as part of their day-to-day internet usage. The survey question listed six different activities and asked respondents to rate their frequency by selecting one of the following answer choices:

0=Never; 1=Very rarely; 2=Rarely; 3=Occasionally; 4=Frequently; 5=Very frequently

The six activities are:

1. Producing an original news story and posting it either as a status update or note
2. Uploading news-related video footage I captured
3. Uploading news-related pictures I captured
4. Sharing news from external sources

5. Sending a news story I produced to news pages

6. Posting a correction to a news story

Questions 21, 22, and 23 explore the age, gender, and educational background of respondents, respectively.
5. RESULTS

5.1. Demographics

Age:

The table below shows the percentage of participants from different age groups who completed the survey (Table 2). Most of the participants were less than 30 years old which means that the majority of the sample can be characterized as "youth". The largest age group is the one between 18-25 years old.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Age of the participants</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-25</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>43.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>26.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-35</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 40</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Gender:

As presented in Table 3 below, males constituted most of the sample, (225/360-62.5%), while females were less (135/360-37.5%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>62.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Gender of participants
5.2. Following news on Facebook:

The majority of respondents (85.8\% of 309 out of 360) indicated that they used Facebook as a source of news (Table 3). This percentage suggests that most of those who use Facebook in Egypt spend a portion of their time following news on the same website. The ranking of Facebook pages in Egypt by several social media analytical web tools, such as socialbakers.com, supports this finding. When the study was first conducted in 2012, the top media brand on Facebook was RNN, a news portal run by citizen journalists. The same page ranked among the top five Facebook pages in terms of the number of followers, now close to 2 million.
Table 3. Following news on Facebook

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Follows news on Facebook</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>85.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doesn't follow news on Facebook</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chart 1: Percentage of news followers on Facebook

Following news on Facebook - Percentage

- Follows news on Facebook: 86%
- Doesn't follow news on Facebook: 14%

Only 14.2% (51) said they do not use Facebook as a source of news. Of the second group, 64.7% (33/51) explained in Q2 that the reason for not following news on FB is their distrust of FB news content; 58.8% (30/51) said they follow news via other media outlets, 19.6% (10/51) said that FB is very time consuming, while 43.1% (22/51) indicated that they only use FB in communicating with others. A total of 51 respondents answered that question. In the following questions, the missing 51
samples represent those who answered the second question but skipped the rest of the survey.

5.3. The displacement effect of Facebook

The first research question investigates the "displacement hypothesis" and aims to measure to what extent Facebook is displacing or supplementing traditional news media for Egyptian internet users (Gentzkow, 2007; Gunter et al., 2003; Kaye & Johnson, 2003; Lin et al., 2005). To measure the displacement hypothesis, the researcher used two different scales, as explained in the methodology section of this thesis. The first are interval level 6-point rating scales to measure frequency of different mass media use, and the second are five point Likert scales to measure level of increase/decrease in traditional media use, and level of agreement with various reasons for increase or decrease of traditional media use.

The fourth question in the survey attempted to measure the frequency of media use, including traditional media (television, print newspapers, and radio) versus new media (online newspapers, Twitter and Facebook). The researcher selected the most widely used traditional and new media, while focusing on Twitter and Facebook as the two most popular social media in the world (socialbakers.com). The answer choices included: 5=Very Frequently, 4=Frequently, 3=Occasionally, 2=Rarely, 1=Very Rarely, 0=Never.

Results of the survey point to the obvious displacement effect of social media in general, and Facebook in particular, on the frequency of news consumption on traditional news media. This comes in line with previous literature on the displacement hypothesis. The three online media measured in the survey (Facebook, Online Newspapers, and Twitter, respectively) scored highest in relation to the
frequency of news consumption by media users. On the other hand, traditional media exemplified by Television, Radio, and Print Newspapers) scored lowest, as clarified below.

The majority of respondents, (116/309-37.5%) stated they followed news on Television only "Occasionally". Similarly, (93/309-30.1%) selected answer choice "Occasionally" when rating frequency of Print Newspapers usage. Radio scored lowest, with (100/309-32.4%) of respondents stating they use it "Rarely" and 31.7% "Very Rarely".

