



Riding the hashtag trend

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If 2014 threw up some hot trends, then '#hashtags' would surely be among the leading ones. What Twitter popularised is now omnipresent across social media, including Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Google+, YouTube and Pinterest. India's users - like users globally - have certainly taken to the hashtag, with topics they trend on spanning sports, celebrities, entertainment, major events and big social issues. "The hashtag is part of the big trends of 2014, when its inflection point happened," said Atul Hegde, CEO, Ignitee Digital Services. "An online search engine recognises the '#' and words. The hashtag is something like a post-it note in a digital era and surely one of the most used key on the computer keyboard or mobile keypad."

With the hashtag attracting massive attention, news and entertainment media and brands have added it to their consumer communication arsenal.

A spokesperson from Star Network, whose general entertainment channels - Star Plus and Life OK - are especially using hashtags with several programmes, said: "We see a strong causality of content driving conversations. Curated hashtags can help set a context to build the conversations."

Rishi Jaitly, media director, South and South East Asia, Twitter, commented, "For Aamir Khan's show on Star Plus, Stayamev Jayate, its hashtags on Twitter created a 300% increase in conversations."

Star Plus used hashtags to further the causes aired in each episode of Satyamev Jayate - #FreedomforLGBT, #RoadsOKPlease, #ARealMan, #TickingTimeBomb. "Each episode dominated Twitter trends, with every hashtag trending number one worldwide. We also had 14 out of 15 Twitter trends on ISL launch day, including the promoted hashtag #LetsFootball and also related to game play (#ISL), teams (#ATKvMUM), players (Fikru), and punchlines (#fatafatifootball). The bottom line is that it is content that inspires conversations."

Nowadays even films are using hashtags. Promotions for the recently launched Bollywood film, PK, had hashtags all around them. Saket Saurabh, CEO, #Fame, earlier called FameBox Network, a digital entertainment network that assists untapped talent reach the right audience digitally, couldn't agree more. "We create original talent-based video content, and the hashtag - which is about sharing - draws attention to them and builds digital communities." Starting January,

#Fame will feature Karan Johar in a digital show - School of Style - that will be an online hunt for top stylists. Johar will host, judge and mentor participants.

Brands too have started using the hashtag in their advertising. Nescafe's ad, using #ItAllStarts, generated a huge buzz online and got more than five million views on YouTube. Philips' #MumbaiInANewLight, was placed in all its TV and print ads. L'oreal launched a #KhoobsuratMoments contest recently.

Looking at top trending hashtags on Twitter, brand hashtags don't necessarily create as much buzz as significant events and issues. Hegde agreed: "India is more about personalities and events and hashtags around them will always draw more attention than those around brands. However, hashtags can help brands trend short-term, being the pulse of the moment. Just like social media, where perishability is very high because there is so much happening."

FASTEST-RISING TWITTER HASHTAGS IN INDIA

1. **#WorldCup2014:** Conversation around Football World Cup 2014 in Brazil
2. **#MH370:** Flight MH370 disappeared on March 8, 2014
3. **#MufflerMan:** A campaign by Aam Aadmi Party
4. **#MUFC:** Football fans following Manchester United Football Club
5. **#KashmirFloods:** JK flood relief operation updates



TOP 2014 BOLLYWOOD HASHTAGS

1. **#ManwaLaage:** Song from the movie, Happy New Year
2. **#HappyBirthdayHrithikRoshan:** Birthday wishes to actor
3. **#HrithikTheMostHandsomeIndian:** Hrithik Roshan being ranked as the most Handsome Indian
4. **#IStandWithDeepikaPadukone:** Support for Deepika Padukone for her stance against a newspaper
5. **#JaiHoThunderStormsIn11Days:** Fans waiting for Jai Ho movie 11 days before release

TOP 2014 TELEVISION HASHTAGS

1. **#HappyBirthdayDrashtiDhami:** Fans of TV actor Drashti Dhami wish her
2. **#ThanksNaBoleTumSSN1:** TV show Na Bole Tum Na Maine Kuch Kaha
3. **#SatyamevJayate:** TV show Satyamev Jayate on Star Plus
4. **#LetsPlayIndia:** First episode of Satyamev Jayate on Sports
5. **#MumkinHai:** Theme of Satyamev Jayate



SOURCE: TWITTER