

## STUDY ON THE SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES IN EDUCATION

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**Abstract:** Social networking has become one of the most popular communication tools to have evolved over the past decade, making it a powerful new information sharing resource in society. To date realising the potential of Social Networking Sites (SNSs) beyond their leisure uses has been severely restricted in a number of areas. This paper focuses on the application of SNSs in a learning environment and the impact this could have on academic practices. While undoubtedly, due to the very casual nature of social networking, there are serious concerns over how it could be integrated in a learning environment; the potential positive outcomes are many and varied. As a communication tool, its effectiveness is already manifesting in the millions who use these networks to communicate on a daily basis. So it is conceivable that educators should be able to create a learnscape - an environment for formal and informal learning - that adheres to educational guidelines, but also harnesses the social support system of these on-line communities. This paper examines the risks involved in the creation of this new learning ecology, and explores the challenges faced by both technology experts and teachers in delivering a truly innovative and effective new approach to education.

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### INTRODUCTION:

Social networking has become one of the most important communication tools among people nowadays. However, social networks exist on the Internet websites where millions of people share interests on certain disciplines, and make available to members of these networks various shared files and photos and videos, create blogs and send messages, and conduct real-time conversations. These networks are described as social, because they allow communication with friends and colleagues study and strengthen the ties between members of these networks in the space of the Internet. The most famous in the world of social networks are Facebook (Facebook.com) and Twitter (Twitter.com) and MySpace (myspace.com) and others. Social networking sites not only assist students but also offer great opportunities for communication between administrators and teachers. Using social networking sites, teachers can able to improve the involvement of their students in studies and education, improve technological ability, provide a great sense of collaboration in the classroom and make good communication skills.

The aim of this research is to consider and study the role of Social networks in Education. Today, technology provides a lot of opportunities for education that can be accessed by everyone around the globe. The educational field has completely transformed ever since the Internet and technology are included in the equation. Due to the growth in social networking websites, educators are looking for their potential for use in education, having the conscious that social networking sites may have the

ability to endorse both collaboration and active learning. In the field of education, social-networking sites offer a student the opportunity to connect with other students, educators, administrators, alumni, both within and outside his current institution. The social networking helps to reduce stress and increase satisfaction among students. It allows each student (slow or quick) to study at their own pace and speed (self-pacing). The social networking allows access to courses available in their sites, allowing the learner to follow-up online at any time it deems appropriate, and overcome the limitations of space and time in the educational process. As a result, it helps resolve timetable conflicts.

The use of social networking is increasing in all areas of society but, although students have been active in social networking for almost a decade now, during this time, schools and teachers have largely ignored their students' clear desire for peer interaction and communication outside the classroom.

Even though the time has passed when students entering secondary education do not remember life before social networking, many schools continue to ban, block and firewall its use, failing to grasp the important role that social media plays, not only in the private lives of their students, but also in the wider school community.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, this alienation has resulted in what many teachers describe as sporadic and unspectacular engagement with technology, thus proving in the eyes of many sceptics that social networking is unfit for academic purposes.

However, as an increasing number of schools and faculties are beginning to open accounts in social networking sites – principally in Facebook and Twitter – to take advantage of the benefits of the networked and transparent transfer of information, and as students continue unrelenting in their use and enjoyment of social networking sites, a greater understanding by both parties of the educational potential of these services is beginning to emerge. Students have discovered that learning is no longer bound to the confines of the school building and schools are beginning to realise that teaching students how to use these technologies effectively for academic purposes is essential if they want their students to engage in the use of social networking appropriately, less sporadically and more spectacularly.

The rising importance and availability of online social networks and their popularity among young people are undeniable facts. The use of the internet is becoming an ever more integral part of young people's lives and, as a result, they are communicating with each other on an unprecedented scale.

In my view, teaching and learning need to reflect these social changes and conform to the needs and expectations of today's young people. Using ICT with a focus on the C for Communication allows us to bring the learning online and to blend the use of traditional tools such as textbooks or dictionaries with more up-to-date, relevant and authentic multimedia materials from the web. Technology itself may not be a motivating factor, but familiarity with the technology certainly is.