On the other hand, the three online media (Facebook, Online Newspapers and Twitter, respectively) scored highest in terms of frequency of usage. Out of 309 responses, 201 (65%) indicated they use Facebook "Very Frequently" as a source of news. A lower number of participants (99/309-32%) used Online Newspapers "Very Frequently", while 17.2% (53/309) used Twitter "Very Frequently". Table 4 presents the results of this question in terms of the mean and standard deviation. The higher the mean, the higher the frequency of usage.
Table 4. Frequency of news consumption on different media

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistics</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Television</td>
<td>3.3269</td>
<td>1.13101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print Newspapers</td>
<td>2.4466</td>
<td>1.27459</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Newspapers</td>
<td>3.5858</td>
<td>1.33992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>1.8220</td>
<td>1.14983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>2.5825</td>
<td>1.61883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>4.3042</td>
<td>1.24500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Mean is based on 5=Very Frequently, 4=Frequently, 3=Occasionally, 2=Rarely, 1=Very Rarely, 0=Never.

To get a clear sense of whether the decreased exposure to traditional media is related to Facebook usage, the researcher investigated the level of increase or decrease in traditional media usage as a result of Facebook usage. In question no. 5, the researcher used a five-point Likert scale including answer choices: Greatly Increased, Slightly Increased, Remained Constant, Slightly Decreased, and Greatly Decreased. The results indicated that the majority of respondents (63.9%) reported a decrease in traditional media usage since the start of Facebook usage. This suggests that Facebook is providing an alternative, rather than a supplement, to traditional news media. Table 5 below shows a mean of minus 0.6117, which indicates a decreased exposure to traditional news media by most participants as an influence of Facebook usage.
Table 5. Influence of Facebook usage on other media usage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistics*</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>-0.6117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
<td>0.73722</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Based on 2=Greatly Increased, 1=Slightly Increased, 0=Remained Constant, -1=Slightly Decreased, and -2=Greatly Decreased

In question 7, the researcher explores reasons for the decreased usage of traditional news media since the start of Facebook usage. Similar to Q6, this question uses 5-point Likert scale to measure participants' agreement with 8 statements that describe potential positive attributes of Facebook. The statements are based on the literature review of previous studies dealing with uses and gratifications of social media (Purcell et al, 2010; Abdulla et al., 2005; Nguyen et al., 2005; Mitchelstein & Boczkowski, 2010; Althaus & Tewksbury, 2001). Moreover, the pilot study helped identify further advantages of Facebook usage. A majority of respondents agreed with the following statements: Facebook is more credible than traditional media; Facebook news format is brief; Facebook provides live news coverage; Facebook provides a variety of news formats; Facebook news are not censored; Facebook can be accessed via multiple portable devices like mobile and computer; Facebook news can be accessed from any place. Table 6 presents a breakdown of the eight statements and their mean.
Table 6. Why traditional media usage has decreased after Facebook usage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistics*</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q7.1. Facebook is more credible than traditional media</td>
<td>0.1652</td>
<td>1.10916</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q7.2. Facebook news format is brief</td>
<td>1.1174</td>
<td>0.84064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q7.3. Facebook provide live news coverage</td>
<td>1.2130</td>
<td>0.86302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q7.4. Facebook provide more Factual information</td>
<td>-0.3043</td>
<td>1.09124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q7.5. Facebook provide a variety of news formats</td>
<td>1.4261</td>
<td>0.71247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q7.6. Facebook news are not censored</td>
<td>1.1826</td>
<td>0.87750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q7.7. Facebook can be accessed via multiple portable devices</td>
<td>1.5913</td>
<td>0.67255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q7.8. Facebook news can be accessed from any place</td>
<td>1.6000</td>
<td>0.61708</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Based on: 2=Strongly agree, 1=Agree, 0=Neutral, -1=Disagree, and -2=Strongly disagree

Table 6 shows that Facebook news consumers find it more favorable than traditional media for both its user-friendly technical features and professional reasons. They find Facebook more credible than traditional media, yet they disagree with the statement that it provides more "factual information" than traditional media. This is perhaps because factual information is contingent on a variety of factor including the perceived credibility of specific news pages and the effort made to verify news stories. Regarding technical reasons, the fact that Facebook offers a variety of news formats is attractive for most users. For instance, the news posted on Facebook come in different forms, including text, image, and videos. In other words, it enables the convergence of different media into one place. Moreover, the brevity of the news is another advantage of Facebook, according to the respondents. Rather than long
articles and feature stories, the news pages, particularly citizen journalism pages, publish short news stories or images with a short caption elaborating the context and the main story. This seems to attract Facebook users. Live news coverage is another benefit. Through Facebook, it becomes easier to live stream breaking news and post instant updates rather than go through the organizational constraints of traditional media like print newspapers and television. The immediacy of coverage has enabled citizen journalists to run breaking news before any other media outlets. More significantly, Facebook citizen journalists have become an inevitable source of information and footage for traditional news outlets.

