

Islamic New Media Ethics

ZainudinZaheril, Islamic Science University of Malaysia, Malaysia

Abstract

All the ways treaded into the twentieth century depicts people received most of the information by word of mouth, mails, or print media in a globalizing world. Today, bear in mind, technological expansion in communication traditions and endurance raced and distorted the variance vis-à-vis information amidst sender and receiver – new media. Information streams are now wide-ranging, varied, flexible and accessible, under circumstances; the principles of conversation always unclear to focus as a focal point of effective communication. Particularly, the purpose of the study is to determine the ethics of new media in relation to Islamic fundamental by put the focal point on concepts of ethics in both Eastern (Islam) and Western fundamental; identify the issues of ethical in new media and explanation from Islamic fundamental; and suggestions to address Islamic ethical guidelines on utilization of new media. Harnessing library research, correspondingly, this essay scrutinizes the notion of ethics in substratum of Islamic fundamental in consort with Western fundamental respectively. The evidence will be strengthening by means to uphold the noble Quran as well as Hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him). This study tender of that major ethical issues such as privacy, digital intellectual property (IP) and information security becomes champion in addressing globalized new media. This paper proclaims of that ethics in relation to new media should be vision from the Islamic over and above the Western lens. In the long run, this paper invites of that the new media users to be mindful on the addressee's understanding in stimulating of the entire Muslims world.

Keywords: Islam, communication, ethics, new media, globalization

Introduction

With the spectacular growth of high-technology industry in a globalizing world; satellite, computers and any means of communication have become the backbone of Muslim new life style. Digital ages through the new media have created a host of potentially new misuses and the computer-related crime has become a growing phenomenon. Since Marshall McLuhan (1964) foresees global village, the traditional criminal activities such as theft, fraud, forgery and mischief turn out to be digital as well as compelling subject to puts in focus. So, this is the logic of that there are increasing opportunities for consciously or unconsciously engaging in unethical or illegal behavior.

Not to mention, in the digital ages, the new media produces the world's largest interconnected environment. It is the most recent communication tool of the world where a user can transcend borders and have access to the books, encyclopaedias, newspapers, bulletin boards, video arcades, hyper malls, broadcast stations, the movies, grapevine, travel agency and mail order - all at one stop, in a global village. With the advent of the new media, the users are faced with the challenge of how it can be used in proper manner as well as avoiding unethical issues if applied as it should be.

Although the lexicons of media or new media are not directly portrays in the noble Quran, but several words which interconnected with particular matter appears. In conjunction, rebounding to Islamic tradition, the similarity of connotation of communication in relation to the new media emerged in Arabic to pronounce the meaning of Islamic communication media. The word *ittisal* and *wasa'ili'lam* brings the meaning of delivering and method of transmission respectively. Correspondingly, census of communication media written in the noble Quran such as *qala* (to speak), *nabba'a* (to inform), *qara'a*(to read), *sa'ala*(to ask), *sami'a*(to listen), *balagh*(to deliver), *da'a*(to call), *bashar* (to convey glad tidings), *awsa* (to advice), *tadhkirah* (to convey) and *maw'izah* expressly to echoes the means of delivering and receiving data or information atmospheres - communication (Mahmoud, 2002; Khiabany, 2003; 2007; Mowlana, 2007).

Seemingly, communication in regards to the new media is not city of forbidden in Islamic fundamental since the modern inventions brings beneficial to mankind in complexes ecosystem. But, it must be bear with the sufficient of utilization in the name of God and for

His cause *Lillahitaalaas* written in Al-An'am (6:102) "*That is Allah, your Lord; there is no deity except Him, the Creator of all things, so worship Him. And He is Disposer of all things.*" Incontestable, modern day machines, instruments and devices in communication garage are not belonging nor ought to any religion. Therefore, new media is permissible of utilization depending on the objective and consequences to the earth's population.

Objective of the Study

Particularly, the purpose of this study is to determine the ethics of new media in relation to Islamic fundamental. Apart, this study attempt to propose the Islamic ethics in regards to new media in order to endeavours the globalized world. Achieving this aim entails this study to address such objectives as follows:

- a. To find out the concepts of ethics in both Eastern (Islam) and Western fundamental.
- b. To identify the issues of ethical in new media and explanation from Islamic fundamental.
- c. To provide suggestions to address Islamic ethical guidelines on utilization of new media.

