Content Analysis of Iranian Celebrity Posts with the most Followers on Instagram

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Abstract: *Social networks such as Instagram are very effective due to having a large audience, high accessibility and the ability to spread messages quickly and widely. An important part of this impact is related to messages posted by celebrities. The main question of this study is what messages they choose and highlight for their followers, and the theories of network society, Agenda-setting, and Halo Effect have been used to explain it. The research method is quantitative content analysis. The research population was the posts of Instagram users from Iran who have a large followers; the sample was last 200 posts from 20 Iranians who have the most followers on Instagram. This study has the content validity and the evaluator reliability. Research findings show that celebrities emphasize their personal and work concerns more than anything else. They also pay attention to some current issues such as social issues, people's economic problems, or the corona pandemic. They pay a lot of attention to presentation of self and a kind of self-obsession and narcissism is seen in the posts, which causes the followers, consciously or unconsciously, to focus too much on themselves and presentation of self.*

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Introduction

Inis and McLuhan, one of the first theorists of communication media, believed that the character and nature of the media of a society has a strong influence on the organization of that society. (Giddens, 2007: 667) And Baudrillard considers the impact of modern mass media to be quite different from and much deeper than any other technology. He argues that where the media is ubiquitous, a new reality - simulacra - is created that consists of a mixture of people's behaviors and media images (Giddens: 669-670).

The development of two-way social communication through the Internet and media based on it has increased dramatically; it makes the media more accessible and exposed to the people. Many messages are being spread in the world today that the role of virtual media and social networks in the extent and speed of these messages is irreplaceable in human history. Public use of social networks has led to the emergence of a new power structure for their owners or users, and by sharing and highlighting messages, they affect the attention and direction of public opinion and even governments.

Instagram is currently the sixth most used social networking platform in the world (after Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, FB Messenger and Weichat). As of October 2020, the total number of Instagram users is estimated at 1.16 billion, with 500 million daily active users. Cristiano Ronaldo (footballer) has the most followers in the world with 275 million followers. The United States and India have the largest Instagram audience with 140 million users. Globally, 50.8% of Instagram users are female and 49.2% are male. And one-third of users are 18 to 24 years old (Walsh, 2021).

According to a report on the Statista website, the number of Iranian Instagram users in the last quarter of 2021 was 43 million. (IT Rasan site, 2021).

Like other social networks, celebrities have a strong presence on Instagram, and the amount of followers, posts and reactions to these posts and the news that is regularly republished, has created a hot and competitive field among fans and themselves.

What he shows in the definition of a celebrity is fame and that his image can carry many messages for people (Khajeh Jafari, Farhangi and Sarukhani, 2018: 163). Axis mediator (need for cultural mediators and media such as: cinema, television, social networks), fan or audience (need for recognition and recognition by the audience), high speed of fame and breadth of its scope, diversification (entry

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from different fields And relocation (use their position to enter other professional fields); There are five key characteristics of a celebrity (Ijtihadi and Kashafi Nia, 2019: 150-151). Today, celebrities are related to and in need of media, especially virtual media. On the other hand, these people attract a lot of followers in cyberspace who can influence their awareness, opinions, attitudes and decisions and even other people who are not members of social networks by sharing messages (text, image or video).

The activities of celebrities are constantly exposed to users through social networks. The important question of this research is what messages they select and highlight for their audience. This shows the orientation of some members of the reference group in society, especially for adolescents and young people; accordingly, this study has tried to analyze the posts of Iranian celebrities who have the most followers on Instagram.

Background research

Findings from research on Instagram show that this social network has an impact on society in personal, psychological, social, cultural, and even political and economic fields, especially because of celebrities and influencers.

