
Report On
The Social Currency

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Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The internship report submitted is my own original work while completing degree at Brac University.
2. The report does not contain material previously published or written by a third party. Information taken from outside sources is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
3. The report does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

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Acknowledgement

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I dedicate this report to Ms. Seema Nusrat Amin. Thank you for your constant guidance, love and support.

Introduction

If I ask you, what is the most prominent form of currency in the world right now ? You might be tempted to answer, “Perhaps the U.S. Dollar, or even the Euro.” But in both cases, your answer would be wrong. When we shifted from the industrial age to the information age, we purposefully altered our understanding of currency. Suddenly he who held the most information, became the most powerful entity in the room, therefore, information became the new currency. But what if I told you that we have currently evolved beyond the information age, and currently reside in the age of social revolution? Think about it, with search engines like Google, Bing etc. at everyone’s fingertips, information is accessible for free to the masses, and a new form of currency has taken over this new world, the currency of “attention.”

In fact, it is a very old media tradition to trade consumer attention for money from advertisement companies. Our “attention” is the one and only possible product which has made billions for surveillance capitalist companies throughout the world. There is a very common misconception that social media sites are free to use. But if that were to be the case, how can they sustain their multibillion-dollar equipment and staff? In the Netflix documentary *The Social Dilemma*, Tristan Harris, a former Google design ethicist quotes, “If you are not paying for the product, then you are the product” (13:19-13:22). But if we are the product, then who are the real customers?

Advertisement companies are the real customers, who pay for the accounts that we use. They pay social media companies to keep us engaged on the screen as they force-feed us various commercials.

Media is not a charitable organization. It thrives on a specific business model, and at the core of any given business model lies profit. As a media student, I have always been fascinated about the extent in which social media affects our lives, and how they generate profit. Getting recruited as a social media intern in one of Bangladesh's fastest growing English Newspapers was certainly one of the most exemplary achievements of my life, as it would help me better understand how monetization could be derived of social media platforms. I joined *Dhaka Tribune* on 12th of February, 2022. I have been following their Facebook page since 2020. *Dhaka Tribune* currently has close to 2 million subscribers on five different social media platforms, and I am tasked with the responsibility of providing them with the latest and most important news items.

In this paper I will extensively describe all the skills I acquired during my internship period, and the experiences which I gathered while working for *Dhaka Tribune* that helped formulate my current perception about the news media industry. I will also be talking about all the necessary skills which I learned at BRAC University through a plethora of media courses in the later part of the paper, as they have contrived me to become an employable journalist.



Fig 1 : Social Currency (McCleary)

A Brief History of Dhaka Tribune



Fig 2 : DT logo (Tribune)

The *Dhaka Tribune* is one of the major Bangladeshi English-language daily newspapers. It also operates an online Bengali version known as *Dhaka Tribune Bangla* (DTB). DT has a strong readership in Bangladesh, especially among the young generation who are always online; as well as a wider readership internationally. The newspaper is notable for organizing the Dhaka Literary Festival.

Dhaka Tribune is the fastest-growing English-language news media in Bangladesh's history, with several award-winning journalists working with the newspaper. The newspaper began publication on 19th April 2013, and since then has been on a steady climb in both sales and growth potential. The largest shareholder of *Dhaka Tribune* is Gemcon Group. The newspaper's founding and chief editor is Zafar Sobhan, who is a 2005 Young Global Leader and 2008 Yale World Fellow. He has worked in multiple prestigious organizations such as *The Daily Star*, *The Independent*, *Dhaka Courier* and so on. He is also Bangladesh's first internationally syndicated columnist who has had his articles published in many internationally recognized newspapers and magazines such as *The Guardian*, *The Sunday Guardian*, *Time* and *Outlook* among many others.

The Journey Begins

The image shows the Dhaka Tribune logo, which consists of the words "Dhaka Tribune" in a bold, sans-serif font. "Dhaka" is in black and "Tribune" is in red. The logo is centered within a light gray rectangular area that has a faint, white, hand-drawn outline of a triangle behind it.

Dhaka Tribune

On February 13th, I joined *Dhaka Tribune* as Social Media Journalist. I still did not know what my responsibilities would consist of, but was sure of my sheer enthusiasm about getting to know how a news media organization operates online.

In the first week of my internship, I was familiarized with different key aspects of social media handling by Tilka Binte Mehtab, my on-field internship supervisor. When I was made an admin of the *Dhaka Tribune* Facebook page, I felt an intense sense of power surging through my veins.

“I now have access to the psyche of 1.6 million people !” I thought to myself. The immediate thought which popped up in my mind seconds afterwards was, “With great power, comes great responsibility,” a very famous quote from the movie *Spiderman*. I felt the responsibility of enlightening a million individuals on issues that are dismantling my beloved country from its core. A perfect balance between responsibility and power is what I was seeking from the first day of my internship.