Online social networks provide teachers and students with a platform in which they can interact beyond the constraints of the school walls, and with which the teacher can provide personalised feedback, peer review, assessment and support beyond that which is possible with the already existing virtual learning environments, which, in my experience, quickly become repositories of institutionally approved teaching materials and effectively discourage cooperation and interaction among students, fostering instead less meaningful, transactional interaction such as the setting or handing in of student work or the communication of assessment grades.

However, there remain many preconceptions regarding the use of online social networking in education and there is a distinct lack of an alternative, more positive discourse highlighting the many benefits modern means of communication can bring to education.

Thus, those of us considering the use of social networking tools are often discouraged by sensationalist horror stories in the media. Sadly, the *teacher-got-the-sack-because-of-*

*Facebook* headline is all too common and, as a consequence, most schools and teachers have decided that online social networking sites are simply not worth the trouble.

Am I saying that it is ok to be friends with pupils on Facebook? Let's answer that clearly: no, it isn't. Your private life should remain private. Being friends with pupils on Facebook is not ok as it exposes you and your pupils to unacceptable risks. That is not to say, however, that we shouldn't use social networks to enhance teaching and learning – by establishing school or departmental pages, for example – or, indeed, that we should tarnish all the internet's potential for social interaction with the same brush.

The vast majority of teachers using online social networking tools manage to do so perfectly appropriately, pedagogically soundly and safely, improving learning outcomes as a result. Sadly, they seldom hit the headlines for these reasons.

Furthermore, traditionalist approaches to institutionalised education have continued to assume that knowledge can only be obtained within the school's walls. Modern technology has shattered this notion and has presented us with a different paradigm: the information is everywhere and it's freely available.

Handling all this information has suddenly become one of the most precious skills we can hope to pass on to our students. How teachers and schools react and adapt to this new paradigm will bear direct consequences in the future success of their pupils, for remembering facts and figures may not be as important to them in their lives as being able to successfully acquire, manipulate and exploit information. I don't buy into the skills vs. knowledge argument. It's not one or the other: it's both.

The adoption of social networking could conceivably provide the school community with a low-cost / high-value platform in which teachers and learners can remain in close contact and interact beyond the constraints of the school walls, and within which the teacher would be able to provide the learner with further personalised feedback and support to that already provided in the physical learning environment. A social network expands the learning environment to wherever the learner happens to be and acting as a bridge between school and home, between formal and informal learning.

#### **Social Networking In Education**

Social networking has become one of the most popular communication tools to have evolved over the past decade, making it a powerful new information-sharing resource in society. In every aspect of our lives, social networking becomes a part of nowadays. Some of the widely used social

networking sites(SNS) are Whatsapp, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, Youtube, etc.

We cannot deny ever since social media came into our lives, it has changed the pattern of living- the way we socialize, interact, plan, or execute. Social networking has widely become a part of our education system now. Starting from elementary school up until university graduation, social media has the role to empower parents, students, and teachers on how to use new ways of sharing information and build a community. From finding a summer internship to promoting a success story about how to win the student-loan battle or collaborate on international projects, everything is made possible with these community-building sites. Collective intelligence has become a hashtag trending episode for today's student-teacher relationship promoting collaboration and sharing of knowledge. Today's youth is already well equipped with these sites and use this space for building a conducive learning environment and this gives educators a platform to create an online framework for education system #Education 4.0. Users are not just passive observers now, rather they became collaborators and contributors to new sites and fresh content across all platforms. The internet is a research network now which creates knowledge through shared experiences and collaboration of its users.

Chalk and Blackboard form the two most important elements of a classroom in our education system for decades. A teacher seems to be incomplete without these. Education 4.0 says "My lord, this statement is not true". A teacher may ask its students "Discuss the Impact of covid19 on the Indian economy" on twitter by using two hashtags. Won't it be a more innovative, up to date and interesting way for students to learn? There is always a complaint by parents "My son spends a lot of time on Facebook", pondering on it Education 4.0 says "why not take Facebook as a source for learning?". Facebook has many pages related to courses or areas of interest of students. Teachers and students can both join that page and debate on the posts in the comment section. Is it not helpful for collective intelligence? The answer is yes, it will help the student to be in touch with teachers and the latest updates in the mode they are comfortable at. In this way, they will learn and retain more.