One of the advantages of Facebook is that users can post and share news on it without censorship. Due to its personalized experience, Facebook enables users to share news and engage in free discussions without fear. This free environment is what allowed Egyptian Facebook activists, particularly during the revolution, to mobilize supporters in a relatively short period of time without pre-censorship or government crackdown.

The accessibility of Facebook news via portable devices like smart phones, IPads, and laptops is yet another advantage. It can also be accessed anytime and from any place. So no time or space constraints are attached.

5.4. Gratifications sought from Facebook news consumption:

The second RQ aims to explore the gratifications sought from Facebook news consumption. This has been examined by four survey questions (8, 9, 10, and 11). Questions 8 and 9 measure the participants' agreement with the importance of several credibility criteria that motivate them to use Facebook as a source of news. Question 8 uses a five-point Likert scale to measure the credibility criteria of Facebook news
content. These criteria, derived from the News Credibility Scale model by the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (1986), include fairness, telling the whole story, accuracy, presenting factual information, having well-trained journalists, caring about public interest, separating fact and opinion, and respecting the privacy of individuals. The majority of respondents indicated their agreement with the importance of all those criteria. Table 7 shows the mean score for each answer choice. Any score higher than 0 indicates agreement with the statement. Thus, all the criteria were important according to the majority of participants, with telling the whole story, accuracy, and separating fact and opinion as the highest in importance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistics*</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q8.1. Fairness</td>
<td>1.0971</td>
<td>1.03993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q8.2. Telling the whole story</td>
<td>1.3722</td>
<td>0.86076</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q8.3. Accuracy</td>
<td>1.3657</td>
<td>0.87475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q8.4. Factual information</td>
<td>1.0324</td>
<td>1.05016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q8.5. Having well-trained journalists</td>
<td>0.4563</td>
<td>1.16588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q8.6. Caring about public interest</td>
<td>0.9256</td>
<td>1.10678</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q8.7. Separating fact and opinion</td>
<td>1.2460</td>
<td>1.01819</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q8.8. Respecting privacy of individuals</td>
<td>1.1942</td>
<td>1.01026</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Based on: 2=Strongly agree, 1=Agree, 0=Neutral, -1=Disagree, and -2=Strongly disagree
Based on the credibility criteria outlined above, the participants were asked in Question 9 to rate the credibility of a number of Facebook news pages, including citizen journalism news pages (e.g. Rassd), online newspapers (e.g. Almasry Alyoum), and online news channels (e.g. Aljazeera Mubasher Misr). This question uses 6-point scale including: completely not credible, mostly not credible, somewhat credible, credible, very credible, and NA as a sixth option for those who may not be subscribing to any of the 11 news pages. The researcher has selected these 11 pages for two reasons. First, at the time the survey was conducted, they were the most followed Facebook pages in terms of number of followers and hits, according to Socialbakers.com. Second, they represent a variety of news pages, including citizen journalism news pages (e.g. Rassd), online newspapers (e.g. Almasry Alyoum), and online news channels (e.g. Aljazeera Mubasher Misr).

The aim of that question was to establish a link between the credibility criteria and the different news pages. In other words, the researcher attempted to measure the credibility of each news page in order to find out how the type of pages may influence their credibility. The most credible news pages according to the respondents were citizen journalism news pages and online news channels. For example, as clarifies in Table 8, RNN had a mean credibility of 3.9126 while Aljazeera Mubasher Misr had a mean of 4.0388. That means that the two news pages range between (3=somewhat credible) and (5=very credible).
Table 8: Credibility rating for Facebook News Pages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistics*</th>
<th>Mean*</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rassd News Network(RNN)</td>
<td>3.9126</td>
<td>1.41953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Masry Al-Youm</td>
<td>2.4628</td>
<td>1.29788</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shorouk News</td>
<td>2.7832</td>
<td>1.55680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Jazeera Mubasher Misr</td>
<td>4.0388</td>
<td>1.38819</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Mean is based on: 0=NA; 1=completely not credible; 2=mostly not credible; 3=somewhat credible; 4= credible; 5=very credible.

5.5. Gratifications obtained from using Facebook:

As for the advantages of Facebook news, Questions 10 and 11 use 5-point Likert scale to measure the level of agreement with advantages of Facebook in general, and advantages of Facebook news pages in particular. The two questions aim to examine the gratifications obtained from Facebook usage as a news medium.