Nowadays, starting from the garbage cleaner to the Prime Minister of a country, everyone is on social media. The growth of a social media-based news platform is more eminent because of the level of comfort it provides to the reader. Whenever someone reads an article online, it is very easy to share their instant opinion through the comment section. It also provides the readers with an inherent sense of unity as they can very easily circulate any news article among their peers, friends or family members with the use of a single click. But every coin has two sides. In order to gain something, one also has to face certain drawbacks. The concept of addiction might seem to be very awkward in such a case, “How can someone be addicted to news?” You might ask.

Whenever the readers refresh our Facebook feed, they do it with the intention of getting something new on the top of the screen, as DT posts a new article almost every 5 minutes. This follows the same technique as the slot machines in casinos. The readers do not know if they are going to get lucky and get something new and we keep on refreshing the feed. And every time when they get trapped in Facebook for 10 minutes more, they have to go through at least 3 or 4 advertisements which generates funds for us.

In the second week of my internship, I learned how to make poster posts on Canva and post them on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Pinterest and Twitter. Almost everyone who is on Facebook, is also on Instagram. This phenomenon of having multiple accounts in various social sites is called a bridge. Therefore, to supply the bridge with any particular content, it is not enough to simply post it on one particular platform.

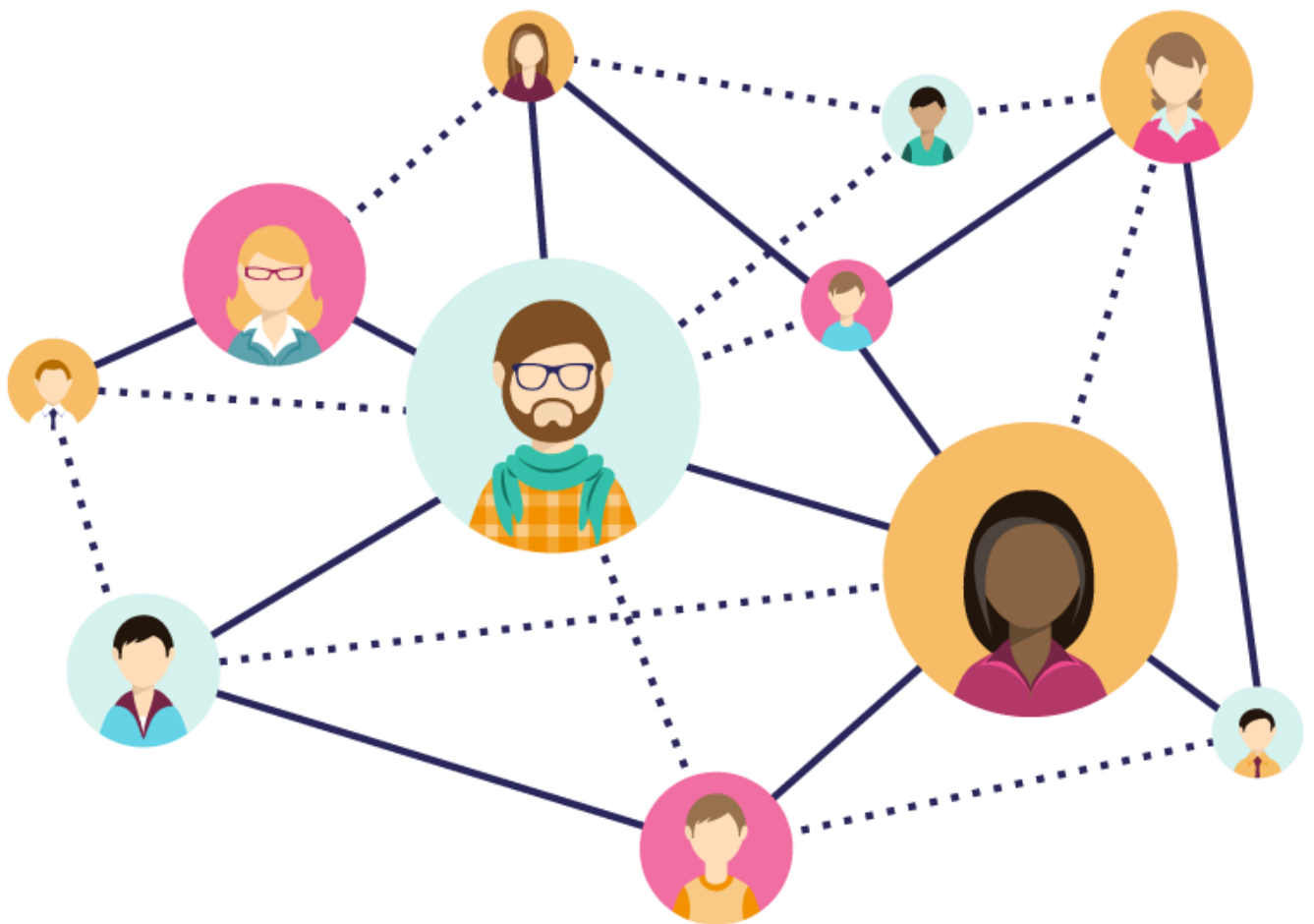


Fig 3 : The Social Media Bridge. Connecting People (Society)