The use of social media in education provides students with the ability to get more useful information, to connect with learning groups of their interest and other educational systems that make education convenient. Online classes on YouTube to web-based courses are helpful to create an anywhere- anytime learning environment for students. All it requires is the student's own

efforts to use these tools to learn beyond the classroom too. Social networking helps to reduce stress and increase satisfaction among students. It allows each student (slow or quick) to study at their own pace and speed (self-pacing). It helps in building strong teacher-student relationships as the student becomes more comfortable with interacting with teachers in both online and offline platforms. Allowing the use of technology and social networking sites in the classroom to read content and participate more is still not applicable in every school/college's education system because of the fear that it would distract the student. And it is true in some cases but to focus on the purpose of using it in the desired way depends upon student's willingness to learn and improve.

To hear some scholars speak we have-The use of social networking tools has impacted positively through creating diversification between different categories of people and has supported them in both their personal and academic lives . There are four fundamental social software tools: 1) Connectivity and social rapport, 2) Collaborate information discovery, 3) Content reaction, and 4) Knowledge and information aggregation and content modification . These affordances have helped learners access their knowledge easily and share them anytime and anywhere. Social networks, such as e-learning technologies, provide an opportunity for educators to revise their content quickly and maintain control over it, learn the sequence pace of learning, time – and often media, which allows them to gain experience to meet their learning objectives . Klamma illustrated that one of the most important advantages of social networking is the ability to manage knowledge and learning by connecting with different experts and knowledgeable people to share common processes, activities, tools, concepts, etc.

In today's society, we face differences between Generation Y(the students who grew up using upgraded technology) and Generation X(the teachers who were forced to use this technology). Being a generation gap between the two brings forward different mindsets and perspectives. The famous author Blankenship, believes that technology in education should be focused on what students use instead of what the school or teachers want. He also believes that when the students become the stakeholder, it will be geared towards their needs, avoiding the need for collaboration between different generations of educators and students. Social networking becomes a medium for such integration. There may be certain training and time required for teachers and students to get well equipped with this new education system, but once applied the efforts are worth it.

Social networking in education also proves to be a good medium in times of emergency. The best example is the current scenario of the Covid-19 pandemic spread across the world. The situation has forced us to stay home but it didn't force us to stop learning. Social networking sites became the medium to study far from institutions too. It helped teachers and students to stay connected and complete their studies and even learn more than the school/college curriculum. Live online lectures, recorded online video classes, new online courses, online assignments and projects have helped students and educators to not let the studies and careers of students get harmed in these tough times. Some may highlight the cons of social networking by saying it can be a reason for the distraction of students, privacy, and security issues are there, internet connectivity may be a challenge at remote locations, etc. To some extent their concerns are right. But with the improvement in technology day by day strict privacy and security are being taken in making the applications more safe and secure. And as far as the distraction of students is concerned, educators should channelize student's skills and energy in a more productive way that they tend not to be distracted. They can be given challenging tasks from their area of interest and the online/offline platform they are comfortable at to prove their worth and can be equally appreciated and awarded for their performance. This will build up their morale and boost enthusiasm.

Student interaction is at the core of a constructive environment and Social Networking Sites provide a platform for building collaborative learning communities. By their very nature, they are relationship-centred and promote shared experiences. A range of activities should be inculcated in the education system where students get to interact more and gain experiences. Knowledge and shared experiences become a base for students to develop and social networking is the channel for building that base. Both students and educators have to understand that social networking is not merely a leisure facility but it is much more than that. They should find out the deep potential which this facility holds so that it can be used in the best and most productive way possible. And this has to be done now because we are rapidly moving to a fully digital era and this potential is to be used now to be a helpful tool for the future years. At IILM campus, we have such networking amongst students, alumni and professors through various virtual networking applications. Thus, Education 4.0 is the superman for the youth of today. If its powers are well researched and presented to students and teachers, they are going to be the biggest fan of it.

### The use of social media in education

Until recently, it would have been unimaginable that a tweet or a post on Instagram could be used as a teaching resource. However, in recent years, the **use of social media** in education has become an essential tool for learning, especially for teenagers. The influence of social media in education is undeniable. Not only has it transformed the way students communicate with each other and with their teachers, but it has also opened up **new opportunities** for collaborative learning, knowledge sharing and the development of digital skills.