These studies indicate that the use of Instagram has had an impact on users' lifestyles, which can be considered positive or negative. The following are some of the research findings:

Table 1: Research background

Name of researcher	the year	The title of	the most important research result or finding
khademiyan and Kalhari	2020	The Relationship between Instagram and Youth Trends in Modern Lifestyle (Case Study: Tehran Youth) Instagram	Tendency to have a modern lifestyle by using Instagram
Abbasi and Jafari	2020	The effect of celebrities' Instagram actions on the lifestyle of Iranian users	Tendency to have a modern lifestyle by using Instagram
Masoudi	2020	Understanding the action of women activists in the "White Wednesdays" campaign (Case study: Instagram social network, 2018)	Promoting Western democracy by opposing the prevailing tradition of society and supporting Western-style women's liberation
Ijtihadi and Kashafi Nia	2019	Sociological study of the audience of celebrity culture on Persian Instagram	Persian Instagram Tendency to consumerism and reduce the tendency to religiosity using Instagram
Bichranloo, Salavatian and Lajevardi	2019	Represent the lifestyle of young Iranian women	Redefining gender identity, especially for women
Dabbagh, Dadgaran and Aghili	2019	Investigating the rate of user interaction on the Instagram pages of celebrities in the Kermanshah earthquake Case study: Instagram page of Ali Daei, Narges Kalbasi and Sadegh Zibakalam	Developing social partnerships Contribute to charitable activities using Instagram
Rahbar Mehrpoo, Rashidi, and Danaei	2019	Explaining the Relationship between Instagram Virtual Social Network and Redefining Women's Gender Identity	Creating online identity and virtual identity for women on Instagram
Zargar	2019	Modeling the effect of Instagram addiction on students' confidence and sense of happiness	Decreased confidence and a sense of happiness with the extreme use of Instagram
Nematifar and Safouraei	2019	Investigating the effect of using social networks on hijab and users' coverage with emphasis on the dimensions of religiosity (Case study: female users of Instagram social network)	Reducing religiosity and less importance to hijab by using social networks such as Instagram
Elenopoulou	2018	The impact of social media influencers on lifestyl	Tendency to consumerism using Instagram and the role of influencers in it
Klassen et al.	2018	The Impact of Social Media Strategies on the Food Industry, Lifestyle and Health	Tendency to consumerism using Instagram
Goodyear et al.	2018	Youth and their involvement in health issues on social media	More sensitivity on health issues using Instagram
Al Qais et al	2018	Explain the relationship between social media persuasion and lifestyle (case study: Instagram)	Tendency to have a modern lifestyle using Instagram

Name of researcher	the year	The title of	the most important research result or finding
Razipour	2018	Sociological study of lifestyle with emphasis on Instagram social network in 1997	Promote a demonstrative life using Instagram
Glucksman	2017	The impact of social media on marketing and lifestyle	Tendency to consumerism and increase the consumption of goods by overusing Instagram
Basirian Jahromi and Nahvi Nezamabadi	2016	Semiotics of online identity representation elements (study of popular Iranian users on Instagram)	Creating online identities and virtual identities of people on Instagram
Samani and Farahani	2016	Online identity and Instagram (study how to show the identity of young people on Instagram)	Creating online identities and virtual identities of people on Instagram
Dion	2015	The impact of Instagram on self-confidence and life satisfaction	Decreased self-confidence and life satisfaction due to excessive use of Instagram

Theoretical Framework

Castells introduced the concept of a network society, which is a society in which media and social networks form important forms of organization and structure. He points out that cyberspace, which contains a wide variety of information, becomes part of the social reality of the new age and takes up more or less the main space of epistemic interactions. In a network society, face-to-face communication gives way to, or is complemented by, intermediate communication. The forms of communication between mass and interpersonal communication, and in other words, computer communication, have created a vast array of virtual communities. The media will be distinct from each other and will send targeted messages and programs to different segments of the audience with different moods. It will connect various media, including: network TVs, cable TVs, satellite TVs, video, radio and the Internet. These devices come together in a multimedia system that creates hundreds of interactive communication channels, transforming the masses into an interactive audience. (Castells (c), 2006: 11)

According to Castells, we do not live in the global village as McLuhan pointed out; rather, we live in cottages suitable for each region, which are produced globally and distributed locally. The village of McLuhan was a world of one-way communication, not reciprocity. His world was and still is an extension of industrial logic and mass production in the realm of institutions; But according to Castells, this world, despite McLuhan's genius, is not very successful in expressing the culture of the information age.

Interactivity and the possibility of two-way communication and feedback is a concept that is possible for modern media based on the Internet, and one-way relationship has given way to two-way or multi-way relationship (Babaei and Fahimifar, 2013).