Besides, every social media platform has its own way of generating income for the content creator, and so, why not use all the means of production if it is readily available? Even if the exactly opposite scenario is to be true, and some of our readers only use a certain platform of social media, posting it on all the platforms makes even more sense as otherwise some of them might miss any particular content. From my experience and analysis, I have seen that different types of news performs differently on each unique platform. For example, news regarding any political unrest gains a very high reach in both Facebook and Twitter, while performing poorly on LinkedIn, Pinterest and Instagram.

My primary task was to sort through daily news items from the *Dhaka Tribune* website and pick the ones capable of generating the most reach potential. Keeping all the variables of different platforms in mind, I have to select the articles which would perform well in all of them. This required certain knowledge about the reader base and the current sociocultural context of the country. Luckily, I have been using social media since 2012 and am in sync with the current trends and likability of any particular news item. I have been following *Dhaka Tribune's* Facebook page since 2020.

After I am done sorting, I have to make posters which contain a relevant picture and a headline for the news. It is a psychologically proven fact that pictures capture the attention of the eyes before texts. Therefore, the likelihood of any reader reading through my posts depends heavily on the graphics. I also had the luxury of tweaking the headlines if I found them to be too mundane or not click worthy. In the social media posts, I have to carefully write a catchy

description which will make the readers want to read more, and click the link below, which would then take them to *Dhaka Tribune*'s website. The description has to be elaborate enough to hold the reader's attention, but not so elaborate that they lose interest. Although it is quite similar to the phenomenon of "click-bait," it does not resemble it entirely. Like click-bait content, I cannot provide my readers with fake news. It is statistically proven that fake news travels six times faster on twitter than real news. But even so, a journalist's ethics would never allow me to stoop to fraudulent news providing. The slogan of *Dhaka Tribune* is "News as it is, nothing more, nothing less." I want to adhere to this motto and be truthful to my responsibilities. The main responsibility of the Social Media Wing of *Dhaka Tribune* is to generate growth in *Dhaka Tribune*'s website traffic.



Fig 4 : Website Traffic (Hoben)

Analytics at the Core

In the third week of my internship, I was introduced to the analytics team of the Social Media Wing who collect, store and modify data for *Dhaka Tribune*. They keep track of every like, comment and share on posts, tweets and re tweets, monitor comments and so on. Every week they compile all the data to form a data sheet. Every content creator of *Dhaka Tribune* has their own data sheet which is updated every week. By going through any particular person's posting data, it is very easy to find out their posting patterns, and places on where they need improvement. Statistics and data also help compare the performance of fellow journalists. For example, who had the most likes on their posts this week, which post gained the most audience engagement and so on.

Analytics is a core component of our business strategy. *Dhaka Tribune* uses Google Analytics to exact real-life business results from social media. Google Analytics gives us access to unique insights and machine learning capabilities. We then use that data to gain monetary value. In the homepage of Google Analytics, there are noticeable insights such as how many readers are currently active at www.dhakatribune.com in real-time. The Goggle Analytics Artificial Intelligence uses machine learning to sort the data according to their patterns. It also provides us with growth and decline data, which helps generate our monthly reports. According to Google Analytics, the primary mistake which I was making was being too wordy. The AI went through all my post data and showed me a clear pattern where I could see that the posts where the description consisted of a single line, or a line and a half, received more reach, as well as likes, comments and shares, compared to the ones which were a bit lengthier. Therefore, I quickly started to reduce the size of the captions and saw the magic happen in real time.

Our supervisor explained to all us interns about the importance of social media data collection and how it helps us to improve our post performance gradually. The data which derives from analyzing my past posts such as the time of posting, the number of likes, shares, comments etc. can help me predict patterns which are favorable. Behavioral psychology suggests that each unique individual has their preferred time-slot in which they only want to consume a certain type of news. By closely monitoring our daily feed preferences, we can see at what time and through which news we gained the most reach. After that, it becomes simply a matter of following through, to finally apply the knowledge which we have harnessed through analyzing data. I quickly began to notice how all the crime related posts were going up in interaction after 6pm. The same would be posted as a news article in the morning, when it just got uploaded in the website, but would not receive much highlight. The poster repost of the same news item in the evening would do wonders !

