

The Use of Social Networking in Education: Challenges and Opportunities

Ashraf Jalal Yousef Zaidieh

ICT, collage of information and communication technology, IIUM
KL, Malaysia

Abstract— Social Networking has become very popular during the past few years, and it plays an important role in our life nowadays. It helps us in the every fields of life such as political field, economic field and educational field. This paper will summarize some of challenges and opportunities to use social networking as educational tool.

Keywords- Social networking; E-learning; Education.

I. INTRODUCTION

Social networking is built on the idea of how people know should know and interact with each other. It gives people the power to share, making the world more open and connected [10]. Nowadays, social networking has a vital influence on our live as it helps a lot in every field of life such as political field, economic field and educational field. However, this paper tries to highlight on the use of social networking in education and explain the advantages and disadvantages of using social networking of educational purpose.

II. SOCIAL NETWORKING

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.

Electronic social-networking services such as MySpace and especially Facebook have rapidly earned fame. The model of the web as a decentralized search engine to search information or communicate with others is becoming obsolete [1].

These networks have offered many services, and one of the most important of these services is blogs, where members can participate in these locations to contribute their idea and discuss with other members. These sites and social forums are means of communication directly with others socially and

the media. They are playing a big and influential role decision-making at the events of the global world economically, politically, socially and educationally.

III. SOCIAL NETWORKING AND EDUCATION

It has been proved in the field of psychology and linguistics that process of the store information or vocabulary in human mind is determined by the nature of the psychological state of the recipient. We also find that this idea is supported by the Greek philosophy of Aristotle when he emphasized in his theory of knowledge on the need to use some form of entertainment during the process of giving lessons. So I think that these sites will be useful tools that can generate a revolution in the field of education if we have the ability to control them to suit the requirements of knowledge and science.

Overall, the social network sites focus heavily on building online communities bound to together with common interests or activities. Thereby provide them with tools that help them to do so. In the field of E-Learning, the social network sites handled the big problem raised by educators in the recent period. For example, a lack of humanitarian aspect and described it as teaching lacks spirit. However, Social networks have helped to resolve some of these problems, by adding interactive side with a human, and make the participation of the human element in the educational process something important. That led to an increase to attract people toward e-learning and some of researcher in the field of social sciences carrying out studies to examine this phenomenon and to clarify the reason behind the attraction educated about social network sites such as (Firpo & Ractham, 2011) and (JIANG & TANG, 2010). I will refer to them in the following.

Firstly, Title of the study is "Using Social Networking Technology to Enhance Learning in Higher Education: A Case

Study using Facebook " [1]. This study explores possibility of using social networking technology to enhance learning in a graduate-level introductory MIS course through Facebook. It is applied at the Faculty of Commerce and Accountancy, Thammasat University, and took five months during the second semester of 2009-2010. Altogether, 69 students, 2 lecturers, and 1 assistant instructor took the role of active participants, while 6 non-registered students and 3 faculty members from the MIS and Finance department took the role of non-active participants. The researchers used the qualitative and quantitative method where the observation period lasted for 105 days and explained the system usage protocols and designated different users' clusters. The paper organized as follows, the researchers examine the potential of using communities of practice and different Web 2.0 technologies within the realm of education. In addition, use the social networking to improve learning in a graduate-level introductory MIS course. The researchers used Facebook to be designed and implemented to enhance teaching pedagogy as well as create an engaging learning environment. Social networking technologies such as Facebook allow members to participate in a learning environment where the learning process can occur interchangeably from both inside and outside of the classroom. The results, there are benefits for successful use of social networking in education for both students and instructors. For students: some degree of informal learning through informal communication, support for collaboration, feedback on thoughts and collaboration independent of space and time. For instruction: gaining feedback from students and constant communication with students and produce an effective instructional technology for their customers. So, networking technology can be used effectively to foster a culture of learning, as a learning tool for both students and teachers. Furthermore, in the future, the social-networking sites will have the significant potential to expand teaching and learning out of classroom.

Secondly, Title of the study is "Web-based Learning Platforms Integrating Social Networking for Design Education at High Schools in China"[2]. The researchers addressed how to use the social networking to support education to build pedagogical models by using social networking and the study tried to identify the balance between developing individual creativity with group activity of collaboration. This model is created based on a traditional instructional model and gains the characteristic of design education. The social networking sites have become the main means of communication between the students and teacher. However, this model predicted to enhance learning efficiency.

We can see from previous studies that the social-networking sites will have a major role in improving and developing education both at the level of the students or teachers.

IV. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

In this era, opportunities in education are available like never before. Though teachers using online tools are enabling students take part in their education, they may also show them to unsuitable material, sexual predators, and bullying and

harassment by peers. I will mention some of challenges and opportunities for use the social networking sites in education.

