

# Investigating the Role of Social Media in Facilitating Literary Collaborations and Community Building

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## **Abstract**

Literature simply means the written records of the race, including history and sciences, as well as poems, songs, stories, novels, and dramas. It serves as the artistic record of life and civilization. The next characteristic of literature is suggestiveness, evoking our emotions and imagination rather than our intellect. All arts reflect truth and beauty that exist in the world but go unnoticed until they are brought to light by sensitive human souls. However, good literature is indeed universal, transcending nationalities and boundaries, and is only bound by the principles of humanity. It focuses mostly on basic feelings and emotions such as love, hate, joy, sorrow, fear, and faith, which are crucial aspects of human nature; the more it portrays these emotions, the more it resonates with people from all backgrounds. Thus, literature can be broadly divided into two main aspects: one for enjoyment and appreciation, and the other for analysis and precise depiction. The progress of media, artificial intelligence, ChatGPT, and information technology has caused a significant change in how literary content is produced and shared. The impact of social media in our daily lives has a pervasive effect. The study of this paper is to explore the multifaceted impact of social media on the style of literary writings and how some platforms of social media like Twitter, Instagram, Meta YouTube, TikTok, and several others have shaped the modern evolution of communication.

**Keywords:** Social Media, Instagram, Twitter (X), Meta Twitterature, Blogging, Artificial Intelligence, Digital Media, Fan Fiction etc.

This research article aims to explore how social media influences the style of creative writing and literature. The study examines how advancements in science and technology, specifically Information Technology, Artificial Intelligence, digital humanities, and digital media, have shaped the new literature and influenced the development of new literary works. This research plan is divided into sections. The above-mentioned sections of this research paper will be examined closely and separately based on the research outline. The Introduction section provides a summary of the research and emphasizes the importance of the subject matter. In the Literature Review section, we will examine research on similar subjects such as social media, literature, etc. In the Research components section, we will elaborate on the research methodology used in this study. In the disclosure phase, this study might utilize fresh investigation strategies. In the concluding section, we will recap our study results and lastly recommendation section suggests new research opportunities.

## Introduction

Literature simply means the written records of the race, including history and sciences, as well as poems, songs, stories, novels, and dramas. It serves as the artistic record of life and civilization. The next characteristic of literature is suggestiveness, evoking our emotions and imagination rather than our intellect. All arts reflect truth and beauty that exist in the world but go unnoticed until they are brought to light by sensitive human souls. However, good literature is indeed universal, transcending nationalities and boundaries, and is only bound by the principles of humanity. It focuses mostly on basic feelings and emotions such as love, hate, joy, sorrow, fear, and faith, which are crucial aspects of human nature; the more it portrays these emotions, the more it resonates with people from all backgrounds. Thus, literature can be broadly divided into two main aspects: one for enjoyment and appreciation, and the other for analysis and precise depiction. The progress of media, artificial intelligence, ChatGPT, and information technology has caused a significant change in how literary content is produced and shared. The impact of social media in our daily lives has a pervasive effect.

## Literature Review

The definition of the word 'social media' is so vague that people often confuse it with the word 'social networking.' There is a lot of debate about the actual definition of social media. The trend is to equate social media with social networking websites like Meta, YouTube, X, WhatsApp, Messenger, Telegram, etc., which is itself a misleading definition. Social networking is a sub-category of social media. The word "social" refers to the interaction with other people by sharing and receiving information from them, respectively. The term "Media" refers to an instrument of communication like the internet. The Internet is new-age media, while TV, radio, and newspapers are examples of more traditional forms of media. It enables us to interact with people worldwide and to put our indigenous ideas and perspective on the digital platform.

This is the era of Digital Humanities, Information Technology, and Artificial Intelligence. New technologies are constantly changing and evolving, replacing older ones with the latest versions. Similarly, new literature is emerging, having a unique effect on science and technology. The rapid transformations and changes can bring about problematic situations. However, they can also create wonderful transformations of knowledge and literature by assimilating technology with society, art, literature, and culture. The impact of social media in our daily lives has a pervasive effect. In his ground-breaking work on media in German literature, Friedrich Kittler has shaped the perspectives of scholars, leading them to regard literature as a distinct form of media (Trüper, 2019). His view on history considers literature as a means of generating knowledge. German literary theorist Friedrich Kittler argues in his influential writings that many academics treat literature as a form of media, according to Trüper (2019). In his approach to literature, he sees it as a way to generate information that is largely shaped by the technology used to reproduce and store it at the time and place it was made. Obviously, literature has the power to create significant change by connecting with people on a personal and sentimental level. Media scholar and "father of media studies" Marshall McLuhan, in 1964, coined the phrase "The medium is the message" in his book *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. In 1967, he collaborated with graphic designer Quentin Fiore to co-create *The Medium is the Massage: An Inventory of Effects*.