Review of Literature

This section will discuss in brief the theoretical underpinnings and conceptual frameworks related to as applicable to this study although may not be exhaustive. For a deeper theoretical context, the views and arguments of the forerunners of communication in globalized world will be discussed. This study is fore-grounded on the broader theoretical legacy of communication in regards to ethics and new media as well as Islamic fundamental in shaping the scope along with discussion, recommendations and conclusions of this study.

New Media in a Globalizing World

Perhaps, I would start from the media which is all around acting a very significant role in society today and has changes the map of communication system in Third World Country. As access to information is essential key to every democratic society, the media has a responsibility to provide impartial information. Regardless, of whether in print or floating in the web, from the shows on TV, the music performance on the radio, to the books, magazines and newspapers each day and more recently, the new media.

In the globalized world, the flow of information is important for the development of communities and the media are vital in relation to facilitate as well as propagates. Without a doubt, this is the evident from the key proponent of modernization theory, Daniel Lerner (1952) seminal thesis, *The Passing of Traditional Society*. Undeniable, without a wide array of information, people's opinions and views would be limited and further impressions and conclusions of the world around will be underdeveloped. Thus, in present globalized territory, without the media, people in societies would be isolated, not only from the rest of the world, but from governments, law-makers, and neighbouring towns and cities.

Mainly, the onrush of new media is inevitable and is not without challenges and implications. The connotation of new media is a broad term in media studies that arisen in the latter part of last century with on-line access to content at anytime and anywhere. The novel communication model in regards to new media are not simply a linear extension of the old as both of them provide information and entertainment to large audiences accessibly as propagates by Claude Elwood Shannon and Warren Weaver (1949) in *The Mathematical Theory of Communication*. The solitary alteration is that the new media capable to expand the range of resources to a new dimension.

Nowadays, most technologies defined as new media are digital having characteristics of being manipulated, networkable, dense, compressible, and interactive. The Internet, World Wide Web (WWW) and social networking sites such as *YouTube*, *Facebook*, *Twitter*, *Instagram*, *WhatsApp* and recently *Telegram* are examples of new media. However, new media does not include traditional technologies like television programs, films, magazines, books, and paper-based publications - unless enclosing technologies that enable interactive feedback of users. In due course, new media is radically transforming and revolutionizing human communication process and upshot a novel democratic communications environment to get closer to knowledge as well as social change (Logan, 2010; Bennett, 2013; Lipschultz, 2015).

For the most part, the changing society and the emergence as well as impact of globalization had a direct bearing on the distribution and perception of new media. Seemingly, the role of new media in globalization defines as a process in which worldwide economic, political, cultural and social relations have become increasingly mediated across time and space

(Rantanen, 2005). In the interim, the new media contends to have a central place in globalization due to three reasons: firstly, that media corporation has increasingly globalized their operations; secondly, that the global communication infrastructure facilitates global information flows; and finally, that global media play a key role in how we view events across the world in developing shared systems of meaning (Terry, 2007).

In the wake of globalization, this aspect of global new media culture has been the main focus of media theorists. The new media with reference to globalization could be seen as consisting of the junctures and disjuncture of five scapes: *ethnoscapes*- changing landscape caused by movements of people via tourism, migrants and refugees; *mediascapes*- both the electronic capabilities to produce and disseminate information and the images created by these media; *technoscapes* - the fluidity of technology; *financescapes*- movement of currency markets and money across boundaries; *ideoscapes*- movement of ideas and images (Appadurai, 1996). Indeed, this is the point of departure for ethics before landing in the landing zone of ethical communication.

In a nutshell, globalization has ensured individuals and communities are exposed to a plethora of information of other communities in the globe. Whether it is contents ethical or unethical on traditional media or the new media, all bring the other worlds into their homes and minds locally. According to the Neo-Marxists' view globalization is a process where the feeling of belonging is no longer connected to different places. Under the dynamism of globalization, people's sense of belonging will become as one single global society (Jackson and Sorenson, 2010).