As Table 9 shows, the participants agreed on the following advantages of Facebook: Facebook provides live coverage of current events; Facebook enables users to select which news pages to follow; Facebook enables users to follow diverse news pages at the same time; Facebook provides news in multiple formats (text-image-video); Facebook has interactive features; Facebook highlights the opinions of other people on current affairs.
Table 9: Advantages of Facebook

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistics*</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q10.1. Facebook provides live coverage of current events</td>
<td>1.3107</td>
<td>0.79808</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q10.2. Facebook enables me to select which news pages to follow</td>
<td>1.3786</td>
<td>0.69949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q10.3. Facebook enables me to follow diverse news pages at the same time</td>
<td>1.4563</td>
<td>0.69940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q10.4. Facebook provides news in multiple formats (text-image-video)</td>
<td>1.4822</td>
<td>0.66242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q10.5. Facebook has interactive features</td>
<td>1.3754</td>
<td>0.76966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q10.6. Facebook highlights the opinions of other people on current affairs</td>
<td>1.4693</td>
<td>0.68603</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Based on: 2=Strongly agree, 1=Agree, 0=Neutral, -1=Disagree, and -2=Strongly disagree

The results of this question indicate that Facebook users find its news features appealing. Live coverage is one aspect, as well as interactive features. It also provides an insight into what others think of current affairs, which is a social aspect but also linked with news sharing, since Facebook enables users to comment on the news being shared by other users.

Likewise, the responses to question no. 10 indicate the numerous gratifications obtained from Facebook usage. It differs from the previous question in that it measures the impacts, rather than the motives, of Facebook usage. The gratifications obtained include: increasing political knowledge and general knowledge, enhancing political participation, pastime, enabling users to express opinions on current affairs,
highlights the opinions of others, allows users to communicate with likeminded people. Since all the mean scores are between 0 and 2, the majority of participants expressed agreement with all the statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistics*</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q11.1. Facebook increases my political knowledge</td>
<td>1.0647</td>
<td>0.88035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q11.2. Facebook increases my general knowledge</td>
<td>0.9741</td>
<td>0.85621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q11.3. Facebook enhances my political participation</td>
<td>0.9612</td>
<td>0.93894</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q11.4. Facebook helps pass the time</td>
<td>0.8770</td>
<td>0.97921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q11.5. Facebook enables me to express my opinions on current affairs</td>
<td>1.3754</td>
<td>0.70815</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q11.6. Facebook informs me of the opinions of others</td>
<td>1.3851</td>
<td>0.70520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q11.7. Facebook enables me to network with likeminded individuals</td>
<td>1.2621</td>
<td>0.78906</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Based on: 2=Strongly agree, 1=Agree, 0=Neutral, -1=Disagree, and -2=Strongly disagree

Thus, Facebook grants users both knowledge and the ability to interact with others, learn about the prevailing opinions, and express oneself freely. The results indicate that Egyptian Facebook users do not merely use it for socializing purposes. They also find it a beneficial source of knowledge and a platform for discussions on public affairs.
5.6. Uses of Facebook:

Survey questions from 12 to 17 examine patterns of Facebook usage as a source of news in terms of frequency and different usage habits. Most respondents were heavy users of Facebook in general and Facebook news in particular. Concerning frequency of exposure, tables 11 and 12 show that 67.3% of respondents spent above 3 hours checking Facebook every day, while 60.2% spent between 1-5 hours daily reading news on Facebook.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 11: Frequency of exposure to Facebook</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than one hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 5 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 12: Frequency of exposure to Facebook news

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than one hour</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>23.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 hours</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5 hours</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>26.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 5 hours</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
While using Facebook, participants engage in a number of participatory activities. That includes sharing news, liking news stories, commenting on news, discussing news with friends via the comments feature, and post corrections to stories they render false. Most respondents reported high frequency of participatory activities, as shown in Table 13.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistics</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sharing news links</td>
<td>3.1553</td>
<td>1.30501</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liking a news story</td>
<td>3.2783</td>
<td>1.38647</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commenting on the news using the 'comment' feature</td>
<td>2.5793</td>
<td>1.25267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussing news with Friends using the 'comment' feature</td>
<td>2.5922</td>
<td>1.25954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posting a correction to the news you believe is false</td>
<td>3.6019</td>
<td>1.60563</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on 0=Never; 1=Very rarely; 2=Rarely; 3=Occasionally; 4=Frequently; 5=Very frequently

Before sharing news on Facebook, most participants said they read the entire story, look for the author's name, and do fact checking. Table 14 shows high mean scores for most pre-sharing activities.
Table 14: What users do before sharing news on Facebook

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistics</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading the entire news story</td>
<td>4.2460</td>
<td>1.42713</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading part of the story</td>
<td>1.6019</td>
<td>1.48372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading the headline only</td>
<td>1.1586</td>
<td>1.21574</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking for the author's name</td>
<td>3.2783</td>
<td>1.80013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measuring the story's credibility</td>
<td>4.0162</td>
<td>1.74412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fact checking</td>
<td>3.3592</td>
<td>1.59252</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on 0=Never; 1=Very rarely; 2=Rarely; 3=Occasionally; 4=Frequently; 5=Very frequently

The above results on usage habits indicate that Egyptian Facebook users pay attention to news credibility before distributing/sharing news with others.