In the perspective of Friedrich Kittler, a German literary theorist, literature is simply one type of genre within the broader realm of media (Trüper 2019). Emphasizing the necessity for innovative literary techniques, advancements in technology have significantly altered and are consistently reconsidering the

relationship between media and literature.

### **Evaluation of Social Media**

The study explores the multifaceted impact of social media on the style of literary writings and how some platforms of social media like Twitter, Instagram, Meta YouTube, TikTok, and several others have shaped the modern evolution of communication.

#### **Emergence of Micro-Content**

Twitter and such equal social platforms have imposed the word limits to their subscribers. The challenge of conveying meaningful ideas, messages, and perceptions within a limited word order leads towards a confinement. This confinement is the art of distillation in terms of microcontent. This challenge of word limits has emphasized brevity, precision, conciseness, and the art of presentation. Microcontent has emerged as a dominant force in reshaping the style of contemporary creative writing and literature. This trend has changed the other forms of writing also, impacting the trends in how authors construct sentences and paragraphs for maximum influence and impact.

#### **Advent of Social Media Devices Hashtags and Trends as Literary Tools**

Several social media platforms have introduced hashtags as a tool to categorize and discover content. However, they evolved into not more than that of functional tools. These hashtags are employed as literary tools by writers. They employ them to impart messages, and convey emotions, and add humour and provide some additional context as well. The emergence of viral trends on digital platforms like TikTok and others has resulted in a new dynamic way of storytelling writing. To engage with a wider range of audiences, they incorporate these trends into their narratives.

#### **Instagram a Visual Storytelling Platform**

Instagram, a visual-centric platform, has redefined the relationship between words and imagery. On Instagram, writers frequently unify their prose with visually appealing graphics or photographs. The fusion of words and images creates a more engrossing and involving reading experience. Authors take into account not just the rhythm and flow of their sentences, but also the visual impact of how their words create images on the screen.

The conversational mode of social media has not only influenced the shift towards informal and authentic tone in writing but also changed the perception of the modern society. People appreciate the subject matters which relate with their sentimentality, necessity and authenticity. This shift towards sentimentality, necessity, and authenticity has permeated numerous writing styles, in terms of social and political issues, social and political propaganda, literary awareness and literary implementation, experimentation and innovation, marketing and planning so on and so forth. The real-time nature of social media facilitates instant feedback, which alters the way writers approach their art and craft. They can examine the reactions of the viewers and accommodate their contents immediately. This iterative process of writing redefines the adaptability of writers, which is based on feedback and response from the viewers. This iterative writing process is a departure from traditional publishing models to a responsive mode of feedback. The interconnectivity of social media has increased awareness of global issues. This awareness has been reflected in new writing trends, which place an increased emphasis on inclusive language and a commitment to social responsibility. Thus the goal of writers is to use language that can reflect the sensitivity of diverse perspectives, leading to a more inclusive and understanding readership.

#### **Twitter (X) as a Social Device for Emerging Literature**

In the 21st century, we have been surrounded by many forms of social media and due to the revolution of