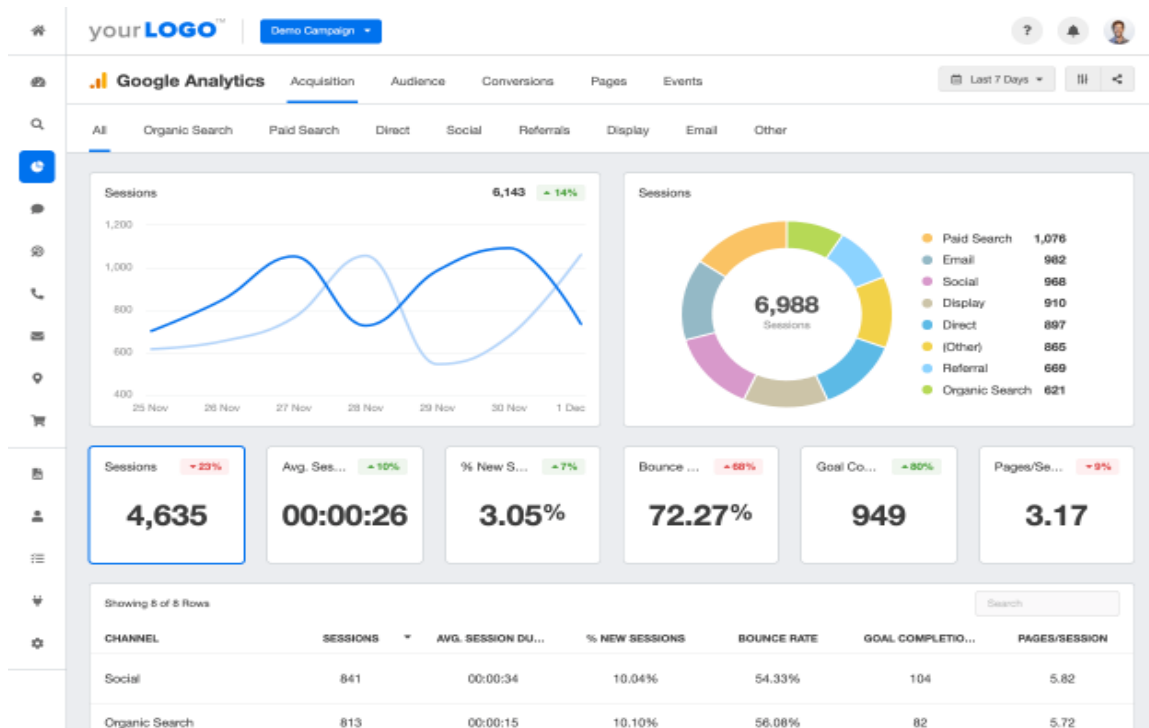


Fig 5 : Google Analytics (Analytics)

Monetization

In my fourth week of my internship, it was finally the time when I was supposed to receive my salary. Thinking about my salary, I started to wonder about the exact monetization process of the social media sites in which I was uploading content and posts. I previously did a lot of research on social media sites and how they monetize but yet did not have any hands-on experience. This would be the first time that I would actually be making money out of spending time on social media and doing research. In order to be perfectly clear about the topic at hand, I asked my supervisor about the monetization process of my posts.

Meta, an American multinational technology conglomerate based in Menlo Park, California, which is the parent organization of Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp, pays its content creators for basic screentime exchange. For example, for every 10 minutes that someone spends on a particular page, they have to at least go through 4 advertisements. Meta gets paid for these successful ads shown, and the page gets a portion of that payment as “monetization” from meta. It also takes into account the reach of the posts as that determines how many people saw the advertisements. Therefore, the more likes, comments and shares I get on my post, the more money I generate. I finally understood what I needed to do in order to perform better. I went through all four weeks of my own post data, noticed a few key patterns and started to make a few slight changes. My precision started to increase gradually.

The Viral Team



Fig 6 : The act of going Viral (Leist)

The name of my team is “Viral Team,” and it consists of 6 members, 3 interns and 3 senior social media journalists. Just as the name suggests, our duty is to generate sensation among our subscribers and viralize any news which possesses potential. After two months of working for *Dhaka Tribune* and being closely associated with the news media world, my potential to judge a news article by its reach worthiness became very acute. By keeping the current sociocultural

context of the country in mind, I could easily pick 5 to 7 news items which I thought could break the internet that particular evening. After sorting through viral worthy news, I had to get it finalized by my editor. Once she would give the green signal, I would start posting the posters, or the news articles accordingly.

Although statistics and data help us determine which news articles are worthy of being reposted, certain types of news get us more engagement from our readers. For example, any political news regarding our Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, and her ruling party in power “Awami League,” generate thousands of reactions and comments on our social sites. After closely moderating the comment sections of such posts, I often notice that most people only comment to criticize the flaws in our government, which always leads to a plethora of hateful comments by Awami sympathizers and their field level workers, who are known as “Chatro League.” As a media organization which thoroughly believes in securing everyone’s freedom of speech, we always try to get rid of hate speech as soon as we detect it. But in a country where creative criticism is seen as the enemy of the state, the work of a journalist becomes quite perplexing. Also, a rare phenomenon which is unheard of also does well in the public engagement area. A particular news article about a mother killing her own two children by drowning them in a nearby lake and then running off with another guy really hit the nerves of our readers. A mother is a safe haven, a valiant symbol of a protector and savior to her child. For a mother to have done something so heinous is incomprehensible to many. Therefore, hordes of angry readers filled out the comment section of the post using slangs and derogatory terms, some even demanding death of the mother. The post was shared more than thirty thousand times and reached a peak of three hundred thousand reactions on Facebook in the matter of a day.