Geneses of Ethics

Derived from the Greek *ethos*, the lexicon of ethics brings the meaning of habit or custom. However, it is been always interchangeably and formed circumstances state of morals which Latin word of mores or custom (Lillie, 1975). As the branch of philosophy's axiology, ethics is the study encompasses organizing, preserving and acclaiming morally concepts of the right and the wrong code of conduct which are indispensable to be practical in daily life (Redner, 2001). In plain English, ethics deals with value in relation to human conduct in regards to rightness and wrongness of certain actions as well as to the goodness and badness of the motives and ends of such actions (Lipschultz, 2015; Donsbach, 2015). Eventually, the stage

of the games of communication in the field of new media demands the doctrines of governing new media, the right and wrong facets of it, the moral-immoral scopes appropriate to the ethics substratum Islamic fundamental.

The Outlook of Western Ethics

Although it is hard to pin down plus the shaky views of connotation, ethics tenders an appraisal of right and wrong, religious beliefs, law as well as the acceptance of society in nature. Since Homo sapiens (human) being descendent of animal ancestors, hypothetical Darwinism's evolutionary scientific theory views ethics in regards to morality by means of a problem of natural history and there is no absolute gap between man and animals. However, Aristotle's *Nicomachean* seminal study, ethics is distinct from the theoretical sciences but methodology with the central tenets of passions or feelings, faculties or capacities and habits or states of character. As a part of philosophy, Merriam-Webster dictionary well-defined ethics at the platform of rules of behavior based on ideas about what is morally good and bad. Present day depicts scholars since Immanuel Kant (*Kantian Ethics*), John Stuart Mill (*Hedonic Utilitarianism*), William David Ross (*Moral Theory*), John Rawls (*Rawlsian Ethics*), Philippa Foot (*Virtue Ethics*) and Seyla Benhabib (*Discourse Ethics* - reformulate) such as J. Herbert Altschull (1990), John C. Merrill (1996) Thomas William Cooper (1998) and Claude-Jean Bertrand (2000) echoes of that ethics should be address at the stand point of technology, transparency, justice, harm, autonomy, privacy and community (Ess, 2014; Patching and Hirst, 2014; Plaisance, 2014). In western perspectives, one should stares ethics is what an individual journalist, or a specific media institution, or a specific society believes appropriate for the material benefit of the journalist, or the press, or the broadcaster, or of the society as a whole.

The Outlook of Islamic Ethics

In general, a few scholars have attempted to define an Islamic framework for new media ethics. As a result, null code of ethics emerged based on the Islamic principles in present days. Under circumstances, the situation occurred for the reason of that lack of support from governments, lack of interest and enthusiasm by journalists, lack of support from scholar plus society in general. By reason, Islamic new media ethics resemblance as well as have not been able to demonstrate the inherently diverse from the western means of new media ethics (Ramadan, 2009). On the record, by all accounts, the focal point of Islamic fundamental

reveals of that ethics must be views from the philosophy of The Book of God, Al-Quran as well as the practiced of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), As-Sunnah. Indeed, as the plural lexicon of *akhlaq*- disposition or virtue or morality or nature or ethics or manner, the intimacy word of *khuluqin* Al-Quran and ethics always cited in regards to review of literature of academic world as written in Al-Qalam (68:4) an Ash-Shu'ara (26:137) respectively “*And indeed, you are of a great moral (khuluq) character*”; “*This is not but the custom (khuluq) of the former peoples*” (Omar, 2010) Perhaps, based on the logic propositions of *amarma'rufnahimungkar*(commanding right and prohibiting wrong) practices by *ummah*(nation) as well as clutching *tawheed*(oneness of God-Allah) gives array of term such as *khayr*(goodness), *birr* (righteousness), *qist*(equity), *'adl*(equilibrium and justice), *haqq*(truth and right), *ma'ruf*(known and approved) and *taqwa*(piety) to address the ethics in globalized world (Fakhry, 1991; Hasan, 2010).

Research Methodology

This study based on secondary data consisting finding documentation as well as Internet archive by harnessing library research - books, journals, press reports, discussion papers, comments and debates.