media the world itself has become a globe. In the globalized era, one can never imagine a life without social media—YouTube, Meta, X, WhatsApp, Messenger, Telegram, Snap Chat Pinterest, Reddit, Discord, WeChat, Viber, LinkedIn, Baidu, Douyin, Qzone, Spotify, SinaWeibo, Microsoft Teams, Quora, Share Chat etc. Two scholars Petro Helo and Yuqiuge Hao investigated the significant usage of media in 2019. According to them, “the evolution of media has transformed the processing and transmission of information. The development of the media industry has been greatly influenced by information technology”. Carla Raguseo also in his article entitled ‘*Twitter Fiction: Social Networking and Microfiction in 140 Characters*’ illustrates how the web has transformed into a new platform for interactive and open publishing. He went on to say that the users of the web are responsible for the revolutionary trends they initiate in language and literature on social sites. The shift of the paradigm signifies a new role for the user, from a consumer to an active producer. These new platforms enable them not only to access social media but they can also contribute. These significant changes in social media and the web continue to have a profound impact on social, educational, and cultural spheres. In this age of globalization, new ways are emerging to create and deliver literature worldwide. Creative writings or literary projects have been developing on social media, that is perhaps the most relevant progress in literature and art in the last decade. The emergence of micro fiction or twitterature is quite a surprising event in literary tradition. Twitterature refers to a unique and original, self-contained work of fiction. It consists of a 140 character stories, fan fiction or it would be a retelling of literary legends, folk tales and classics. Twitterature, the new literary genre, is experimental for authors. The format of twitterature and the limitation of ‘140’ character space has originated two approaches. First, the authors who write stories follow the format of twitterature exactly, while the others consider it a limit in spite of a structural constraint. It includes various genres such as poetry, fun fiction, short stories, etc. Here, the aphorism is popular on account of its shortness, and it suits the word limit of Twitter.

### **Fan Fiction**

Fan fiction has also become a popular form of writing and has spread worldwide with the advent of Twitter. It is an integral part of twitter literature. Sean Hill and Arjun Bose are considered pioneers in this form of writing. 140 character stories can fit into a single tweet. In 1998, the non-profit site FanFiction.Net was launched, allowing users to upload content in any fandom. A very famous example of modern fan fiction is E. L. James's *Fifty Shades of Grey*, originally written as fan fiction for the *Twilight* series, featuring Bella and Edward. To avoid copyright infringement, James changed the names of the characters to Ana and Christian for her novel. This practice is known as 'pulling-to-publish'. In films, TV series, and books Tweet accounts play a pivotal role in the promotion of the characters. Through creative posts of fan fiction, one can acquire insightful nature of all-time literary classics. Imaginative and creative interactions with other users are the essence of fan fiction.

### **Twitter Fiction**

Twitter fiction can be told through hundreds or thousands of tweets at intervals over several months. In this unique kind of fiction, context is maintained by a hashtag. Some popular literary Twitter account holders whose accounts are examples of Twitterature include the accounts of Nick Belardes (@smallplaces), Robert K. Blechman (@RKBs\_Twitstery), and Neil Gaiman. Nigerian-American writer Teju Cole is well-known for his innovative use of Twitter as a platform for creative writing. Teju Cole began his initial literary venture on Twitter by inviting his friends to join a storytelling initiative. He sent

a message to his friends and told them to pass it on to their followers. Therefore, this storytelling experiment resulted in the creation of "Hafiz," Teju Cole's first work of fiction on Twitter. "Hafiz" was Cole's attempt at distributing storytelling. Basically, Twitter fiction allows users and readers to delve into various meanings and significance and enhance interpretative abilities. These micro-narratives present various learning chances and engaging adventures along with several obstacles. In her article "Twitter Fiction: Social Networking and Microfiction in 140 characters," Carla Raguseo explores two distinct methods of crafting microstories within the Twitter platform. In her article, she outlined these methods: "the 140-character space limitation has generated two approaches, with some authors, like Arjun Basu, writing stories of exactly 140 characters, while others simply consider it as a limit instead of a structural constraint and may write 140 characters or less" (Raguseo, Carla;).

To support her argument, she cited Chris Brauer, an author of Twitter fiction, and included his exact words in the subsequent sentences:

"One of the most demanding early questions is whether you should post stories of exactly 140 characters or write stories of 140 characters or less. This has a big practical impact on the process as if you decide on the former, you often find yourself writing to conform to the strict format instead of letting the creative process drive the length. This is the difference between writing free-form poetry and iambic pentameter or haikus." (2009, n.p.) (Raguseo, Carla;) L. Zavala also highlights the advantages of micro fiction in his book "From Literary Theory to Postmodern Mini Fiction," stating that it acts as an antivirus of literature. (Zavala, L). In his book, he claims that this micro fiction serves as a vaccine for young readers and advises them to develop addiction to it. He believes that micro fiction teaches critical literary devices like humor, irony, parody, allusion, etc., in a didactic manner and blurs the line between reading and comprehending a text. Even though twitterature is still in its infancy, it is gradually emerging as the literature of the future, with several curious and excited writers getting involved in this new form of expression. Indian authors are also joining in the venture. Chindu Sreedharan, a UK-based professor at Bournemouth University, has decided to use Twitter to retell the story of the Mahabharata through the perspectives of Duryodhana and Bhima. This piece of Twitterature, known as 'EpicRetold', has gained popularity among internet users. Arjun Basu and Rakesh Raman are well-known for their unique endeavors. Tech author Rakesh Raman's book Gobojit, known as The Sand Planet, is popular among the readers.