Boosting

To ensure the surge of new subscribers to our social media accounts I have to be persistent in sharing news articles which can keep the readers engaged and at the same time add more to our subscriber count. Whenever a post gets to a certain reach, more and more people start to notice the post, in short, the Matthew Effect starts to come to life. Some news spread like wildfire on social media, all it takes is a little push. This is where boosting comes into play. Boosting refers to the phenomenon of significantly promoting a certain post to thousands of consumers for a certain amount of money. Social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn and so on offer variety of packages which help any certain post to reach the maximum amount of people in the least amount of time. There are various categories and price ranges available for the content creator to choose from. The categories consist of post engagement, post traffic generation and so on. For example. I can boost any post for 1 Dollar a day on Facebook, and the engagement on my post will be enhanced. The post will get an enormous boost of exposure as Facebook itself will be promoting my post to my current and future subscribers on my behalf.

Have you ever started to browse Facebook, and after a certain amount of time suddenly a post appears which has the word “Sponsored” written on the upper right? That is a boosted post and if you even stop and stare at it for 1 or 2 seconds, Facebook algorithm will think that you have a preference towards that sort of product, and will show you more ads of similar content later. This is how people who have liked the Facebook page of *Dhaka Tribune* or any other news media agency are more susceptible to getting ads of news articles. As they already enjoy similar type of content, Facebook is sure that they would not mind reading another article. This is how boosting posts get us more subscribers daily.

After I finally got my boosting access, I felt as if I had evolved as a social media journalist. Now I possessed the power to tell the readers what is important and demands their most immediate attention. According to Matthew Effect, I only boost posts which are already doing well. By doing so, as the post is already up for monetization, I can use the extra reach on the post to generate more money. Boosting posts that are doing well pay for themselves in a way.

Sometimes there is no significant data or trait of a news article which can vouch for its success, as the news is one or first of its kind. In such cases it always depends on the fastest chariot in the race. If the reader base gets the news from our competitors earlier, they will gladly share that post instead of ours, as we have failed them in a way. On this accord, we receive a very low consumer loyalty, but we try to make up for it with our diligent efforts and fast forward reporting policies. There is no need to report the entirety of the news in a single article or at once, there is always the option of updating the consensus as the plot reveals itself further. These kinds of news items are always boosted at launch and with more money than usual, as we are trying to catch your eyes first. It is always first come first served in the news media business, and the reason why *Dhaka Tribune* is the fastest growing news media agency in Bangladesh is because we almost certainly never miss our mark.

Push Engage

Sometimes it is just not enough to boost the post as the reader might simply not be online. But when they choose to come online, the most important news item of the day might be stuck under a pile of other news items and might miss the reader's eye. Therefore, it cannot be simply be left to chance that the post will somehow find its way to our readers by miracle. I have to take measures into my own hand. By carefully monitoring which news article is getting the most reader attention, I have to Push. Pushing is the phenomenon which refers to sending subscribers direct notifications from our website. For pushing a certain news, we use www.pushengage.com. PushEngage is a paid platform which charges its user dollars based on how many times notifications were sent. PushEngage lets us send a direct notification to our subscribers on the basis of our current subscriber count and how many times we want to notify them daily. The current subscriber count of DT is above thirty-one thousand.

Whenever I find clickable news, I have to emphasize on how to present it to the audience. Sometimes I tweak the headlines by making it shorter and more mysterious, so that our subscribers are still interested to click on the link even after reading the notification headline. Exposure to too much information in the notification bar often results in the reader not clicking the link, and sometimes being annoyed to the point of unsubscribing. PushEngage also has AI Analytics which help us determine which news articles generated the most clicks. By carefully analyzing the patterns and behavior of our readers, I started getting almost two to three thousand clicks on any particular link sent.

Debug and Refresh

After two more weeks of analytics duty, I was appointed with another intriguing journalistic duty at *Dhaka Tribune*. News shared in our website or our social sites often have to be re-edited at some point in time. Some news articles take time to develop, and as new leads start to unveil, editors and sub-editors add or deduct certain parts of the online news article. My duty is to stay on standby at my workstation throughout my shift and respond to such queries about changes.

Once a change has been done to any particular news item, it is reported immediately through the DT Toolbox Messenger group. The link of the news article and commands such as DNR, Refresh, change headline and so on are given. According to the request of the editor or the sub-editor, I then have to modify the article accordingly.