Findings: The State of Arts of New Media Ethics

As technology advances and evolves, the new media continue to tenders as well as ensure a greater impact on society. As a result, this climate has made the discussion of new media ethics becomes a compelling subject in globalized world. Consequently, Islamic fundamental calls, perhaps mandatory to the users to harnessing the Al-Quran and As-Sunnah with the purpose of addressing the commons major ethical matters or issues such as privacy concerns, digital intellectual property rights (such as copyrighted electronic content) and information security. Therefore, this study offers the views to illuminates the new media ethical issues in the bright of Islamic plus Western fundamental respectively. Without a doubt, most of the factual in academia depicted new media permit users to send and receive information via Infobahn for almost everything such as discourse and assortment of data.

However, bear in mind, there is a restriction in picking and throwing of information along with decision based to the Islamic fundamental as written in Ash-Shams (91:7-10) “*And (by) the soul and He who proportioned it, And inspired it (with discernment of) its wickedness and*

its righteousness, He has succeeded who purifies it, And he has failed who instills it (with corruption)." Unquestionably, the first step at the point of embark before speaking about ethical is intention as narrated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim *"Actions are according to intentions, and everyone will get what was intended. Whoever migrates with an intention for Allah and His messenger, the migration will be for the sake of Allah and his Messenger. And whoever migrates for worldly gain or to marry a woman, then his migration will be for the sake of whatever he migrated for."* To be sure, grounded to the Islamic beliefs, every single act has to be intended for the sake of God (Allah) and surely a good deed with the wrong intention will be not rewarded in the Hereafter – all the way to *Jahanam*.

Privacy

Every time ever since puts the index finger on keyboard will leaves a cyber-footprints for bigger audience in a globalizing world. The vast amount of information particularly written in the "big book", *Google*, gives new insight of ethical concerns such privacy in everyday life. In plain English, I would say of that privacy is a state in which one (individual/group) is not observed, disturbed, segregate, seclude and isolate by other people or being free from public attention – leave me alone but leave lonely (Adler and Clark, 2015; Horner, 2015; Lipschultz, 2015; Morley, 2015; Vermaat et. al., 2015).

Rendering Islamic tradition, privacy in the state of utilization of new media demands the respectfulness and permission to avoiding exploitation, abuses or misuses as written in An-Nur (24:27) an Al-Hujurat (49:12) respectively, *"O you who have believed, do not enter houses other than your own houses until you ascertain welcome and greet their inhabitants. That is best for you; perhaps you will be reminded."*; *"O you who have believed, avoid much [negative] assumption. Indeed, some assumption is sin. And do not spy or backbite each other. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his brother when dead? You would detest it. And fear Allah ; indeed, Allah is Accepting of repentance and Merciful."* Further, on the authority of Abu Hurairah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, *"Beware of suspicion, for suspicion is the most false of speech. Do not seek out faults, do not spy on each other, do not contend with each other, do not envy each other, do not hate each other, and do turn away from each other. Rather, be servants of Allah as brothers"* (Al-Bukhari and Muslim). In both verses from Al-Quran as well as As-Sunnah jog our memory about the restriction and prohibition of new media users to enter physical or mentally into others belongings without

permission. Indeed, this is the logic of entering or hacking someone information on the net prior to permission of the owner.

Digital Intellectual Property (IP)

Intellectual property (IP) refers to intangible creations of the mind, such as inventions; software; literary and artistic works; designs; and symbols, names and images. In the real world, IP should be protected in law by means of patents, copyright and trademarks, which enable people to earn recognition or financial benefit. However, in the globalized world, it is difficult to protect intellectual property for the reason that digital information can be simply copied, distributed and the worst case, misuses. Nevertheless, by striking the right balance between the interests of innovators and the wider public interest, the IP aims to foster as well as enables decoration of creativity and innovation into digital environment (Reynolds, 2014; Dagne, 2015; Donsbach, 2015; Morley, 2015; Vermaat et. al., 2015).