#### The Essence of Meta and Instagram in a Contemporary Literary Movement

Metafiction is also an integral part of the new literary movement on the internet. It is a crucial component of a fresh literary trend in the digital world, while Twitter offers a great opportunity for development outside of the online world. Meta lacks collaborative stories, diversity in story writing, and dramatization, unlike Twitter (X). But one of the interesting things about Meta is the relationship between fiction and Meta. Obviously, there is a shift from realism to fiction on Meta. But Meta still remains a successful digital platform for blogging and is quite similar to other microblogging platforms. Even though many scholars have argued that Meta has more literary possibilities than other web blog websites, it has a specific policy on using fake names. Fake names are only allowed for non-personal accounts. Meta pages can feature fictional characters, as seen in a recent project by Michael Smith and Steve Lowtwait (Rospigliosi and Greener). Despite Meta's specific policy on the use of fake names, it is only allowed for non-personal accounts. Fictional characters can be found on Meta pages, with a recent example being a project developed by Michael Smith and Steve Lowtwait (Rospigliosi and Greener). In their endeavor, they attempted to tell a fictional story on Meta by creating profiles for the characters on its web pages. They have created various fictional characters, including protagonist, antagonist, round, static, flat, and the foil.

The fascinating aspect of this project was that individuals had the ability to interact with them and contribute new elements to the development of the story. Instagram is also part of the same group as Meta and Twitter. Instagram has the potential to emerge as a successful platform for social media fiction. Instagram has given the birth to photo-inspired fiction, which is longer in length than Twitter's Nano stories. This illustrated short fiction on Instagram challenges the boundary between fiction and realism. Hence, the users of Instagram are transformed into main characters of made-up narratives, as Instagrammers share pictures with brief fictional captions. The subgenre of storytelling can be discovered on Instagram through the hashtag #realpeopleinfictionalstories. Another trend on Instagram involves taking photos of strangers and creating fictional stories about them, which is now gaining popularity in both social media and literature. This particular Instagram project transforms actual locations and people into fictional settings and characters, blurring the line between reality and literature.

### Blogging Reshaping the Concept of Literature

Blogging is also a digital platform that has played a pivotal role in redefining the idea of literature. In this modern era of literacy, blogs are equally valuable as other microblogging platforms. Microblogging and blogging are similar in basic features, with the main distinction being that microblogs have some restrictions. Currently, individuals compose blogs for various reasons, with some composing based on their personal perceptions and passions. They used to post comments and interact with other bloggers simultaneously. Thus, it is easy for bloggers to keep themselves up to date, which is not possible in hard copy articles or writings. The function of every blog is governed by RSS and XML features, which means the public and other bloggers can also be participants in reproducing the content anytime. In a joint paper entitled "What factors influence knowledge sharing in organizations? A social dilemma perspective of social media communication" by Liana Razmerita, Kathrin Kircher, and Pia Nelson, they express the view that social media platforms offer new methods for sharing information and interacting among colleagues. They applied the theories of social dilemma and self-determination in their research work. The other two scholars, Franklin and Van Harmelen, in their study, explored that bloggers may generate parallel knowledge by sharing their thoughts and responding to others' posts and comments on blogs. Obviously, one can believe that blogs will serve as a fresh method for organizations and individuals to engage in creative writing. In this way, blogs not only offer a "collaborative space" for individuals but also allow them to contribute their comments through group writing and participate in a specific venture. Weblogs have a transparency that makes them more acceptable and transparent among users by fostering communication between authors and readers. Blogging threads are neither fixed nor separate entities, but they are flexible and adaptable, available for rewriting on several occasions. Besides a weblog, there are several other blogs that focus on specific literary topics. These literary blogs discuss various subjects including fiction, nonfiction, poetry, publishing, literary journals, criticism etc. *Bookslut* and *The Literary Saloon* are well-known within the literary blogosphere. These blogs provide a novel environment for their readers. Neil Gaiman, Holly Black, and Scott Westerfeld are popular bloggers who have their own personal literary blogs. In terms of lit-blogging, India isn't lagging behind on a global scale. India's blog culture is only a decade old, with well-known bloggers like *Shout Me Loud* and *Next Big What*. The emergence of social media literature and the plethora of storytelling techniques on the internet manifest that this new form of literature is an independent entity of creative writing. However, the aim of authors is to establish a connection between the real world and the world of imagination in this e-literature. It is clear evidence that this innovative form of fiction not only enhances the storytelling process but also brings fresh perspectives and functions for literature in social interactions. Although web literature or blogs