DNR (Debug and Refresh) was my last duty as an intern at *Dhaka Tribune*.



Fig 7 : Debug logo (Rankin)

The Hard Goodbye

In Ramadan, there was an Iftar Party held at *Dhaka Tribune*'s head office in Panthapath. It was the first time I had actually gone to the office as I was a work from home employee. They had decorated it very beautifully and my happiness knew no bounds when I finally saw the main dish of the party, Kacchi Biryani ! It is undoubtably my most favorite food item.

When the festivities came to an end, my editor called me and all of my other colleagues to the meeting room. She told us that she was quite happy with our performance in the work field and would like us to sign documents of extending time here at *Dhaka Tribune*. I did not know how I could articulate it properly, but still rose my hand at the end to let them know that I had something to say. I began by describing my wonderful time there at *Dhaka Tribune*, how much I enjoyed working with them, and how much I learnt throughout these three months. Then I said, "I feel sad while saying this, but I cannot continue to work after my internship period is over."

I could see the disappointment in the eyes of my editor, Tilka Apu. Before I could say anything, she said, "Knowing you, you must have a very good reason to decline such an offer ! So, let us hear it then ?" Those words relieved me of my awkwardness and I could finally speak with a clear conscience. "I want to continue my studies. As a full-time student, I only can spare so little time for any sort of extracurricular activity, let alone a full-time job. If I could even work part-time, I would consider asking you for an extension, but I plan on securing a scholarship in my MFA, and therefore have to devote my entire schedule to studying harder than my competition," I explained with a smile of confidence on my face. My editor also started to smile and said, "You

are indeed a very hard worker, and we all can vouch for that. Go chase your dreams and make us proud ! The doors of *Dhaka Tribune* will always remain open for you. You are one of us now, and we would be happy to see u here if anytime you wish to return.” Everyone started to clap and cheer for me afterwards. My colleagues wished me good luck on my academic voyage ahead. I feel lucky to have worked with such dedicated people who taught me the meaning of professionalism. *Dhaka Tribune* will always a hold a very unique space in my heart as the first workplace of my life.

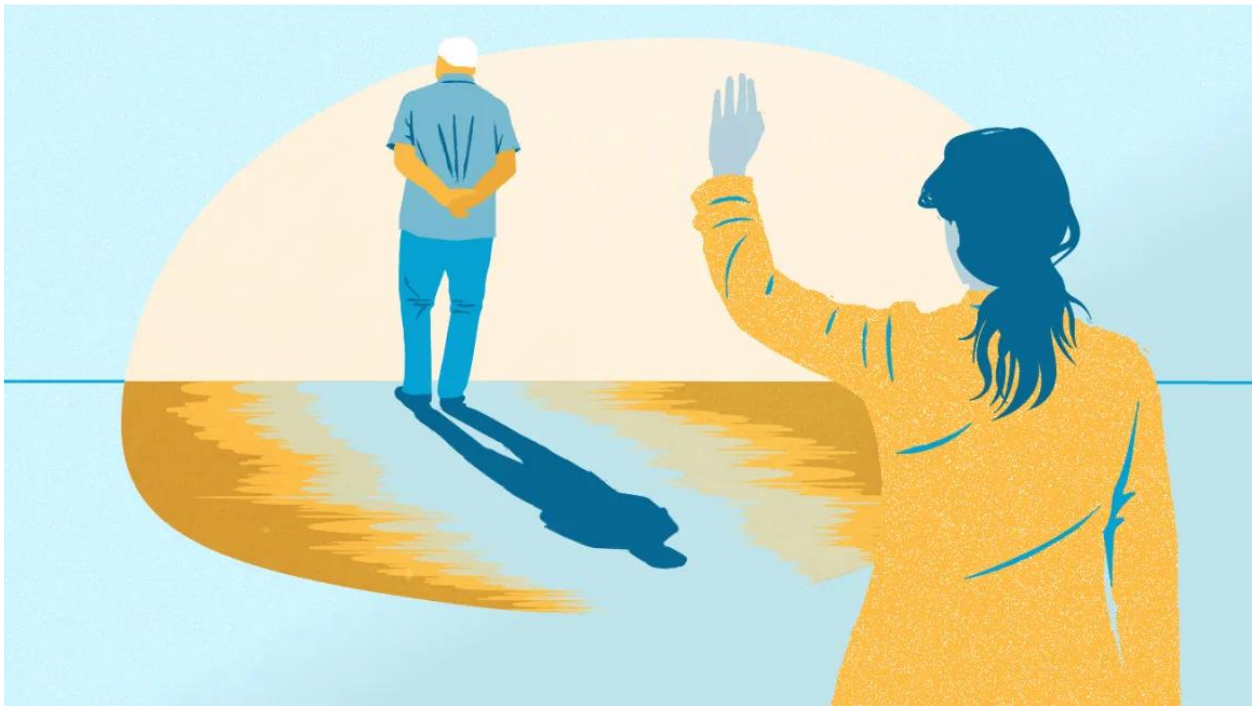


Fig 8 : Farewell (Koskie)