In interactive communication, the parties to the communication are active, though not equally. This possibility is greater for the parties involved in interpersonal communication, and less for the recipients of the message in mass communication. Both sides of the communication are in a functional interaction, and this interaction eliminates a need that is satisfying and more or less information is exchanged between the two. (Myers and Michele, 2004: 37-38).

In addition, Agenda-Setting Theory claims the influence of the media on the knowledge, attitude of people and determining their mental priorities by selecting and Agenda-Setting some topics and events in the form of news and news reports. In other words, the media influence people's awareness and information by highlighting certain issues and events. Donald Shaw and Maxwell McCombs argue that the media, in the form of news reports, significantly covers important issues. This effect of the mass media - the ability to influence the change of the audience's cognition and perception and the construction of their thinking - is called the function of highlighting the mass media. The most important effect of mass communication in performing this function is to create intellectual order for the audience and to regulate the world around us. The media may not succeed in telling us how to think; but they are very successful in saying what to think about (Mehdizadeh, 2010).

On the other hand, celebrities can be considered as a reference group, especially for teenagers and young people. The reference group has the important feature that when people evaluate, orient and behave, they consider their perception of their expectations and criteria as a guide and model (Entezari, 2005); this position of celebrities makes the message highlighted by them have a greater impact on the

audience. If a halo effect also helps; the halo effect is one of the assumptions of Gestalt theory in psychology and conveys the tendency to apply one person's general opinion to another, which means that if we have good suspicions about someone, we evaluate all his actions and opinions well (Karimi, 2018).

According to the theoretical issues raised, social networks as interactive media, further develop the network community; they can affect the culture and social organization of communities and people. Meanwhile, the content and form of the exchanged messages and the extent to which certain messages are highlighted, especially by celebrities in these networks as credible people from the point of view of followers, can affect the mental priorities, attitudes and behavior of their audiences. In the continuation of these effects, the public life style, culture and foundations of the society are shown.

Methodology

The research method in this study is content analysis. The advantage of the content analysis method is that it is possible to achieve a realistic analysis of the structure of various signals (linguistic, written, music, visual, etc.) through which it is communicated without interruption (Rafipour, 2005: 109). In this study, a quantitative method of content analysis has been used.

The research population in this study is the shared posts of Iranian Instagram celebrities who have the highest followers, the research sample was selected by Targeted Sampling and 200 shared posts were 20 Iranians who have the most followers. Based on this, the last 10 posts of 20 Iranians who have the most followers on Instagram have been reviewed and analyzed. It should be noted that the time of reviewing the posts is July 2020, which the reviewed posts can be related to the same month or before, depending on the frequency of posting.

Table No. 2: 20 Iranians who have the most followers on Instagram (Source: Instagram, July 19, 2020)

Rank	name	Number of page followers (per million)	Rank	name	Number of page followers (per million)
1	Hasan Rvandi	14	11	Ebi	7/2
2	Mahnaz afshar	11/9	12	Armin zarei	7/2
3	Rambod javan	10/5	13	Amin hayai	6/5
4	Goli farahani	9/1	14	Traneh alidosti	6/4
5	Donya jahanbakht	8/9	15	Ali karimi	6/2
6	Behmoush bakhtiyari	8/7	16	Parviz parastoui	5/8
7	Reza golzar	8/6	17	Shadmehr aghili	5/9
8	Elnaz shakerdoust	8/3	18	Negin mirsalehi	5/9
9	Sahar ghoreyshi	8	19	Yas	5/8
10	Behnousg tabatabae	7/5	20	Bahram radan	5/6

The analysis unit has shared posts, and the content or measurement unit is the text, images, and videos on the individual page and his or her last 10 posts at the time of analysis. Research variables include the following:

A- Demographic variables include: gender, place of residence, field of activity

B- Variables related to the page on Instagram include: number of followers, number of following, total number of shared posts, time of last 10 posts, number of likes, number of comments, language of posts, having a photo, image or The text, the tone of the message, the prominence of the celebrity in the posts

C- Variables related to shared messages: Highlighting of messages related to: a- Self and personal life, b- Criticism and protest, c- Recommendation and encouragement, d- Honoring, reminding and thanking and e-Advertising. These 5 general categories are obtained after content analysis. Each shared post (including video, image, and text) is categorized and indexed in terms of featured messages. It should be noted that each post can contain several featured messages. The presence of a celebrity as the main subject; Make-up, clothes, decor and scenery, speech, manner of addressing, etc. have been examined as his show and lifestyle, as well as her/his point of view.