5.7. Citizen journalism on Facebook

In addition to the above participatory activities, Egyptian Facebook users engage in news-making activities, also known as citizen journalism. That includes: producing an original news story and posting it either as a status update or note; uploading news-related video footage; uploading news-related pictures; sharing news from external sources; sending a news story to news pages; posting a correction to a news story. As Table 15 shows, most statements received a mean score between 3=Occasionally and 5=Very frequently. That indicates frequent engagement in new-making activities by most Facebook users.
Table 15: Frequency of news-making activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistics</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Producing an original news story and posting it either as a status update or note</td>
<td>3.2427</td>
<td>1.54247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uploading news-related video footage I captured</td>
<td>2.3269</td>
<td>1.66514</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uploading news-related pictures I captured</td>
<td>2.7508</td>
<td>1.72624</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing news from external sources</td>
<td>3.5081</td>
<td>1.58035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sending a news story I produced to news pages</td>
<td>2.4401</td>
<td>1.84474</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posting a correction to a news story</td>
<td>3.3430</td>
<td>1.77248</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Mean is based on 0=Never; 1=Very rarely; 2=Rarely; 3=Occasionally; 4=Frequently; 5=Very frequently

5.8. Impact of January 25 Revolution on Facebook usage:

The percentage of those whose usage of Facebook increased after the Jan 25 Revolution is very telling. A number of 224 participants, equal to 72.5% of the entire sample, said their usage of Facebook "Greatly Increased" after the revolution. That highlights the huge impact of the revolution on the soaring number of Facebook users in Egypt. It also points to the political dimension in the Facebook market in Egypt.

5.9. Gender and Frequency of exposure to Facebook:

The researcher conducted a t-test to test the null hypothesis that "there are no significant differences between males and females in their frequency of exposure to Facebook". Table 16 reveals that males are more likely to consume news on Facebook, with a significance level of 0.013.

However, no statistically significant differences were found between males and females in their participatory activities on Facebook.
Table 16: Differences between males and females in frequency of exposure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Exposure to Facebook</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.051</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>1.962</td>
<td>4.4070</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Exposure to Facebook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.1182</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>News Pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.013</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>2.500</td>
<td>2.4623</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Exposure to Facebook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.1636</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>News Pages</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Mean is based on 0=Never; 1=Very rarely; 2=Rarely; 3=Occasionally; 4=Frequently; 5=Very frequently

5.10. **Age and Frequency of exposure to Facebook:**

The age group between 18-15 is the highest in frequency of exposure to Facebook news pages. Its mean (2.55) was higher than the total mean (2.35). On the other hand, the oldest age group (above 40 years old) has a mean of 1.77, which is less than the total mean. This is explained in Table 17.
Table 17. Differences between different age groups concerning their frequency of news consumption on Facebook

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Exposure to Facebook News Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.00000</td>
<td>2.0000</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Less than 18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.01304</td>
<td>2.5500</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>18-25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.04319</td>
<td>2.2821</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>26-30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.03133</td>
<td>2.2667</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>31-35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.81358</td>
<td>2.1905</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>36-40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.81251</td>
<td>1.7727</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Above 40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.01425</td>
<td>2.3560</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ANOVA test revealed statistically significant differences between the age groups, with youth more active in their Facebook usage than elders. However, there were no statistically significant differences between different age groups and their participatory activities.

Table 18. Differences between different age groups in their frequency of news consumption on Facebook

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Exposure to Facebook News Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.014</td>
<td>2.905</td>
<td>2.899</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14.495</td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.998</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>302.347</td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>308</td>
<td>316.841</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

89
6. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study attest to the changing news media environment in Egypt since the January 25 Revolution. Egypt is witnessing a remarkable shift in the way young people send and receive information. Traditional news media, such as Television and newspapers, have lost audience share from social media due to the advantages they provide and the personalized experience that empowers the young to be news producers and to select the sources of news they find most credible. As the findings of the study reveal, Facebook is increasingly becoming an alternative news outlet for young people in Egypt. Its two-way experience enables the young to be creators of content, thus becoming citizen journalists. The Egyptian Revolution was not merely a political one, but it was also accompanied by a digital revolution that has left a profound effect on the news media environment.