Challenges

When I heard that I was being recruited into the social media department instead of print, I felt both excited and a bit perplexed at the same time. I did not know what duties I would have to fulfill, yet, the thought of learning something new sparked a keen interest in my soul. Most of the things which I had to do in my first month of internship such as making posters, uploading video content on the website and so on were new skills which I had to learn on the job. Outside of my working hours, I would sit with my seniors in Zoom calls, and learn these necessary skills to perform my daily tasks. My skill of adaptability was certainly tested to its limit, but being a fast learner, I persevered through sheer will and determination. Being a journalist is a full-time job. This means no holidays, be it weekly or national. I only got a one day off a week and at first did not think much of it. When the first weekend came and I had to work instead of going out, I felt a certain level of displeasure. I still had to continue my full-time course load at Brac, therefore, the weekend was the only day I could actually go out. After two or three weeks of working however, it felt kind of natural for me to stay in and work on my computer even in the weekend. Every time that I would feel overwhelmed by workload, or moments of displeasure, I would quickly remind myself of who I was doing this for. Yes, I was doing it for myself, and so it would be pointless to cavil.

Although I was used to working in a group through my courses at university, working as a part of a team also came with its own dilemmas. Two members of the same team would be working on a particular shift, therefore, dividing the work equally among two people would be crucial. Many of my other teammates were also working alongside university coursework, and would sometimes ask me to carry on the whole shift by myself. Working as a team taught me the value

of patience, and how it is important for an individual to keep their sights fixated on the end goal rather than simple hinderances. Facebook article posting was perhaps the most challenging task among the ones which I did at *Dhaka Tribune*. The task in itself is very easy, but the pace of it is indeed very daunting. Every 5 minute I had to post an article on Facebook, and therefore, I would often be sitting at my desk for two to three hours straight, staring at my computer screen for posting constantly. Even when new articles were uploaded after a while, I would have to constantly refresh the website page to check if any new articles had appeared. With diligence and rigor, I overcame this challenge as well.

Application of Course work

The courses which helped me acquire the mindset of an employable journalist mainly consist of the ones in my major grid. I will be briefly mentioning the course title and the theories or skills learned from the specific courses in this segment of the report.

1. ENG 331: Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice

Eng 331 consisted primarily of examination of cultural and literary theories. By carefully looking at the relations between society and literary and cultural production, I discovered and came to an understanding of different latent functions of media as an organization. Besides the core concepts in cultural theory, this course also equipped me with the skills required to analyze and understand the processes of cultural production in our own society. Popular issues such as popular culture and cultural politics, feminist and post-colonial perspectives, advertisements and so on were highlighted in the course. One theory that I could connect specifically to my internship is John Storey's *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture*. Without the knowledge of what is popular or "trending," it is impossible to viralize any news article in social media platforms. By knowing how culture is formed, and how it is susceptible to alternation, it was easier for me to sway the audience of my posts to a predetermined conviction and generate the desired ratio of interaction.

2. ENG 333: Globalization and The Media

This course introduced me to post-modern and globalization theories, as well as theories of consumer culture, which I needed to know in order to form the catchy headlines and also post

selection. The study of audio-visual media, as well as other forms of cultural production that lend to the creation of global public opinion and the creation of a global culture helped me to reach a better understanding of which posts would do well on social media and why. The study of a growing global culture and its interactions with local and regional cultures helped me formulate my posting strategies accordingly. In my internship, I actually saw how Jean Baudrillard's Concept of Hyperreality plays out in the news media industry. Every article that we see online is edited and re-edited to the extent in which it looks presentable to the target audience. Often times reality gets trumped by simulation, just because it will most likely generate the desired outcome.

3. ENG 401: Editing

This course helped me tremendously in every aspect of my internship. The editor's role is crucial while posting on any kind of social media account. As a simple mistake in spelling or punctuation can reduce the credibility of our writers to our readers, the one in charge of posting content has to be extra careful. My abilities such as reading proofs, structure and headings, spelling and vocabulary, grammar, meaning and clarity, punctuation, capitals and hyphen, dialogue and extracts, perspective and level, the author's voice, consistency and house style, numbers and math, use of italics and so on have significantly improved due to the practice sessions in class.

4. ENG 404: Copywriting

Principles of Copywriting introduced me to the concepts of preparing copy for print media, radio, television and films, copywriting for social marketing and so on. The knowledge accumulated from this course helped me to write better headlines for my posts. Other aspects

such as preparing texts for brochures, designing campaigns, working with graphics and layouts helped me to design just the perfect poster for any significant news article.