The variables are quantitative and qualitative in nature and are extracted and completed from sample Instagram pages and posts. This study has face and content validity, which means that the indicators and qualities analyzed in appearance correctly assess the research topic and represent the selected content

sections. In this regard, 3 specialized experts in communication and cyberspace have been consulted. The reliability of the research was confirmed by an arbitrator by re-evaluating 5% of the messages and agreeing well with the researcher (more than 90%).

Finding

According to the data in Tables 2 and 3, the studied celebrities have an average of 7.9 million followers. Hassan Rivandi (stand-up comedian) is at the top of this list with 14 million followers at the time of research. Among these 20 samples, 55% are male and the rest are female. 70% of these people live in Iran and most of them are artists (actors and singers).

Table No. 3: Descriptive statistics related to celebrities with the most followers on Instagram

Sex		place of residence		known as		
Female	Male	Iran	out of Iran	Artist (actress, singer and stand-up comedian)	athlete	Active in social networks and models
9 (45%)	11 (55%)	14 (70%)	5(30%)	17 (85%)	1 (5%)	2 (10%)
total	20 (100%)					

According to Table 4, these people follow an average of 139 people, notably some of whom do not follow anyone on their page. They have also shared an average of 933 posts since joining Instagram. Their last 10 posts have been shared for an average of 54 days, with a minimum of 4 days and a maximum of 174 days. These posts have been liked between 10134 and 4750202, which means that each post has been liked more than 580 thousand times on average. If the number of likes is compared with the number of followers, it is found that about 7.5% of the followers approve or like the posts. Posts that contain photos or videos or content from a person's personal and private life are the most liked.

The reviewed pages have open comments, meaning that users can post comments. In a few cases, some comments are blocked or restricted for some posts. In the 200 posts analyzed, an average of 10.792 comments were written, which means that 0.13% of the followers commented on the posts.

Table 4: Descriptive statistics related to celebrity pages

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Number of followers (million)	5/6	14	7/9
Number of following (per person)	0	652	139
Total number of posted posts	91	2607	933
Time to post the last 10 posts (day)	4	174	54
Number of likes for 200 sample posts	10134	4750202	588960
Number of comments 200 sample posts	0	141496	10792
Percentage of shared images	58/5		
Percentage of shared video	42		
Percentage of shared texts	88		
Percentage of videos under one minute	77/4		
Percentage of short texts (less than 5 lines)	70		
Percentage of Persian writing	75		

According to Table 4: Celebrity posts have 58.5% image, 42% video and 88% text. 0.5% of the posts had both image and video. In most cases (91.5%) the image contains only one photo, videos often (77.4%) less than one minute and the text of 70% of the posts is short (less than 5 lines). Writing language in 75% of the posts is Persian, 13.5%. Percentage was English and the rest was Persian along with English.

The tone of the shared posts (meaning positive, energizing, and hopeful versus negative, sad, disappointing) was positive in 80% of images, 56% of videos, and 44% of texts; in other cases, the message has a negative tone, both positive and negative, and neutral. About 80% of the posts are dedicated to themselves

Messages are examined in 5 general categories based on the highlighted content: a) messages related to self and personal life, b) criticism and protest, c) advice and encouragement, d) honoring, reminding and e) thanking and promoting. Each shared post can have one or more messages highlighted in different

contexts at the same time using a photo, text or video. Therefore, the frequency of each index in the message is calculated from 200 posts and its percentage for all of them is calculated separately from 100; the information is given in Table 5 and based on it:

A. In the category of messages related to self and personal life, the highest frequency (56.5%) is related to highlighting the beauty and attractiveness of the person, which is usually determined by clothes, makeup, body, home, entertainment, leisure and so on.

Then, respectively: personal and work ability (39%), financial ability and well-being (18%), showing lifestyle (7%), showing their privacy (6%), self-criticism or self-definition (5.5%) and showing emotions about personal affairs (4.5%).