In one hand, procurement of both *Aqliyah* (acquired) and *Naqliyah* (revealed) knowledge are really needed and Islam encourages the followers to learn with the respect of ownership. On the other hand, Islamic fundamental looks ruthless activity in gaining knowledge such as piracy, plagiarism and misquotation as act of stealing, robbery and dishonesty respectively. Further, Islam forbids that kind of activity and advocates of demanding consent in each acts of new media users as written in An-Nisa (4:29) “*O you who have believed, do not consume one another's wealth unjustly but only (in lawful) business by mutual consent. And do not kill yourselves (or one another). Indeed, Allah is to you ever Merciful.*” On the authority of Abu Hurairah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, “*The fornicator who fornicates is not a believer so long as he commits it and no thief who steals is a believer as long as he commits theft*” (Sahih Muslim).

Also, new media users obligates to comply with the digital IP as written in Al-Maidah (5:2) “*O you who have believed, do not violate the rites of Allah or (the sanctity of) the sacred month or (neglect the marking of) the sacrificial animals and garlanding (them) or (violate the safety of) those coming to the Sacred House seeking bounty from their Lord and (His) approval. But when you come out of ihram, then (you may) hunt. And do not let the hatred of a people for having obstructed you from al-Masjid al-Haram lead you to transgress. And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression. And fear*

Allah ; indeed, Allah is severe in penalty.” The Prophet (peace be upon him) echoes as narrated by Muslim, *“Whoever bears arms against us is not one of us, and whoever cheats us is not one of us”* (Sahih Muslim). In the real setting, sadly, the issues of digital IP keep mounting and not forthcoming since the Muslims miss to embrace the real thought of Islam.

Information Security

New media has been touted as new and exciting platform of communication since Marshall McLuhan (1964) prophecy of global village. Undeniable, the vast growing technologies of new media have been used to strengthen communities by making information readily available in addition to empowering the forgotten one. Therefore, this climate has made the topic in issue of security needs to be monitored or addressed in today digital sphere - hacking, espionage, theft, identity theft, cyber stalking, malicious software. Generally, the notion of security refer to quality or state of being secure, that is, to be free from danger (Merriam Webster; Oxford Dictionaries; Oxford Advanced learner’s Dictionary; Yan and Wier, 2010; Cross, 2014; Gonzalez, 2015). Nevertheless, policies, guidelines, procedures as well as technical gears are not permits to give protection or gatekeeper on information in new media technology. Beyond doubt, the major intentional or unintentional threats ranging from digital crime to failure of technical part respectively. As a result, major destruction swept the new media turf, for examples, monetary theft, larceny, losing valuable data and services (Bidgoli, 2015; Chawki, et. al., 2015; Holt et. al., 2015).

Zooming from the lens of Islam, the focal point of new media security is outlawed once the element of safety is breached or penetrated. The book of God stated in Ali-Imran, (3:104) *“And let there be (arising) from you a nation inviting to (all that is) good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, and those will be the successful.”* Moreover, perhaps, the case of Alexander The Great (*Dhul-Qarnayn*) vs. Gog and Magog (*Yakjujand Makjuj*) will be the guidance of new media users to portray the differentiation between the role as *khalifah*(vicegerent) and devils in regards to security as written in Al-Kahf (18:94) *“They said, "O Dhul-Qarnayn, indeed Gog and Magog are (great) corrupters in the land. So may we assign for you an expenditure that you might make between us and them a barrier?"* In the kingdom of Muslim, the followers must escaping from the severe punishments of breaking the rules, distress or conflict, disturbances of security as well as emerging frightening among

the community. Evidently, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "*He will not enter Paradise whose neighbor is not secure from his wrongful conduct*" (Sahih Muslim).

Discussion and Recommendations

The result of three major ethical issues shows the significance of embracing the Islamic fundamental in order to address the utilization of new media in globalized world. Therefore, this study tends to exemplify more or less ways and means to reduce the unethical means of utilization that enables as a role model of new media resources in a digital age.