Yet, it should be recognised that its use also poses certain challenges, so it is very important to understand how we can maximise its advantages while at the same time minimising its disadvantages.

### How does social media influence education?

The use of **social media in education** ranges from how students interact with content to how educators design and share their learning materials. One of the primary ways in which it influences education is through **communication**. In the past, communication between students and teachers was limited to class time or tutorial hours.

Nowadays, thanks to platforms such as **WhatsApp** or **Facebook**, students can ask questions, discuss class topics or share resources in real time, which, in addition to promoting **greater participation**, also allows for more fluid and **consistent learning**. This is particularly beneficial in primary education, where younger students may need more immediate feedback and guidance.

Another fundamental aspect is the **potential to create online learning communities**, enabling students to connect with their peers, form study groups and collaborate on projects. But they can also access a **wealth of resources**, enriching the learning process by providing different perspectives and **up-to-date material** that cannot always be found in textbooks. This is equally relevant for secondary education, where students are often expected to engage in more independent research and collaboration.

Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the same platform that is used to share an academic article can also be the one that offers a notification about a new meme or a friend's photo, which can be very **distracting**.

### Advantages and disadvantages of social media in education

The use of social media in education has many advantages and disadvantages that should be carefully considered in order to maximise the benefits and reduce the risks:

### Advantages

Social media offers many advantages in education, and it is crucial to identify which benefits can be most useful in the teaching context.

- **Facilitating collaborative learning:** social media allows students to work together on projects and assignments at any time and from anywhere. Platforms such as Google Classroom or Edmodo have social features that facilitate real-time collaboration, enriching the learning process.
- **Encouraging creativity and critical thinking:** the ability to share multimedia content (videos, images, presentations) allows students to express themselves in more creative ways. In addition, provided that a responsible and critical use of information is encouraged, the analysis of data from a variety of sources promotes the development of critical thinking.
- **Accessing a wealth of resources:** social media provides access to a myriad of educational resources to complement and enrich what is learned in class, from tutorials on YouTube to streaming conferences on Instagram.
- **Developing digital skills:** the use of social media can help students develop basic digital skills which are fundamental for both their academic life and their professional future.

### Disadvantages

Although it is true that social media offers many benefits, it also has a number of disadvantages that need to be taken into account to avoid affecting students' academic performance:

- **Constant distraction:** one of the main problems is distraction. Constant notifications and the temptation to check the feed can affect concentration, reducing productivity.
- **Security and privacy risks:** the use of social media can also carry risks related to security and privacy, due to exposure to inappropriate content, cyberbullying or even identity theft. For this reason, it is very important to educate young people about the importance of protecting their personal information online.
- **Superficiality of interaction:** Although social media facilitates communication, it can sometimes be superficial or limited. By its very nature, online exchanges can lack the depth that characterises face-to-face interactions which could affect interpersonal relationships.

- **Disinformation and fake news:** social media is the perfect breeding ground for the spread of misinformation. Students may be exposed to incorrect or biased information which can lead to confusion and affect the understanding of certain topics. It is therefore essential to encourage critical thinking and to teach students to verify information before accepting it as true.

### How to make the most of social media in education

In spite of all this, social media is still a very effective tool for education. Here are some ways in which both students and teachers can take advantage of it to enhance the teaching-learning process.

- **Create online study groups:** social media can be the perfect place to form study groups where students can share resources, discuss topics and help each other. Applications such as Facebook or WhatsApp make it possible to create closed groups that can only be accessed by members.
- **Use of educational blogs:** teachers can use platforms such as WordPress or Medium to create educational blogs where they can share supplementary content, lecture summaries or even research projects, which, in addition to complementing lectures, can be a source of inspiration for students.
- **Webinars and live classes:** using platforms such as YouTube or Instagram to conduct webinars or live classes can be an excellent way to engage students in a more dynamic and interactive way. These sessions can also be recorded and shared later for review.
- **Gamification:** we can also use social media to gamify learning by incorporating game elements such as points, medals or competitions between peers. This increases student motivation and engagement.

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