5. ENG 440: English for the Print Media

This course provided me with the English Language skills necessary to work or write for newspapers, journals and other print media. The comprehensive understanding of how a newspaper or journal is organized helped me to better navigate my time at *Dhaka Tribune*. The course also introduced me to the different aspects of journalistic writing such as news reporting, feature writing, literary-critical analysis, news commentary, op-eds and post-editorials, planning a story, including cross-checking and editing.

ENG 465: Translation Studies

This course primarily consists of theory and practice of translation. As Dhaka Tribune has both its English and Bangla news versions, it is absolutely necessary for anyone working there to be proficient in both of the languages. Although Bangla is my mother tongue, I never had much practice of writing Bangla with a keyboard. Throughout the course I was familiarized with typing Bangla and also with problems of translation from Bangla to English and vice versa. Therefore, I was a suitable candidate who could perform well in both the English and Bengali website posts.

Knowledge is POWER

“Knowledge comes of learning well retained, unfruitful else,”- Dante.

Philosophical thinkers such as John Caldwell Holt have well established the proponent of “unschooling” or “DE schooling” as they believed that institutional knowledge is certain to undermine someone’s untapped potential thinking capabilities, and would harm their future prospects of attaining success. I would, however, like to argue otherwise.

Institutional knowledge not only paves the way for future prospects, but also acts as a guide, and provides evidence of one’s acquired knowledge and capabilities. With the grace of my Lord, I have been blessed enough to study at a prestigious university such as BRAC. But I often find my peers criticizing the way the undergraduate degree curriculum has been established. “The credit count of courses belonging to the subject I am majoring in is almost one fourth of my entire required credits to graduate ! Why should I study all these extra courses if they are not going to help me find a better job, or be better at my desired field of study?” they exclaim with despair.

There is this certain thought etched in all of our minds that university is a place where you come to just get a degree, which will afterwards translate into a well-paying job, and that is it. I do not completely disagree with this notion of thinking, but there is certainly much more to studying at a university than just getting a degree. Starting from Eng101 to Eng490, each course has helped me develop into the student I am today. All the General Education courses helped me understand the basic principalities of life. In my elective courses, I selected courses belonging to different schools of thought, such as Anthropology, Law, Business, just to discover how these subjects are deeply intertwined with my everyday life. All of the group study sessions, group projects,

assignments and extracurricular activities have given me new and improved social skills, collaboration techniques, and most of all, taught me the importance of having humility and being patient with my peers and acquaintances. The courses in the “Media and Culture” grid, which belong to the area of my major, have undoubtedly taught me the skills required of a journalist, such as editing, copywriting, awareness of one’s own current sociocultural context and so on. But all of the other courses which I had to complete in order to graduate also helped me at almost every aspect of my 3-month long journalist career. I believe in Dante’s philosophy by heart. Every book that I have ever read in my life has constituted to the development of my psyche today. Therefore, I like to think of myself as, “The jack of all trades, and the master of ONE.”

Conclusion

Throughout the experiences which I have accumulated in this tiny period of my life, I have come to terms with the understanding that regret is always harsher than failure. I have failed in my aspects of my life, yet learnt crucial life lessons from each of them. But the thoughts that still haunt me to this date are all the opportunities which I did not take. The fear of failure was so deeply engraved my mind that I simply could not make myself take the beginning step. After years of introspection, I finally decided to pursue what interests my soul, rather than blindly following the social norm. When I decided to switch from engineering to arts, I knew very well that all the odds will be stacked against me, my parents would not support me financially, my friends would ridicule my efforts with every chance they get, the one I love might flee my side in the horrors of an uncertain future, and yet, I choose to move forward with my heart's earnest yearning. The same situation arose while I was completing my internship at *Dhaka Tribune*. I knew beforehand that there are various other sectors to choose from in the Media industry, but I was particularly interested in Journalism, and therefore choose to intern at a newspaper. While working, I obtained different constructive life lessons which will stay with me till the day I die, but also came to the conclusion that the life of a journalist is not what I thought of it to be. Everything seems pleasant and unique when studied in theory, while in practice we get the chance to experience the detrimental side of reality. Just as every coin has two sides, I measured the pros and cons of a journalistic lifestyle, and finally decided that I would rather pursue the one goal which I had in mind when I choose to take up a degree in arts, to become an artist. The particular art which I now find to be exponentially captivating is the art of Filmmaking. The three-month long internship period has certainly helped fuel my passion for filmmaking even

more, and the lessons which I have gathered while working will stay with me forever. I took up Journalism as a career choice because of the social and financial security which comes with it, but what good has come of any man who has forever been contained in his comfort zone ? With the courage to go beyond social expectations, unshackled ambition, and incandescent self-confidence, I shall try my level best to become a human being who is true to both himself and society, for every ounce of kindness which I have received, I pledge to return it tenfold.

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Samples of work



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