

## Digital Media vs Print Media

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The total number of people in India that claim to have used the Internet in 2009 is 71 million. That's according to a recent report conducted by the [Internet](#) and Mobile Association of India and market research leader IMRB. The report also suggests that the surge in numbers has been primarily due to the increased number of the users in the remote urban pockets (small metros and towns) and among lower socio-economic classes'. So much so that they've overtaken top cities and higher socioeconomic classes. Also, the amount of time that people [spend](#) online has increased from about nine hours to almost 16 hours a week, and these numbers only seem to be soaring. So, you can imagine the pace at which the percentage of Internet penetration in the country might grow in the coming years.



One might rightly suggest that social media and increased Internet access on mobile phones have fueled the overall user base. But is social networking the primary reason for people getting hooked on to the

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information superhighway? I wouldn't say so. The Internet is too far fetched and propagates happenings like wild fire across the globe, and news updates could never have found a faster way to reach the people. These are perhaps the main reasons why debates like online versus print favor the former. Before I explain why print media would never fizzle out, let me massage the egos of people who think I'm wrong.

Online publishing rocks and social networking sites rock even more (Twitter and Facebook users can give me a silent nod here). Reading news online is convenient because you can call upon it whenever and wherever you like. You don't need to make space for piling up dailies. News breaks much faster online than in any other [medium](#), except for live television, of course. And for online publishers, updates can be quick, seamless, and in a matter of minutes after the event takes place. Online media reaches people without any demographic or geographic boundaries, and people avail of it for free, theoretically speaking. So there is much temptation (and reason) to visit online news sites and social networks that syndicate news updates. But are these reasons enough to convince lakhs of loyal patrons of print publications into making a switch?

Print has been around for hundreds of years and well-established media houses have a massive reader base, even if it is domestic. These are people who prefer to hold their favorite magazine or newspaper while they sip on their coffee or tea every morning. Perhaps they go online only to check mail or to read elaborate versions of international news snippets. In any case, most major publications have the perfect online presence today. So the way I see it, online media might become a secondary, and very rich, source for news and even niche topics. Though [successful](#) online publishers and journalists might anticipate that print media will completely transform into e-media, I think that both mediums will co-exist and have their own place and set of consumers, even though one might have a larger reader base than the other.

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