Challenges that face use the social networking in education

There are many challenges facing the use of social networking in education such as privacy, taking up time and miscommunication [<http://socialnetworkingeducation.wikia.com>].

Privacy

Nowadays, the social-networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter are open for anyone who wants to participate. However, researchers have studied in relationship between privacy concerns and online behavior. Studies have shown that users will express very powerful concerns about privacy of their personal information, but be less than vigilant about safeguarding it[3]. Although a lot of the information individuals supply on social-networking sites is elective, users are progressively more comfortable with displaying a great deal of personal information online. Therefore, one of the main concerns for users who register in these sites is privacy. How private is the information that users place on social networking? Who has access to the information and what is it used for? Whose role is it- parent, student, educator and website developer to ensure an individual understands his right to privacy and exercises it accordingly? Everyone asks himself these questions. So, the privacy is one of the obstacles that has faced the use of social networking in education.

Real friendship

Through social networking, person has a lot of friend but the quality and integrity of these friendships is not always true. On the other hand, data on these social-networking sites for a person is not always 100% honest and reliable, and they do not verify personal details (age, location, etc.) of their members. While sites provide an opportunity for individuals to present a positive and accurate self-image, there is an equal potential to abuse this openness. So, having many friends through social networking sites is likely to be more harmful than good. This will affect the use of social networking in education

Taking up time

The study which was conducted by the site www.azureim.com showed the amount of time spent by individuals with each other online. This has effect on health of individuals, because spending a lot of time browsing these social networks can affect the way the genes operate within the human body, and weakens the immune and hormone levels, and function of arteries. In addition, it also has an impact on mental health. Moreover, the use of social networking in the education can cause lack of motivation towards learning and can be boring sitting in front of computer for a long time, especially if the scientific material presented is free of audio and visual effects that will attract learner towards learning.

Miscommunication

E-Learning does not afford the student with the same opportunities of explanation and clarification that occur in face-to-face interaction [4]. Learners face some difficulty through social networking in expressing their views and ideas in writing, as many learners prefer to express their ideas orally which is approach they have used for many years through their study, While e-education users need to be acquire to writing skills to express their ideas and opinions freely. Face to face allows individuals to perceive physical clues like tone, inflection, body language, in an online environment, these are lacking.

Opportunities to use of social networking in education

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. Scholars praise social-networking tools for their capability to attract, motivate and engage students in meaningful communicative practice, content exchange, and collaboration [5]. There are some of opportunities in the use social networking in education I will mention some of them.

Flexibility

"Flexible learning expands choice on what, when, where and how people learn. It supports different styles of learning, including e-learning. Flexibility means anticipating, and responding to, the ever-changing needs and expectations of Vocational Education and Training clients - enterprises learners and communities".[8] Flexibility is one of the most attractive elements of online learning in social networking. Blended approaches that combine face-to-face and online learning are preferable to an online pedagogy alone. Face-to face classes are likely to enable high levels of emotional understanding, while the convenience and flexibility of online components can motivate students to complete educational tasks.

It contributes to the different perspectives of the students, forums such as chat rooms that exist in social networking provide opportunities to exchange views on topics [9], which increases the opportunities to take advantage of views and proposals and their integration with the views of the student, and helps in the formation of a solid foundation for students in their knowledge purpose of.

The education theories confirm that human interaction is a vital element in the learning process. It should be noted that social networking provides participation through such virtual classrooms, chat rooms and meetings by video.

Repeatable

Remember information depends on all of our sensory, while the response depends on the features of individual and the motivation to learn. So, it must be therefore provided a way that has offered for a learner the possibility of repetition, which is rarely offered by traditional educational methods [7]. The social networking has offered this way through their sites and

gives the opportunity for learners to retrieve the information immediately or later.

Convenience and accessibility

The social networking is easy and quick in term of accessing accessibility, reviewing, updating, and editing learning material needs any time and any where [9]. In addition, it allows for option to select learning materials from large quantity of courses offered online which the learner needs and it also makes easier distribution of courses material.

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). Furthermore, it is easy to join bulletin board discussion any time, or visiting classmates and instructors remotely in chat room.

It can provide stronger understanding and increase retention on the subject , due to using many elements which exist under e-learning, e.g. multimedia, quizzes, interaction ... etc and the ability too retry training and over in order to understand.

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.

V. CONCLUSION

There are some benefits and obstacles that face the using the social networking as educational tool. Privacy, real friendship, taking up time and miscommunication are the most important challenges facing education through the social networking. On the other hand, flexibility, repeatable and convenience and accessibility have a vital influence in the use of social networking in education. In addition, this paper addressed some of previous studies about the relationship between the social networking and education.

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