



# Impact of Social Networks and User Generated Content – An India Perspective

**Blogworks- Blog the Talk** discussion series was conceived to feature the best of learning from the 'live web' through panel discussions, talks and one-on-ones – mostly conducted online.

It was to be a 'monthly discussion' but its already been 3 months since the launch of Blogworks but between our new business discussions, talks & workshops, writing the blog; (and of course) meeting our work commitments & deadlines, we haven't been able to keep that promise. Do hope that 'content' from the discussion below will make up for the gap. We hope to be more regular though (there are a couple of discussions already in the pipeline).

Much has also changed in the last few months- the terms blogosphere has become partly redundant, it's about Social Media or Live Web now, broader in what it covers. Social Networking and User Generated Content (UGC) have been gaining mainstream status. In view of that, it was pertinent that we discussed: **Impact of Social Networks and User Generated Content – An India Perspective.**

Joining in the discussion (in alphabetical order):



**Alok Mittal, Canaan Partners**

– Alok, a friend, former client 2 times over, is a Partner with Canaan ([www.canaan.com](http://www.canaan.com))- an early stage venture fund with focus on internet, technology and BPO space. A first generation entrepreneur, Alok is also a founding member of Band of Angels India - an organization comprising successful entrepreneurs looking to invest in seed stage businesses. Alok's community blog Venturewoods ([www.venturewoods.org](http://www.venturewoods.org)) attempts to bring the Indian venture community closer together. Alok is located in New Delhi.



**Amit Ranjan, Slideshare**

– Amit Ranjan, of whose product I am a great fan, is the co-founder & COO of Slideshare ([www.slideshare.net](http://www.slideshare.net)). Amit keenly follows emerging trends in the consumer internet space in India and writes a blog called Webyantra ([www.webyantra.net](http://www.webyantra.net)) about the Indian Web 2.0 space. Amit is located in New Delhi.



**Prerna Gupta, Yaari.com**

– Founder & CEO of Yaari.com ([www.yaari.com](http://www.yaari.com))- a social networking site for Indian youth. Prerna has led Yaari through rapid growth and widespread media coverage since its beta launch in October 2006. Prior to founding Yaari, Prerna was an Associate in Summit Partners' venture capital fund in Palo Alto, CA. Prerna is an economics graduate from Stanford University and presently splits her time between India and the US.



**Rajesh Lalwani, Blogworks Consulting**

(Moderator): Rajesh is a communication professional and his new offering Blogworks aims to deliver strategic social media solutions and know-how to brands & corporates for using 'conversational communication and marketing' effectively. Read more from him on his blog <http://blogworks.in/blog>

*All thoughts expressed by participants are personal opinion of respective speakers and do not represent the views of Blogworks or any other company/ organization.*

**Rajesh, Blogworks:** Alok, first of all let me congratulate you and your colleagues on your new investment in iYogi! I think it's an interesting next generation outsourcing concept.

Let me begin by asking you... networking on the net isn't new - sites bringing friends together, dating and matrimonial and even business networking sites have been there forever; but suddenly there is a lot of buzz about user generated content (UGC), content communities, social and business networking - communities are emerging all around. What brought about the change?

**Alok Mittal, Canaan Partners:** Thanks. I think the move towards consumer generated content has been gradual and limited on a geographical scale and people want to contribute quick byte-sized content - a la, discussion boards etc.

MySpace extended the frontier in terms of user expression. I think YouTube is perhaps the most extensive example of this, and driven by:

- Broadband
- Focusing on content which already exists with the users in a form that can be shared.

**Prerna Gupta, Yaari.com:** The idea has been around for a while but I think what really brought around the change was when a few sites, mostly well-funded, executed the idea in very clear and simple way and had effective marketing to make their sites tip.

**Amit Ranjan, Slideshare.net:** The community aspect being mashed up with the content is what seems to be spurring the growth at this stage. As Alok said, the content already exists; people are already creating it; now the ability to share that content in a social context has added the impetus.

There are pure SNS (Social Networking Sites) sites where networking is the end and there are content oriented sites where SNS is the means and not the ends.

**Rajesh, Blogworks:** Alok, how much of this unleashing has to do with the possibilities that Google AdSense and other contextual ad options brought along? That the owner of a community had, for the first time, at least a possible option of moving away from transactions or selling display ads, which may not always be a possible option?

**Alok Mittal, Canaan Partners:** I think that's an interesting survival technique and helps in that context. However, that's too small a stream for a reasonable business, especially as you get to rich media sharing, you definitely need something more as source of revenue/capital.

**Rajesh, Blogworks:** But do you think that to some owners it has given a dream to make it big.

**Alok Mittal, Canaan Partners:** I doubt anyone has