B- In the category of messages related to criticism and protest, the highest frequency is related to criticism and protest against social issues (16%) and the performance of officials (12.5%), followed by topics related to social interactions (6.5%), respectively. Cultural changes (4.5%), issues related to families and special groups (2.5%), how to deal with nature (1%) and international issues (0.5%) have been criticized and protested. Among the issues raised: poverty and high prices, incompetence of the country's leaders, economic pressures, rising dollar prices, opposition to the death penalty, support for the black movement, attention to the environment, the crash of the Iranian plane, attention to trans people, can be mentioned.

C- In the category of messages related to advice and encouragement, the highest frequency is related to advice and encouragement for self-knowledge (5.5%) and having a happy, better and purposeful life (5%); They are followed by health, medicine and treatment (4%), better understanding of people and how to interact with them (3%), humanitarian and benevolent topics (3%), nature or environment (2%), respectively. And issues of coherence and solidarity (1%) have been recommended or encouraged.

D- In the category of messages related to honoring, reminding and thanking, the highest frequency is related to honoring and congratulating the occasions of family members, friends and colleagues (15.5%), followed by thanks and honoring the audience (9.5%), Respect and remembrance of the activities of others (7.5%), requesting the participation of followers (2.5%) and congratulations on religious and national occasions (2%). Among the items mentioned in this section: birthday greetings, condolences for the dead, compliments from colleagues and family, New Year greetings, Labor Day commemoration.

E- In the category of messages related to advertising, the most frequencies are related to advertising for their works, services and activities (27.5%) and advertising of works of art (22%), followed by advertising of commercial affairs (4%) and affairs. Charity (3%).

Table 5: Highlighted messages in shared posts

Message category	Highlighted messages	Frequency of 200	Percent
personal life	individual and work ability	78	39
	beauty and charm	113	56/5
	financial ability and well-being	36	18
	Self-criticism or self-definition	11	5/5
	Show lifestyle	14	7
	Demonstrate privacy (home, family members, etc)	12	6
	Show feelings about personal affairs	9	4/5
Criticism and protest	social issues of the country	32	16
	country's officials and managers	25	12/5
	international social issues	1	0/5
	behavior of individuals in social interactions	13	4/5
	human behavior in dealing with nature	2	1
	cultural changes of the society and the ethics of the society	9	4/5
	issues related to the family and special groups such as women, youth and ...	5	2/5
	Other topics	2	1
Advice and encouragement	Advice and encouragement to have a happy, better and purposeful life	10	5
	Advice on how to interact or them	6	3
	Advice and encouragement for self-knowledge	11	5/5

Message category	Highlighted messages	Frequency of 200	Percent
	Health, medical and treatment recommendations	9	4/5
	Recommendations on nature and the environment	4	2
	Humanitarian and benevolent advice	6	3
	Recommendations for cohesion and solidarity	2	1
	Other recommendations	4	2
Respect, reminders and thanks	Honoring and congratulating the occasions of family members, friends and colleagues	31	15/5
	Honoring and thanking followers and polling them	19	9/5
	Honoring and thanking others for their activities or sharing other people's posts for appreciation, introduction and	15	7/5
	... Involve followes	5	2/5
	Congratulations on religious, national and artistic occasions	4	2
Advertise	Advertising for charity and non-profit	6	3
	Advertising for works, services and activities	55	22/5
	Advertising for business matters	8	4
	Advertising for art affairs	42	21

Among the highlighted messages, the messages that appear in at least 10% of the posts are listed in Table 6, according to which the first rank of the highlighted messages is related to beauty and attractiveness, followed by personal and work ability, advertising for works, services. And their activities, Advertising is for one's artistic affairs and financial well-being, all of which are related to one's personal life or work. In the continuation of criticizing the social issues (economic, social, political and cultural) of the country, honoring and congratulating the occasions of family, friends and colleagues and criticizing the officials and managers of the country are highlighted in the messages.

Table 6: Highlights in at least 10% of posts

Message category	Highlighted messages	Percentage of message repetition	Rank
personal life	Individual and work ability	39	2
	Beauty and charm	56/5	1
	Financial ability and welfare	18	5
Criticism and protest	Critique of social issues (economic, social, political and cultural) of the country	16	6
	Criticism of the country's officials and managers	12/5	8
Advertise	Advertise for your works, services and activities	27/5	3
	Advertising for art affairs	21	4
Respect, reminders and thanks	Honoring and congratulating the occasions of family, friends and colleagues	15/5	7

Conclusion

Iranians with the most followers on Instagram are all celebrities whose cyberspace has played an important role in maintaining or increasing their reputation, and given that they are often known as artists, other media, including television and cinema, have influenced their initial reputation. .

