

Usage of Social Networking Sites by Students and Faculty Members of College

Libraries

By

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Abstract:

What are the implications of increased use of SNSs in recent years among college students? Can students' academic performance be affected by the increased usage of SNSs which takes away considerable amount of time for studying and completing assigned homework? Can the elevated use of SNSs affect the communication patterns among college students and their friends and family members? In addition to these research questions, this study examined the usage and implications of social networking sites among college students.

Keywords: Social networking sites, college students, library.

Introduction:

Abbreviated as (SNS) a social networking site is the phrase used to describe any web site that enables users to create public profiles within that Web site and form relationships with other users of the same web site who access their profile. Social networking sites can be used to describe community-based Web sites, online discussions forums, chatrooms and other social spaces online.

People are finding new ways of keeping in touch with others every other day; they are discovering and adopting different means of transmitting, exchanging and accessing information. Nonetheless, the essential chief needs for communicating linger on. Trenholm & Jensen (2004) note that regardless the technological advancements in the communication channels or how large the audience is communicators must make sense with one another. While the previously used communication modes remain, revolution in computer technologies has seen new methods of communication come up and get adopted at an astronomical rate and this has in one way or another affected our interactions socially, culturally and even biologically. It has also changed how we perceive others as well as how we present ourselves to them (Tyson, 2009). As Tyson (2009) notes, technology allows for a variety of choices and many people are now opting to communicate with it and use it in massive numbers. This rapid increase in technological adaptation is also giving people the preference and the alternative to communicate in far-reaching and more open, unrestricted arenas. As more techno savvy individuals promote use of these new technologies, the public is gradually more appealed to exchange ideas in these settings. The social media and especially through the social networking sites is increasingly being adopted by people all over the world and the interactions on these platforms are incredibly challenging people's perceptions, eliminating social barriers and altering our lexicon.

Background:

Since their inception in the 21st century, Social Networking Sites (SNSs) have grown popular so much that millions of users have adopted and integrated the constant use of these sites into their daily practices. SNSs are becoming a preferred mode of communication and many are logging in these social sites daily as they seek to gratify their social needs which have initially been resolved through other means such as e-mails, texts and phone calls. Gross & Acquisti (2005) note that the daily use of SNSs such as Facebook has become a routine for millions of internet users and that as a result, SNS's are becoming more than just a phenomenon; they are a type of technology that is being massively adopted by societies around the world.

SNSs are web based sites which allow individual to present themselves by creating online accounts as well as define, create and expand their social networks by connecting with other people all over the world. These sites are not just a recent way of linking up people but also an

opportunity to reinforce interpersonal interactions among users such that they are incorporated into a live communal system which comprises of their private profiles and ties between them. SNSs such as Facebook and Twitter present a blend of interactive and exclusive features in every person's online profile as available as individual accounts. Moreover, what complicates these sites from an impression? From a perspective is that people other than the person about whom the site is focused also contribute information to the site.

However, the disclosure of a quantum large amount of personal data floating around in society today leaves individuals open to having their privacy violated, sometimes with dire consequences (Agre, 1998). Social networking is a phenomenon which has been in existence since society began. Human beings are social beings and as such they have always sought to live in social environments (Barabasi, 2002). However, using SNSs to communicate and socialize is a relatively recent phenomenon which is becoming immensely popular especially among Kenyan college students. The proliferation of SNSs and their pervasion in everyday practices is affecting how these students manage their social.

Social Networking Sites Motivation

It will be essential to comprehend the motivations that trigger SNSs usage among college students because various individuals join these sites for various and different purposes. It will be important in this research therefore for the researcher to identify the root motivations for the students to be part of these sites as it will be able to answer questions pertaining to the popularity of SNSs and the extent of reliance on these sites. There must be rewards for the students to be motivated to use SNSs and reviewing literature from previous researchers about the motivations pertaining use of social sites will be important for linking with the study on the ground.

Social Networks and Education

The advent of social networking platforms may also be impacting the way(s) in which learners engage with technology in general. For a number of years, Prensky's (2001) dichotomy between Digital Natives and Digital Immigrants has been considered a relatively accurate

representation of the ease with which people of a certain age range—in particular those born before and after 1980—use technology. Prensky's theory has been largely disproved, however, and not least on account of the burgeoning popularity of social networking sites and other metaphors such as White and Le Cornu's "Visitors" and "Residents" (2011) are greater currency. The use of online social networks by school libraries is also increasingly prevalent and they are being used to communicate with potential library users, as well as extending the services provided by individual school libraries.