Furthermore, the findings raise questions regarding the potential impact of Facebook on the Journalism profession in Egypt. Participants in the study seem to rely on citizen journalists more than professional ones. Every user considers him/herself a source of information. Moreover, most participants are aware of the different criteria of a credible story, and whether or not to share a story with others depending on its authenticity. Perhaps this has contributed to the success of the revolution, since most Egyptian Facebook users could avoid the misleading news coverage of traditional media, relying instead on the verified news shared on Facebook by citizen journalists. This may also be a good omen for the future of journalism. While traditional forms of journalism may have eroded with the advent of social media, new forms of journalism are flourishing thanks to the advantages of social media as well as the democratic culture and the wider margin of freedoms available after the revolution.
Social media users in Egypt are becoming watchdogs on journalists. They can evaluate news stories using the interactive features available on Facebook. An authentic story is more likely to be shared by a high number of users, since the majority care about accuracy and balance. A fabricated story can be spotted and corrected immediately by a vigilant audience. Therefore, it is highly unlikely that a journalist not adhering to professional standards could maintain popularity among the majority of Facebook users. On the contrary, a professional and ethical news outlet on Facebook would attract more viewers in a short period of time.

In Egypt, Facebook is not just a social networking site. In fact, the political uses of Facebook may outweigh the social ones. The social networking and political aspects in Facebook are intertwined. Most Egyptians, based on the findings of the study, prefer to network with likeminded individuals on Facebook. Therefore, social networking is influenced by the political biases of Facebook users. Additionally, users consider Facebook a source of knowledge about politics and general culture. It raises the awareness of users regarding current affairs and enhances political participation. It also keeps the user informed about the prevailing public opinion on a particular news topic, and empowers users to express themselves freely.

7. CONCLUSION:

The Egyptian media landscape has been witnessing rapid changes since the outbreak of the revolution in January 2011. The number of Facebook users soared and continues to increase. Yet, media scholars need to track these changes over time to determine whether they reflect a lasting change or a temporary one.

Facebook news is a phenomenon worth exploring. Whether it is good or bad news for professional journalists is still unknown. But certainly, it represents a
revolution in the news industry that is likely to leave a considerable impact on future patterns of media usage.

The freedom of expression allowed after the revolution may also backfire if not used constructively. While Facebook was a tool for unity and solidarity among Egyptians during the revolution, the political rivalry that accompanied elections may have led to a change in the uses and gratifications of Facebook.

8. LIMITATIONS AND AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH:

Limitations of this study include the choice of sample. The purposive sample is a non-probability sample. Therefore, results cannot be generalized. Furthermore, the findings should not be generalized as to suggest traditional media have been replaced by social media in all aspects. This study concentrates on the news dimension. Traditional media may still retain their appeal when it comes to entertainment and other types of programming.

Another shortcoming of the study is the lack of literature on the changing media landscape and Facebook uses after the revolution in Egypt. The study was conducted one year after the revolution. This is why it was hard to find literature covering that period.

Some of the responses to the survey may have been affected by social desirability bias, i.e. selecting answers that would be viewed favorably by society. For example, the vast majority of respondents said they read the entire news story before sharing it with others on Facebook, something which may seem unrealistic. The study relies heavily on self-reports. Questions aim to solicit answers about certain behaviors from the perception of the respondent. Rather than establishing causality, it is a descriptive study.
Future studies should continue exploring the impact of Facebook on traditional media. They also need to investigate whether social media have a displacement effect on television's entertainment programming, for instance. Moreover, other social media, such as Twitter, need to be compared with Facebook's usage as a source of news. Studies need to explore how Twitter's experience is different from Facebook, and whether there is a similar displacement effect by Twitter on other media. Implications for journalism need to be addressed by future research as well.
9. REFERENCES


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Reports of all years can be found in the years tab in the same page.

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Appendix A: Survey-English

Survey on the Use of Facebook as a Source of News in Post-Revolutionary Egypt

*This survey is only for Egyptian Facebook users.

1) Do you follow news on Facebook?

1- Yes  
(If the answer is Yes, please skip question no. 2 and continue the rest of the survey)

2- No
(If the answer is No, please only answer questions no. 2, 21, 22, and 23).

