



IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON MANAGEMENT EDUCATION: AN OVERVIEW

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ABSTRACT

The millennial generation of students are digital natives coming to higher education with extensive experience in social media. Business and other organizations are expecting their recruits to have high proficiency in these technologies, too. This article is an overview of the use of the main social media in teaching. Facebook, blogs, YouTube, Twitter, MySpace, and Second Life are discussed with examples of how they can be used to foster robust collaboration among learners in management education. The movement to richer media such as video blogs (vlogs) is assessed.

KEYWORDS : Micro blog, Face book, Management

Introduction

At the outset of the second decade of the 21st century, educators find their students are digital natives, sometimes called "millennial students" (Reinhardt et al., 2009), who have been involved with computers from the time they were toddlers. While still in preschool they enjoyed computer games such as Putt Putt Saves the Zoo (Humongous Entertainment, 1995). They grew up with online virtual worlds and simulations, such as World of Warcraft and Sims Online. So they generally feel comfortable with computer-based collaborations such as those using social media. Social media are largely free and generally usable by students and instructors. These collaborative platforms are collectively known as Web 2.0 technologies and are characterized by the fostering of a high level of interactivity with groundbreaking implications for educational practice (Selwyn, 2007). Students using computer-mediated communication can have richer, more extensive exchanges than are likely in a face-to-face (F2F) classroom situation. This sometimes immersive experience can lead to more positive student attitudes and outcomes (Mazer et al, 2007). It is useful for students to become more knowledgeable about sites such as Facebook, as social networking sites are increasingly where companies are turning for marketing, recruitment, and other activities (Hagel and Brown, 2008). This article will provide an overview of teaching approaches and issues using such social media as Facebook, blogs, YouTube, Twitter, MySpace, and virtual worlds such as Second Life.

The current social networking platform of choice "among students in higher education is Facebook (Selwyn, 2007). Facebook users have personalized websites called "Profiles" that they develop through easy-to-use menus. Users can adjust the privacy settings of their accounts so as to limit access to their Facebook profile. "Friend" status generally enables full access to a person's profile including the ability to view all the photographs in the person's albums there and post comments to it. One can send "Friend Requests" to other Facebook members and correspondingly accept friend requests from other people in order to link up, thus allowing access to view each other's profiles and write on each other's "Walls," which are interactive blogs of their doings and comments from other people. These walls are often embellished with links, photographs, videos, and virtual items or gifts. Special pages can also be created for events and groups.

Not widely known is that leading scholarly management societies have Facebook groups. For example, the Organizational Behavior Teaching Society and the Academy of Management have them. These groups are ready ways to locate links to Facebook profiles of other management instructors to enable deeper interfaces with them.

Blogs

A "blog" is a web-based log, journal, or chronicle developed by an individual or group, with ongoing updates that feature diary-type commentary, often with critiques of and links to online articles and relevant news. Blogs can be a great

medium for sharing content among a course's learners and the instructor. The instructor might create a blog covering the progress of the course, session by session. PowerPoint slides, lecture notes, videos of lectures or class sessions, etc., might be included for learners and others (assuming this is openly posted on the web) to view. Learners might share notes on articles, interviews, and other materials, related to class assignments there too. Ideally this will allow bloggers to cover much more material than they would be able to on their own (Murley).

An instructor may create a "vlog" (video blog) including videos of important segments of classes, directions for reports, and comments on the progress of the class. Students might have vlogs where they share highlights of their project team meetings, articles they have been reading for the course, or multimedia reports that they have developed for the course.

YouTube

As we enter the second decade of the 21st century, the use of video is burgeoning in many areas of society, including higher education. This is fostered by new easy-to-use pocket-sized camcorders that come with one-touch digital zoom and high-definition resolution with models offered by Flip, Creative Labs, Kodak, Sony, Sanyo, Samsung, etc. For example, some new cameras are the size of an iPod and can shoot hours of footage, plug into a USB port for easy downloading, come with free software for easy editing (which took the author all of 5 s to get started with), feature image stabilization, and are available in the United States for about \$130 and in Europe for about EUR 160. So, it is possible to have a class of students all acquire such inexpensive pocket-camcorders instead of textbooks and provide them with a protocol of interview questions and supporting video tutorials.

Students might be asked to go interview managers in firms they are familiar with or ones they might locate by searching for alumni in LinkedIn as subjects. They might be instructed to ask questions constructively to elicit interesting and useful business cases. So, if the course is Strategy, they might be asked, "would you discuss the most interesting strategic action your company has taken?" Ten minutes of the highlights of such an interview might be shared with other learners, either on a course website or in a F2F class session. Alternatively, students might be requested to post them to free public forums like YouTube, Facebook, or Vimeo. Some of these new cameras have "Post to Facebook" or "Post to YouTube" as an output option. That is, the ease of making and sharing videos is getting incredibly easier.

Twitter

Twitter, the best-known free microblogging application, is particularly useful for fast exchanges of thoughts, ideas, and information (Ebner, 2009; Reinhardt et al., 2009). It presents

many possibilities for reframing communication among students and their instructors about curricular and co-curricular topics (Reinhardt et al. (2009)). "Tweets" are Twitter messages which may be up to 140 characters. Twitter is excellent for giving a quick and simple notification to people or sharing something such as a hyperlink just as it is needed (McFedries, 2007). Generally tweets are about what the sender is currently doing or thinking, or to alert followers about some imminent event or particularly notable resource. Other Twitter users who have been accepted as followers of a particular person's tweets will receive them. Twitter has been characterized as the prime example of Mobile 2.0, as a communication platform accessible anywhere and anytime (Griswold, 2007).

Myspace

Myspace is a social networking website that allows users to create individual profiles and provides many utilities and applications for sharing multimedia and blogs with friends. Users create blurbs describing their interests and feelings often more than opinions. MySpace's popularity has recently been eclipsed by Facebook's success to a great extent. However, students might be encouraged to create MySpace sites to share their endeavors through video and audio files. Students might be assigned to develop a MySpace profile page around a particular course theme, then invite other students and the professor to comment on their work. A student project might be to have them create MySpace-themed pages on a particular industry or various companies in the industry (Kolb, 2008). With more than 150 million members, MySpace guerilla opportunities might be useful for students to be sensitized to. Student exercises on building MySpace friend networks, attracting friends who build buzz and businesses, marketing to specific schools or colleges might be developed (Percival, 2009).

Conclusion

Students currently entering management education are digital natives (Palfrey and Gasser, 2008; Tapscott, 2009) with extensive experience using social and other new media.' Business and other organizations are increasingly taking advantage of this wherewithal. This article has provided an overview of the use in management education of such social media as Facebook, blogs, YouTube, Twitte MySpace, and Second Life for collaborative projects students using social media will (1) interact ubiquitously in the sense that they will be able to engage in project collaboration using their mobile devices wherever they happen to be; regularly utilize heterogeneous smart (artificial intelligence) interfaces with many types of people, often through automatic translation interfaces; and engage in massive groups, with class assignments frequently entailing collaborations of hundreds of other learners in disparate locations (Witbrock, 2008). New platforms will lessen the divide between physical and virtual reality (Quitney and Rainie, 2008). The web will become completely integrated into every physical environment (Garrett, 2008).

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