emerged in an unorganized way, the outcome came into being through ongoing online experimentation by individuals or groups, eventually becoming a focus of literary analysis. As traditional printed literature is in crisis due to lack of readers' interest and time management, while web literature has introduced readers to a new form of literary expression. The youth are more inclined towards the new generation of literature as they spend a significant amount of time on the internet. Hence, traditional print literature might face some obstacles such as funding, financial sustainability, geographical boundaries, as well as marketing and distribution limitations, while electronic literature does not encounter these factors. Online self-publishing industries make it easier for authors, editors, publishers, and critics to have a more equal distribution of power. E-literature has changed the dynamics by transferring power from traditional print to digital writers, editors, publishers, and critics. Thus, they are independent for their own literary publication and presentation, and earning reputation from cyberspace. Web literature has changed the meaning of authorship. Surely, one can state that the internet has become more democratic because common readers can also publish their work on cyberspace. Over the years, web literature has developed unique characteristics in terms of content, genre, style, and language, expanding the scope of literary creation and interpretation. However, in the realm of language, there has been a remarkable display of creativity, adding a fresh perspective to literary culture.

Lewis et al. in their scholarly article, argued and remarked about restrictive features of social media in these words— “they are focused on the communal circulation of artifacts and individual meaning-making, rather than the co-construction of meaning” (Filimonov, 2021, p. 37). Lewis and colleagues used Meta and YouTube to support their claim that social media sites with strict posting schedules and non-collaborative elements like rating and sharing may change users' and followers' perception of participation and collaboration. However, a few scholars argue that the fundamental concepts of social sites, such as interactive and engaged users, might not align well with the educational environment. In order to justify their argument, they have mentioned the study of Prof. Crook in the following words:

"tasks are often confined and restricted under tight deadlines; while more fun, cooperative participation in social media is permitted to wander more and is less commonly handled in the structure of discrete projects" (Silva, 2021, p. 497).

