

RECENT TRENDS AND INNOVATIONS IN DIGITALIZATION OF EDUCATION: A STUDY OF EMERGING PEDAGOGY

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ABSTRACT

With the sudden explosion of digital media in the form of Social Networking Platforms (SNPs), there is now more information available to more people from more sources than at any time in human history. Social Networking Platforms (SNPs) have attracted considerable attention among teens and young adults who tend to connect and share common interest. Despite this popularity, the issue of students' adoption of social network sites is still being unexplored. With the creation of Social Networking Sites, colleges and universities across the globe have been playing catch-up with students. This new technology carries much weight as a new medium for students to build social connections and grow as members of their institutions. The current generation of students entering higher education are digital natives who have been raised in a techno-centric world where omnipresent technologies play an integral role in human life and where new innovations are quickly absorbed and assimilated. In order to develop learning communities with increased student engagement, educators are increasingly adopting the use of social networks to supplement teaching and learning in both fully online as well as traditional classroom learning environments. This paper discuss about the various social networking platforms and their efficacy as an instructional tools. It will also summarize some of challenges and opportunities to use social networking platforms as educational tool. Moreover, the paper points out the merits of the innovative use of these platforms in higher education and it is suggested that it could be a permanent change agent that boost innovation in higher education learning arenas.

Keywords: *Digital natives, Innovations, Pedagogy & Trends,.*

I. INTRODUCTION

In the world of hi-tech innovations, use of information and communication technologies have led to transformations in every part of life, from business to educational environments. **De La Campa Portela & Bocanegra Valle, (2007)** stated that Information and communication technology (ICT) has been evolving at an amazing speed for more than two decades. ICT not only includes a broad range of communication devices, such as personal computer, digital television, mobile and satellite system, etc., but also encompasses various services and applications, such as videoconferencing, online learning, and e mail, etc. Currently, ICT has made considerable remark into educational contexts by providing new approaches and paradigms for knowledge acquisition.

In line with this trend, social networking platforms and its related research have received an increasing attention in the area of education. Social Networking platforms are termed to as web based services that give an opportunity to individuals to create their own personal profile with the choice of their own list of users and thereby connect with them in an altogether public forum that provides them with features such as sharing of photos and videos, chatting, blogging, video calling, and mobile connectivity.

Social network site (SNS) has become the most dynamic Web 2.0 application which enables students not only to socialize with friends but also interact with lecturers (**Hamat, et al. 2012**). It is a web based service which allows people to sign up in a bounded system, articulating group of people within the same system so as to share personal or academic related information (**Boyd and Ellison, 2007**). The use of these sites in the field of education not only changes the educational environment but the manner which we used to define teaching-learning process few years back. This impact on education becomes an important issue that has caught both educators' and practitioners' attention.

According to **Harasim (2000)** there are basically three modes of educational delivery within the scope of online education. They are:

- Adjunct mode: It uses networking to enhance traditional face-to-face or distance education.
- Mixed mode: It employs networking as significant portion of a traditional classroom or distance course.
- Pure online mode: It relies totally on networking as the primary teaching medium for an entire course or program.

Among these three education delivery modes, the pure online mode has caught the most attention.

II. BEST SOCIAL MEDIA SITES FOR STUDENTS & TEACHERS

1. **Twiducate:** also defined as a “walled garden,” advertized as a safe site for teachers and students to collaborate. It is easily accessible and allows teachers to create a class community online using a class code. It also allows teachers to have total control over who is a member and what gets posted. And, it is free.
2. **TweenTribune:** Want to join up with a site that hooks **kids** on current events? TweenTribune lets students stay up-to-date with current events from the Easthampton student whose tongue froze to a metal pole to a proposal by New Jersey's governor Chris Christie to lengthen the school day and the school year. It gets students in the news habit and offers a chance for them to comment on the day's events. Unfortunately, it does have advertisements (though, what news outlet doesn't). It sticks to the upbeat news of the day—don't log on expecting the latest on the Syria conflict.
3. **Blackboard:** This industry leader in course management systems, but it isn't something you can adopt on your own. The decision to use Blackboard is usually made at the district level, though occasionally by individual schools. Blackboard is an incredibly powerful, safe and comprehensive platform. Many newer teachers will already be familiar with it from their teacher training programs. The downside is cost. This is a very expensive platform, but you pay for quality. That said, it will lack some flexibility for its most tech-savvy teachers.
4. **EDU2.0:** This is for teachers looking to integrate course management systems like Blackboard, without the cost. Edu2.0 starts out by offering all its premium features on a free trial basis. At the end of the trial period, those features turn off and you can still use the basic platform for free. These features will be

plenty for the average user, but may be enough for “power users.” Edu2.0 is cloud-based and requires no significant investment in storage capacity.