2) If you don't follow news on Facebook, please explain why (please select one or more of the answers below):

1- I follow the news on other media
2- Facebook is very time consuming
3- I only use Facebook for social networking
4- I don't trust the news posted on Facebook
5- Other _______________

3) Which Facebook pages, if any, do you follow as sources of news (either by liking the page or incidentally reading their news via your Facebook friends)?
4) Please indicate how often you use the following media as sources of news:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Media</th>
<th>0-Never</th>
<th>1-Very Rarely</th>
<th>2- Rarely</th>
<th>3- Occasionally</th>
<th>4- Frequently</th>
<th>5-Very Frequently</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1- Television</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2- Print Newspapers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3- Online Newspapers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4- Radio</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5- Twitter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6- Facebook (including newspaper pages)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5) Since you started using Facebook, has your use of traditional news sources like newspapers and television increased, decreased, or remained constant?

1- Greatly Increased  
2- Slightly Increased 
3- Remained Constant 
4- Slightly Decreased 
5- Greatly Decreased 

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6) In case your use of traditional news sources has increased after starting to use Facebook, please indicate why (answer is optional):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>1-Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>2-Disagree</th>
<th>3-Neutral</th>
<th>4-Agree</th>
<th>5-Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1- Traditional media are more credible than Facebook</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2- Traditional media provide more in-depth analyses of news</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3- Traditional media provide more professional news coverage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4- Traditional media provide more factual information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5- Traditional media have well-trained journalists</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6- Traditional media care about public interest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7- Traditional media separate fact and opinion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8- Traditional media Respect privacy of individuals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7) In case your use of traditional news sources has decreased since you started using Facebook, please indicate why (answer is optional):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>1-Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>2-Disagree</th>
<th>3-Neutral</th>
<th>4-Agree</th>
<th>5-Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facebook is more credible than traditional media</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook news format is brief</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook provide live news coverage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook provide more factual information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook provides a variety of news formats</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook news are not censored</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook can be accessed via multiple portable devices like mobile and computer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook news can be accessed from any place</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8) Please indicate your level of agreement with the importance of the following criteria for news credibility on Facebook:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1-Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>2-Disagree</th>
<th>3-Neutral</th>
<th>4-Agree</th>
<th>5-Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-Fairness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-Telling the whole story</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-Accuracy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-Factual information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-Having well-trained journalists</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-Caring about public interest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-Separating fact and opinion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-Respecting privacy of individuals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9) How credible do you think are the following Facebook news pages?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>News Page</th>
<th>0 - NA</th>
<th>1 – completely not credible</th>
<th>2 – mostly not credible</th>
<th>3 – somewhat credible</th>
<th>4 – credible</th>
<th>5 – very credible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-Rassd News Network (RNN)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-Egypt News Network (ENN)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-Al-Masry Al-Youm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-Dostor al-Asly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-Shorouk News</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-Ahram</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-Masrawy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-Al-Mogaz</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-Tahrir News</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-Youm 7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-Al-Jazeera Mubasher Misr</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10) Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements about Facebook:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>1-Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>2-Disagree</th>
<th>3-Neutral</th>
<th>4-Agree</th>
<th>5-Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-Facebook provides live coverage of current events</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-Facebook enables me to select which news pages to follow</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-Facebook enables me to follow diverse news pages at the same time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-Facebook provides news in multiple formats (text-image-video)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-Facebook has interactive features</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-Facebook highlights the opinions of other people on current affairs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11) Please indicate your level of agreement with the following impacts of Facebook news activities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>1-Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>2-Disagree</th>
<th>3-Neutral</th>
<th>4-Agree</th>
<th>5-Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-Facebook increases my political knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-Facebook increases my general knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-Facebook enhances my political participation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-Facebook helps pass the time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-Facebook enables me to express my opinions on current affairs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-Facebook informs me of the opinions of others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-Facebook enables me to network with likeminded individuals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12) On an average day, how much time do you spend on Facebook?

1- Less than one hour
2- 1-2 hours
3- 3-5 hours
4- More than 5 hours

13) On an average day, how much time do you spend reading news on Facebook?

