Innovation Approaches of “WhispersInTheCorridors.com” in the Field of Indian Bureaucracy: A Case Study

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ABSTRACT

This study describes the business model for the website whispersinthecorridors.com. It analyzes the various factors for the popularity of the whispersinthecorridors.com and finds out that the main reason for this popularity and success is targeting group of the website, i.e., the top bureaucrats and corporate elites. In the proposed model, the credibility of whispersinthecorridors.com is based on the context of fruition, stimuli, and mental schemata. These factors analyze the sources of news of whispersinthecorridors.com and hence analyze the possibility of happening of the news which is put on the website in the near future. The SWOT analysis of whispersinthecorridors.com further analyzes the various aspects of the website. A module interaction process is explained to find out how whispersinthecorridors.com collects their news and the various steps involved. This study further examines why there are no competitors of whispersinthecorridors.com till now, even in this highly competitive environment of journalism.

Keywords: Bureaucrats, Context of Fruition, Journalism, Mental Schemata, Module Interaction Process, Stimuli, SWOT

INTRODUCTION

India is governed by the politicians and bureaucrats by means of delegated legislation. Administrative accountability is enforced by various controls. Media is one of the means to keep the administration under a close watch and in check. Backed by around 40 years of journalistic experience, owner of whispers in the corridor, turned toward the Internet to fulfill his dream of creating a site tracking decision makers (administrators, politicians and corporate world) of our country. The Website carries tidbits of information about transfers and postings of IAS and IPS officers around the country. An officer might even get to know some whispers
about themselves, such as whether he is likely
to be posted out soon. With a considerable fan-
following in the state bureaucracy, most officials
can be seen hooked on to their computers during
office hours, browsing the site which they claim,
provides a bird’s-eye view of the happenings
in the country’s bureaucracy. The site launched
by the owner of whispersinthecorridors.com
 carriers “inside news about government policy
changes and personnel”.

The Whispers publisher, the media incarn-
ation, had its beginning as a Hindi journalist
reporting for a news agency from Ujjain. He
came to be posted as newspaper correspondent
in Bhopal, in early eighties. He worked for the
Free Press Journal that had opened an edition
from Indore. For someone new to the print
media (he had till then been a UNI wire service
reporter), the publisher kept up a steady flow of
‘exclusive’ news stories, much to the surprise
and envy of his colleagues in the media. He
was quick to earn a grudging recognition from
media peers; he developed a network of contacts
in official and political circles.

Molded in traditional style of journalism,
the editor of whispersinthecorridors.com used to
write a very popular weekly column “Satta Ke
Galiyaro se…” (From the corridors of power)
(source- cities.sulekha.com). The column
revolved around happenings and grapevines
doing rounds in the corridors of power. The
column was very popular among common
man and bureaucracy and is still remembered
after 15 years. He edited Bhopal-based English
dailies, National Mail and Hindi daily Dainik
Naidunia. He has been associated with the UNI,
Free Press Journal, Dainik Bhaskar and the
Hindustan times. He had been writing columns
on bureaucracy before launching his sites.

In 2001, the owner with 40 years of jour-
nalism career thought of doing something new
and started experimenting in electronic media
with his website “whispers in corridors” with
two operators and a single PC. The site caught
the attention of viewers with its authentic and
concise information on transfers/promotions
of bureaucrats/technocrats, policy matters and
other juicy stuff related to policy makers.

Starting with 2 hits on the very first day of
the launching of the site, at present the number
of hits have crossed 1,00,00,000(one crore). Out of these, around 87500 are officials from
the cow belt.

Objectives of the Study

To summarize the objectives of this paper are
as follows

1. To describe a business model for the website
   whispersinthecorridors.com.
2. To find out the various factors for the
   popularity of the website and analyze its
   process of working.
3. To find out the targeting group of the
   whispersinthecorridors.com.
4. To analyze why there are no competitors
   of the whispersinthecorridors.com till now
   even in this highly competitive environ-
   ment of the journalism.
5. To give insights on the changes taking
   place in journalism’s relationship with its
   consumers.
6. To analyze what is the future learning from
   the success of the whispersinthecorridors.
   com.

Review of Studies

In the literature review, we first analyzed the
Portal sites which are the earliest ones on the
Web either as a search engine (such as Alta
Vista), a browser service (such as Netscape),
or an online service (such as American Online)
that are frequently used by Web users (Webo-
pedia, 2001). When these portals launched their
service, they started out with an advertising-
supported model, trying to maximize audience
size and deliver advertising for advertisers.
Such early presence on the Web gave portal
sites a first-mover advantage as they enjoyed
the highest top-of-mind recognition among
Internet users as an Internet brand (dot.com).
As Shamdasani, Stanaland, and Tan’s (2001)
study shows, a web site’s reputation is very
important for the advertising effectiveness
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