5. **Wikispaces Classroom:** Collaboration is second nature to Wiki users and Wiki Classroom proves it’s no exception. Wiki Classrooms are private social networks complete with news feeds and communication tools. It is safe because you decide who’s invited — students, parents, administrators. You can assign, collaborate on, discuss and assess projects all within the site. It can even handle multimedia. The best part is that, it is free.
6. **Edmodo:** Edmodo is the largest social networking website used mainly for education purposes. As per the survey, more than 13 million people are using this website effectively. Edmodo provides greater security for all its users. If an institution is using this website, then the institute will get a security code from this website. Hence, the institute can share the code to the people whomever it wants to access the website. This is how the website provides greater security to its users. Edmodo encourages other activities such as posting assignments, conducting surveys and sharing images and videos.
7. **Academia.Edu:** Academia.edu is a science-related website built especially for scientists and the respective college students. As per the study, more than 1.9 million people are using the website all over the world. It is a platform mainly for academic researchers to share research materials and research papers to other website users. Using this website, the users can able to share their research papers with other users in the same field. The website also shows the number of people accessed the papers and their reviews to the users who post their research papers.
8. **Epernicus:** Epernicus is another social networking website, focuses on social networking aspect, built mainly for scientists and researchers. Unlike Academia.edu, it doesn’t allow users to share their research papers and materials. It allows users to post questions and get suitable answers from recognized experts. The users of the website can participate on any topic related to science and research and hence the website is quite informative for its users.
9. **Facebook:** Facebook is a famous social networking site that has nearly a billion users all over the world. This website is considered to be the best website for promoting education. In this modern generation, you can find almost every student has an account in facebook. The facebook groups are formed for schools and classes and thus the website allows both the teachers and students to share their information, post queries and answers, set reminders about upcoming events, etc.
10. **Skype:** Too many educators overlook the potential of Skype in the classrooms. It is the one site that can literally bring the outside world right into your classroom. You can host authors, visit science labs or talk to pen pals from across the globe.
11. **Twitter:** Not everyone loves Twitter in the classroom, and there may be good reasons for that. However, it makes the Top 10 because students love it and they use it. Setting up a GroupTweet account lets you moderate who joins and what gets posted. It is also important to keep the account strictly business.

12. **Course Cracker:** Course Cracker is a network that enables students, teachers and parents to connect with each other resulting in the refinement of the learning process. The main objective of this site is to improve the educational experience of users by using latest web applications and web tools. This website allows the users to post their course material, quizzes, assignments and other sources related to education and also give them permission to access the posted content.

III. PROS AND CONS OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE CLASSROOM

All these studies can provide us with information and show us the positive and negative impacts of social media in the higher education classroom.

PROS

1. **Communication:** Many studies focused on the communication abilities of social media and found positive aspects to incorporating social media for this purpose. One study found social media makes more communication possible with classmates both in and out of the classroom.
2. **Community of Learners:** As the theoretical frameworks suggest, researchers did find that one of the benefits of social media is creating a community of learners. One study found that a Facebook-based community of learners can help students overcome weak study skills and an over-reliance on the instructor.
3. **Active Learning:** Social media was found to have a positive impact on active learning. Studies that focused specifically on blogs found that students are actively learning when they write blogs and that blogs support self-expression and self-reflection. Students involved in a class where a blog was assigned as a cooperative activity didn't feel pressured from their peers when sharing their work which led them to share more.
4. **Content Management Systems and Alternative Class Styles:** Facebook and Twitter were studied as content management systems and were viewed as successful. Their main advantage is ease of access. In Facebook-specific studies, one researcher found that it was the ideal site for a blended learning environment.
5. **Second Language Learners:** Facebook and Twitter also helped students learning English as a second language. Students posted in English which began a dialogue with English-speakers and the conversations improved their skills.
6. **Behavioral Data:** Finally, social media provides a rich source of behavioral data. Instructors and researchers can actually see exactly what students are doing and analyze it.

CONS

1. **Students:** Studies found that students don't use social media for educational purposes. Surveys of students' show that students prefer to keep their social media life separate from their educational life. Time spent on social media can have a negative relationship on GPA, academic performance, and student achievement. Researchers suggest that the negative correlations could be caused by multitasking.

2. **Instructors:** Only 24% of instructors incorporate social media in class, and only 34% think it is a useful tool for improving student satisfaction. Instructors can be inconsistent in their use of social media in the classroom.

Surveys of instructors show that instructors need more training and assistance to fully incorporate social media into their curricular activities.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Schools and classrooms need to have solid guidelines in place before introducing technology. This keeps everyone safe and ensures your students only harness the power of social media for good.
2. Students must learn to distinguish the skill needed to locate information online from the ability to understand that information. Using social media to cultivate and demonstrate deep learning is possible, but that requires overcoming the persistence of distraction, the surfeit of irrelevant information, and the temptation to wander.
3. Students should try to develop a capacity for practical reasoning when using social media. Educators and students should have multiple, purposeful discussions about social media's pros and cons.
4. Awareness should be created among the students regarding serviceability of internet and social media as a source of information and its utility in academic field.
5. Arrangements should be made for teleconferences and video conferences among students and dignified scholars through social media for sharing educational information.
6. Students should act like a "Good participant" not become "An Addict" of SNS. To become a good participant they should know when and how to post a comment on a blog considering what comment will be appropriate and provide informative ideas.

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