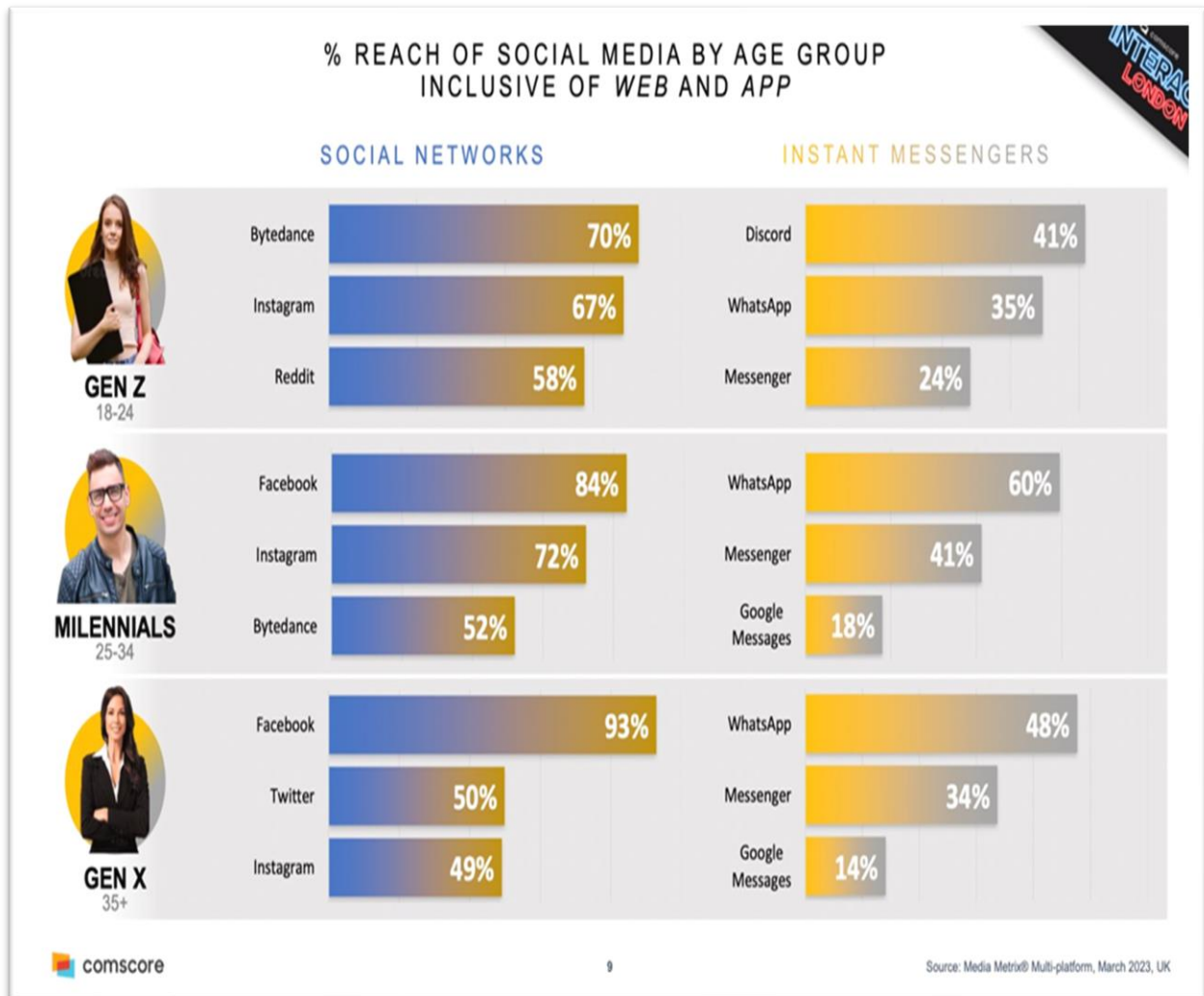
### **Research Components**

The research components are used in this article, including content analysis and qualitative research methods. However, this study aims to explore how people in various settings use language to express their views of the world in social groups, movements, and institutions.

### **Disclosure**

The present research article has taken many recent data from various sources and will mention in the reference section of the article itself. The findings of the research are also mentioned here.

In May 2024, 5.07 billion individuals are active on social media platforms, accounting for 62.6% of the global population. On average, people dedicate 2 hours and 20 minutes daily on social media. In the period from April 2022 to April 2023, 150 million individuals joined social media platforms as new users, representing a 3.2% annual growth. 64% of internet users express worry regarding the way companies utilize their personal information. Voice interfaces are now being used by 43% of internet users on a monthly basis. 80% of internet users engage in gaming on a monthly basis. More than 40% of the global population, equivalent to 3.2 billion individuals, are still not connected to the internet.



This data has been taken from media multi-platform, March 2023, United Kingdom

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, this study explores the impact of social media on creative writing and literature. It discusses how platforms like Twitter, Instagram, Meta and YouTube have reshaped the style of literary writings, giving rise to new forms such as micro-content, Twitterature, and photo-inspired fiction. The study examines the characteristics of social media literature, including brevity, visual storytelling, and real-time feedback. However, there are lots of things that remain to be explored. Still, there are numerous areas that still require further exploration. This study has provided researchers with various additional chances to venture into uncharted area. Finally, this study contributes to our understanding of the role of digital platforms in facilitating literary collaborations and community building.

**Recommendations**

Considering what was mentioned before, this research has presented various measures and studies regarding examining how social media can help in facilitating literary collaborations and community building. Future studies on social media impact should concentrate on a consistent population to ensure relevance in that specific study area and other populations with comparable traits. Furthermore, universities and colleges need to create curricula that address the contemporary challenges of writing



culture on social media. As per this research, it is undeniable that digital media and social networking sites have a significant impact. However, receiving proper training and developing writing skills will help prevent various writing challenges, including those from social media and other sources. Further investigation can be conducted on various student groups, professors at universities, and other individuals across various sectors to gain their perspectives and expertise on studying how social media influences the promotion of collaboration and community development in the field of literature.

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