The results show that the lifestyle and advertising of the works and programs of these people has been strongly highlighted. For them, posts are an important aspect of work and even life, and in most cases they represent themselves directly and clearly in text, hashtags, images or videos.

Due to the importance of being seen on social media for them, messages are often prepared with time, money and accuracy, and studio images and videos confirm this.

However, the number of likes and especially comments indicates the low participation of followers, which may be one of the reasons for the high volume of posts shared on Instagram and the high amount of information provided in it. But these messages seem to be seen in large volumes, even if they are not implicitly endorsed or encouraged and users do not respond with likes or comments.

The analysis of the posts shows that celebrities publish and highlight their messages on various topics, such as personal and professional life, social status, advertising and business, social interactions, and so on.

Celebrities living outside of Iran have paid less attention to Iran's domestic affairs and highlighted most of their personal and professional issues, although there are also posts on social issues that are not common. Celebrities living in Iran have paid attention to social issues inside Iran. But above all, they represent and highlight their own personal and work concerns, and then point to some social issues, economic problems, or the Corona pandemic. They get more likes and comments when they share their private and personal issues.

It is very important for celebrities to be seen, approved, different, and famous in cyberspace, even if they sometimes complain about it; But this brings them fame and income. As a result, they are more likely to try to get attention in this space. Excessive presentation in celebrities' messages can greatly lead them to their obsession with approval and visibility, which is why it is a kind of narcissism in the messages.

Narcissism is defined as the ability to maintain a relatively positive self-image through self-regulatory processes, emotion, and the environment, and has both healthy and of pathological states. Healthy narcissism can increase feelings of independence, self-esteem, and well-being by tending to accept positive perceptions; While in the case of of pathological, people become disturbed if not approved (Soleimani et al., 2015).

It seems that paying much attention to approval in this space can facilitate the field of pathological narcissism.

The abundance of themes highlighted by the beauty, charm, well-being and success that are directly and indirectly present in the messages, leads the followers, consciously or unconsciously, to focus too much on themselves and their desires. People who, like celebrities, seek to show off with make-up, clothes, food, celebrations, etc .; They are kind of contagious narcissism. As previous research shows

 (Including studies: Alnopaolo, 2018; Klassen et al., 2018; Khademian Kalhori, 2020; Abbasi and Jafari, 2020; Al-Qais et al., 2018; Razipour, 2018; Ijtihad and Kashafi Nia, 2019) and Kashafi Nia, 2019),

Following a lot of messages on Instagram affects the lifestyle, especially the ostentatious and consuming lifestyle, and puts people in comparison and competition with each other in this type of lifestyle; this is the reason why theatrical identification in particular is widespread in society. People who try to be approved to have a shows of the best consumer goods, the best camera angle, the best emotional expression, and to convey to others a sense of happiness and joy that is sometimes unreal; This issue causes a decrease in self-esteem and a sense of happiness, as mentioned in previous studies (Dion 2015; Zargar, 2020).

Social media has increasingly enabled people to interact with each other. In the meantime, celebrities as a reference group can act as media leaders and have a lot of influence. The highlighted messages of these people mostly seek and encourage a kind of personal identification with a conspicuous consumption lifestyle.

This issue is also affected by the conditions of society (consumer society with many economic problems and great importance to economic status) which affects the celebrity and he also rides the wave to maintain fame - that is, both condemning the conditions of society and using it. To maintain social status and visibility. In fact, as important and influential people in the media, they help to reproduce many of the demonstrative, consumerist, and judgmental cultural values.

This problem is exacerbated by the effect of the halo, because the audience and followers, under the influence of interest, charm or art of a person in one area, generalize this knowledge and pursuit in other areas, and thus the influence of this group further It shows that if we do not know enough and control it, the halo effect can certainly have a negative impact on our lives.

Teaching media literacy to users and popular people on social networks, strengthening and encouraging social responsibility in celebrities as a reference group, teaching the principles of publishing and republishing news and information in cyberspace helps social media users to behave more consciously, actively and favorably.

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