Social networks and their educational uses are of interest to many researchers. According to Livingstone and Brake (2010), "Social networking sites, like much else on the Internet, represent a moving target for researchers and policy makers. Pew Research Center project, called Pew Internet, did a USA-wide survey in 2009 and in 2010 February published that 47% of American adults use a social networking website. Same survey found that 73% of online teenagers use SNS, which is an increase from 65% in 2008, 55% in 2006. Recent studies have shown that social network services provide opportunities within professional education, curriculum education, and learning. However, there are constraints in this area. Researches, especially in Africa, have disclosed that the use of social networks among students have been known to negatively affect their academic life. This is buttressed by the fact that their use constitutes distractions, as well as that the students tend to invest a good deal of time in the use of such technologies.

Albayrak and Yildirim (2015) examined the educational use of social networking sites. They investigated students' involvement in Facebook as a Course Management System (CMS) and the findings of their study support that Facebook as a CMS has the potential to increase student involvement in discussions and out-of-class communication among instructors and students.

Social Trading Networks

A social trading network is a service that allows traders of financial derivatives such as Contracts for Difference or Foreign Exchange Contracts to share their trading activity via trading profiles online. Such services are created by financial brokers.

Constraints of Social Networking Services in Education

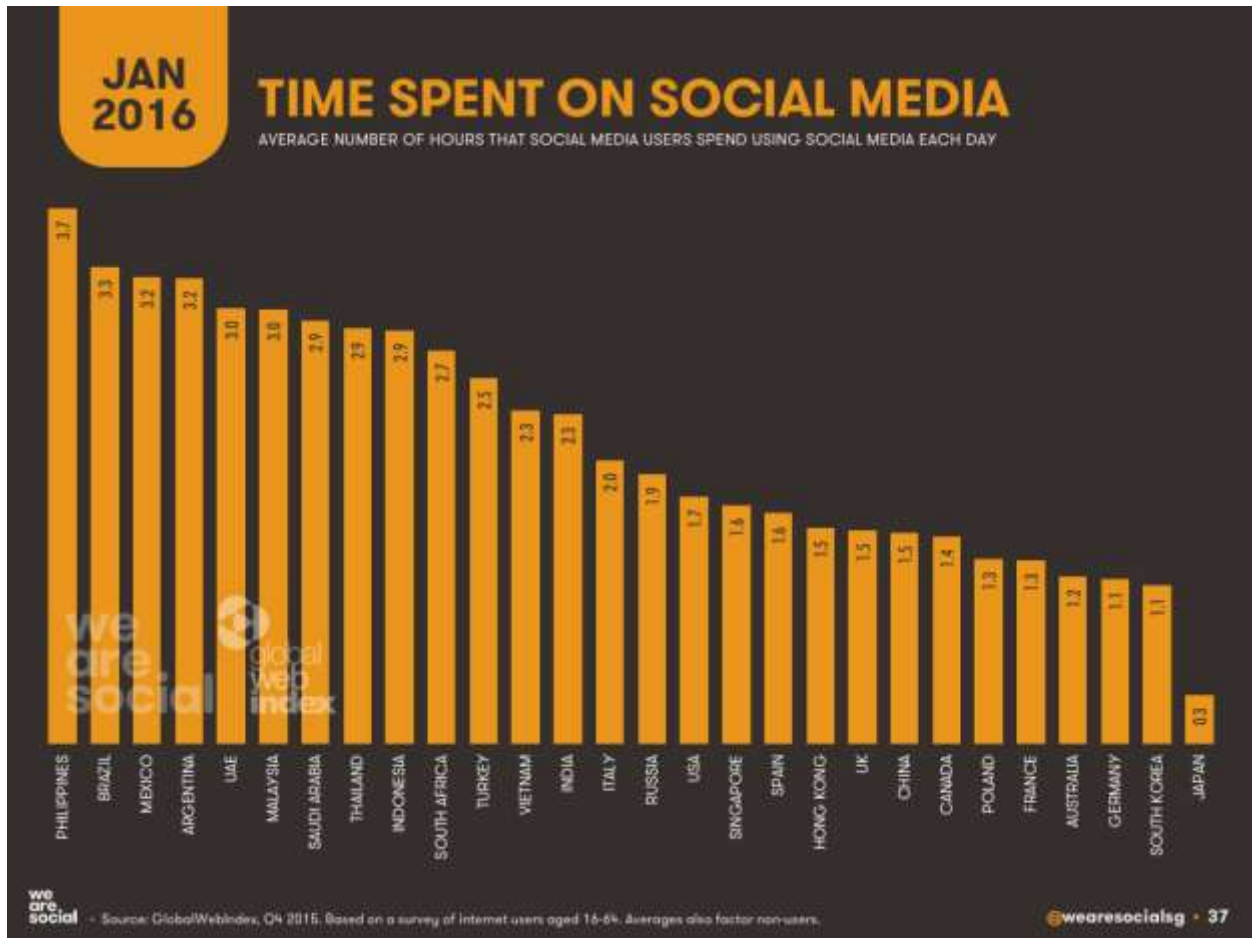
In the past, social networking services were viewed as a distraction and offered no educational benefit. Blocking these social networks was a form of protection for students against wasting time, bullying, and invasions of privacy. In an educational setting, Facebook, for example, is