First, especially Muslim, it is essential to hold tight on *Iman* (faith) in any circumstances of being in the state of utilization of new media for the sake of *Jannah* (paradise) as narrated by Abdullah bin 'Amr, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "*A Muslim is the one who avoids harming Muslims with his tongue and hands. And a Muhajir (emigrant) is the one who gives up (abandons) all what Allah has forbidden*" (Sahih Al-Bukhari). Further, as a *khalifah* in the state of *ummah*, the users obligates to grasp *taqwa* (piety) as an eccentric key to avoids the bad deeds of devils as written in Al-Baqarah (2:208) "*O you who have believed, enter into Islam completely [and perfectly] and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy.*" This verse brings the meaning of performing ethical good deeds as the Prophet (peace be upon him) said and narrated by Umar bin Al-Khattab, "*The reward of deeds depends upon the intentions and every person will get the reward according to what he has intended. So whoever emigrated for worldly benefits or for a woman to marry, his emigration was for what he emigrated for*" (Sahih Al-Bukhari).

Second, nurturing ethical substratum Islamic fundamental should start at home before opening the door to release the occupants. Indeed, cultivation of ethics or moral since early childhood is a vital key before utilization of new media as written in Luqman (31:17) "*O my son, establish prayer, enjoin what is right, forbid what is wrong, and be patient over what befalls you. Indeed, (all) that is of the matters (requiring) determination.*" Based on this verse, parents should ensure that their children are taught the real meaning and importance of Islam – Al-Quran, As-Sunnah, Islamic values, taught to breathing their lives in accordance with the rules of Islam and educates to defend religion by means of actions, words and preaching.

Third, the government which acts as a policy maker and constitutes legal regulatory must insert the implementation of the element of *Shariah* (Islamic law) especially Shafi'i school of thought in any condition or situation to address the legislation of new media as primary source - Al-Quran and As-Sunnah. In the same vein, reference should be made at the secondary source encompasses *Ijma* (consensus), *Kiyas* (analogy), *Ijtihad* (responsible individual opinion) and *Istihsan* (Juristic references). In my humble opinion, beyond contestation it is my conviction, although, fundamental of *Shariah* principally derived from the emulations of early Islamic rules by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his four rightly guided *Caliphs* (Abu Bakr as-Siddeeq, Umar Al-Khattab, Uthman Affan and Ali Abi Talib) but under circumstances it is applicable in globalized world.

Fourth, development of cutting edge software to detect the unethical matters in regards to new media to monitoring the real time users in digital age. For example, Hewlett Packard (HP) have been developed the software namely *Real User Monitoring* (RUM), but it is only focus on business matter and not the issues of ethics. Although there is a few time in efforts, but it is the mandatory job to be undertaken for experts in turf of communication technology. In the long run, phenomenon such as hacking, espionage as well as theft will be eliminate to secure information and data of the users of new media.

Fifth, as the *khalifah* in planet earth, the users of new media should have awareness at all level since acceptance of Islamic beliefs. The users must bear in mind to say a good word and do a best deed at all time as written in Ali-Imran (3:104) “*And let there be [arising] from you a nation inviting to (all that is) good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, and those will be the successful.*” This verse evidently shows the important of *amarna'rufnahimungkar* as the Prophet (peace be upon him) said and narrated by Abu Sa'id al-Khudri, “*He who amongst you sees something abominable should modify it with the help of his hand; and if he has not strength enough to do it, then he should do it with his tongue, and if he has not strength enough to do it, (even) then he should (abhor it) from his heart, and that is the least of faith*” (Sahih Muslim).

Finally, there are some precincts in this study which need to be measured. Firstly, the other research design instead of library should be taken into account in order to get better results. Secondly, the generalization of the findings of the present study might be questionable due to

the nature of data collection. Thirdly, the limited number of techniques of data collection may affect the findings. It is better for the next study, therefore, to include the proper and focus research design plus a bigger sample in relation to address the utilization of new media substratum Islamic fundamental in the direction of creating more significant results.

Conclusion

New-fangled improvement in communication technology and the existence of new media brings the issues of ethical in addition to unethical. Since Islamic fundamental encourages the followers to conveying message or *da'wah* across the border, the unethical issues of utilization emerged. The illegal doings particularly cyber-crime turn out to be a driven aspects to unethical activities which will transports the collapses of society. In order to ensure the pleasure and harmony of life in galaxy of Milky Way, the users of new media should grasps and back to the Islamic beliefs for the sake of *Jannah*. New media ethics substratum Islamic fundamental will provides more or less manners of utilization of new media in globalized world as well as shows the beauty of Islam which every single action must be done in appropriate habits.

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