1- Less than one hour
2- 1-2 hours
3- 3-5 hours
4- More than 5 hours
14) Please indicate how often you follow news from the following Facebook pages:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0-Never</th>
<th>1-Very Rarely</th>
<th>2-Rarely</th>
<th>3-Occasionally</th>
<th>4-Frequently</th>
<th>5-Very Frequently</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-Social media news networks (e.g. Rassd News Network, Egypt News Network, 6 April News Network, or others)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-Newspapers’ Facebook pages (e.g. Al-Masry Alyoum, Al-Shorouk, Tahrir, or others)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-Television Channels’ Facebook pages (e.g. Aljazeera Mubasher Misr, Al-Arabeya, BBC, or others)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-Political movements’ Facebook pages (e.g. April 6 Youth Movement, National Association for Change, Revolution Coalition, or others)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-Advocacy pages (e.g. We are all Khaled Said, We are all Sayed Bilal, or others)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-Political Parties (e.g. Freedom and Justice, Al-Adl, Al-Wafd, Al-Nour, or others)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
15) Please indicate how often you follow the following news pages on Facebook:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>News Page</th>
<th>0-never</th>
<th>1-Very Rarely</th>
<th>2-Rarely</th>
<th>3-Occasionally</th>
<th>4-Frequently</th>
<th>5-Very Frequently</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-Rassd News Network (RNN)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-Egypt News Network (ENN)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-Al-Masry Al-Youm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-Dostor al-Asly</td>
<td></td>
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<td>5-Shorouk News</td>
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<td>6-Ahram</td>
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<td>7-Masrawy</td>
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<td>8-Al-Mogaz</td>
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<tr>
<td>9-Tahrir News</td>
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<td>10-Youm 7</td>
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<td>11-Al-Jazeera Mubasher Misr</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
16) Please indicate how often you engage in the following participatory activities when following news on Facebook:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>0-Never</th>
<th>1-Very Rarely</th>
<th>2-Rarely</th>
<th>3-Occasionally</th>
<th>4-Frequently</th>
<th>5-Very Frequently</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1- Sharing news links</td>
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<td>2- Liking a news story</td>
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<td>3- Commenting on the news using the 'comment' feature</td>
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<td>4- Discussing news with Friends using the 'comment' feature</td>
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<tr>
<td>5- Posting a correction to the news you believe is false</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
17) Please indicate how often you engage in the following activities before sharing news on Facebook:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>0-Never</th>
<th>1- Very Rarely</th>
<th>2- Occasionally</th>
<th>4- Frequently</th>
<th>5- Very Frequently</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-Reading the entire news story</td>
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<td>2-Reading part of the story</td>
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<td>3-Reading the headline only</td>
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<td>4-Looking for the author's name</td>
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<td>5-Measuring the story's credibility</td>
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<tr>
<td>6-Fact checking</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### 18) During the 18 days of the Jan 25 Revolution, how often did you seek out news from the following Facebook pages?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facebook Pages</th>
<th>0-Never</th>
<th>1-Very Rarely</th>
<th>2-Rarely</th>
<th>3-Occasionally</th>
<th>4-Frequently</th>
<th>5-Very Frequently</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-Social media news networks' Facebook pages (e.g. Rassd News Network, Egypt News Network, 6 April News Network, or others)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2-Newspapers' Facebook pages (e.g. Al-Masry Alyoum, Al-Shorouk, or others)</td>
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<td>3-Television Channels' Facebook Pages (e.g. Aljazeera, Al-Arabeya, BBC, or others)</td>
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<td>4-Political movements' Facebook pages (e.g. April 6 Youth Movement, National Association for Change, Revolution Coalition, or others)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5-Advocacy Facebook pages (e.g. We are all Khaled Said, We are all Sayed Bilal, or others)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### 19) Since the first 18 days of the Jan 25 Revolution ended, has your use of Facebook as a source of news increased, decreased, or remained constant?

1- Greatly Increased
2- Slightly Increased
3- Remained Constant
4- Slightly Decreased
5- Greatly Decreased
20) Please indicate how often you engage in the following news-making activities on Facebook:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>0-Never</th>
<th>1- Very Rarely</th>
<th>2- Rarely</th>
<th>3- Occasionally</th>
<th>4- Frequently</th>
<th>5-Very Frequently</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1- Producing an original news story and posting it either as a status update or note</td>
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<tr>
<td>2- Uploading news-related video footage I captured</td>
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<tr>
<td>3- Uploading news-related pictures I captured</td>
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<tr>
<td>4- Sharing news from external sources</td>
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<tr>
<td>5- Sending a news story I produced to news pages</td>
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<tr>
<td>6- Posting a correction to a news story</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

21) Age:

1- Less than 18
2- 18-25
3- 26-30
4- 31-35
5- 36-40
6- Above 40
22) Gender:
1-Male
2-Female

23) Educational Background:
1-High school degree
2-Undergraduate degree
3-Post-graduate Degree

Thanks for participating in the survey

###