seen by many instructors and educators as a frivolous, time-wasting distraction from schoolwork, and it is not uncommon to be banned in junior high or high school computer labs.

Cyber bullying has become an issue of concern with social networking services. According to the UK Children Go Online survey of 9- to 19-year-olds, it was found that a third have received bullying comments online. To avoid this problem, many school districts/boards have blocked access to social networking services such as Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter within the school environment. Social networking services often include a lot of personal information posted publicly, and many believe that sharing personal information is a window into privacy theft.

Schools have taken action to protect students from this. It is believed that this outpouring of identifiable information and the easy communication vehicle that social networking services opens the door to sexual predators, cyber bullying, and cyber talking. In contrast, however, 70% of social media using teens and 85% of adults believe that people are mostly kind to one another on social network sites. Recent research suggests that there has been a shift in blocking the use of social networking services. In many cases, the opposite is occurring as the potential of online networking services is being realized. It has been suggested that if schools block them [social networking services], they're preventing students from learning the skills they need. Banning social networking [...] is not only inappropriate but also borderline irresponsible when it comes to providing the best educational experiences for students. Schools and school districts have the option of educating safe media usage as well as incorporating digital media into the classroom experience, thus preparing students for the literacy they will encounter in the future.

Mobile & Social: The Future of E-Commerce



All this means that mobiles have the potential to become essential online commerce devices. Already, some Asian markets are showing the impact that mobiles can have on the online shopping behaviours. Last month, close to half of South Koreans used their mobile to shop online. And in China, mobile commerce has become the norm, with consumers now almost as likely to complete a purchase online via their mobile as via a laptop/PC.

As yet, digital consumers in Europe and North America may be more attached to their laptops and PCs for online shopping, but the trend here is clear. In the UK, for example, where more than three-quarters are online shoppers, it may be only 1 in 4 who are buying via mobile now but with smartphones capturing an average of nearly 2 hours of online time per day, it's only a matter of time before these consumers become mobile shoppers.

We Are Social's report, and Global Web Index's data, also highlights another key opportunity in the world of online commerce – social. As Digital in 2016 reports, nearly 1 in 3 of the entire world's population is using social media, a rise of 10% from this time last year. These figures put paid to talk of the 'social media bubble bursting'. In fact, social media users are now spending more time than ever using social networks each day. In the most enthusiastic markets, like the Philippines, Brazil and Mexico, users are devoting over 3 hours daily to social media, while in most European markets we are seeing daily figures of 1-2 hours.

Social Networking Websites That the Listed Number of Unique Visitors:

According to Com Score, up to the end of November 2011, the following top social networking websites that the listed number of unique visitors.

Worldwide	Unique Visitors
Facebook	900,000,000
Twitter	310,000,000
LinkedIn	255,000,000
Pinterest	250,000,000
Google+	120,000,000
MySpace	61,037,000
Others	255,539,000

Recommendations:

Social media studies need to be included in the curriculum where students can be taught in their course of study. This particular course could teach the students the evolution of social media, importance of social media and diversified social media uses such as to gather important information, how to research and how to network with people relevant to their line of study.

Etiquette of using the social media could also be taught so that students engage in proper use of the medium as it could affect their future plans in their career and other aspects of their life.

Social awareness campaigns should also be conducted to inform people of the effects of being

too dependent on the social sites. The society needs to be conscious of the problems that could arise from spending too much time on the social sites by the young generation. It will be easier to tackle the problem at an early stage before it gets out of hand. Parents, teachers, lecturers and people generally dealing with the youth need to be extra vigilant with their internet and social sites use patterns and guide them.

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