

Social Media in Education: A Primer

Matthew N. O. Sadiku¹, Sunday S. Adekunle², Sarhan M. Musa¹

¹Roy G. Perry College of Engineering, Prairie View A&M University, Prairie View, Texas

²Community High School, Agada, Ogun State, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

Social media (or social networking) is a universal phenomenon. Social media basically refers to any technology that facilitates the dissemination and sharing of information over the Internet. The key purpose of using social media tools to engage others through electronic means, facilitate professional communication, improve student comprehension, enhance student networking, and enable collaboration with other students around the globe. Social media applications include Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Google+, which are popular among our students. Some social media tools are powerful drivers of change for teaching and learning practices. This paper provides the best social media networks for education and how they are being applied in various areas in education.

KEYWORDS: Management by objectives (MBO), Employee's participation, Compensation and Productivity

INTRODUCTION

Internet is now an indispensable part of our life, impacting every area from electronic commerce to online education. Its beauty is that it connects people. The rapid development of information technology has led to the birth of social media, which may be regarded Internet-based channels that allow users to opportunistically interact either in real-time or asynchronously [1]. Social media (SM) are essentially online tools that provide users with the ability to collaborate and communicate with each other without any limitations by time or space.

Social media (also called Web 2.0) refers to Internet-based and mobile-based tools that allow individuals to share and consume content through varied modalities such as text, image, and video [2]. The world has become a global village and the use of technology has made it a smaller world through social media.

Traditional social media include written press, TV, and radio. Modern social media, also known as social networking, include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, and YouTube. Social media websites are online environments where users can contribute, retrieve, and explore content primarily generated by other users. Social media technology has become a medium through which educators can instruct and students can learn.

Children were born in the age of digital technologies, which they are part of their daily lives. For this reason, they are called digital natives. They the young generation of students

(K through college) who are "native speakers" of the digital language of computers, videos, video games, and social media [3]. The 21st century has become a digital world that has produced digital natives. Social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Myspace, Google+, LinkedIn, and Instagram are used daily by millions of people worldwide, especially young people. Youngsters use social media mostly for socialization, entertainment, and exchanging of ideas. Although teachers see the need to explore educational use of these media, many teachers seem to struggle with the tension between possible pedagogical use and the tempting distraction of the relatively new technology [4].

SOCIAL MEDIA BASICS

Social media (SM) is consumer-generated media that covers a variety of new sources of online information, created and used by consumers with the intent on sharing information with others. It employs mobile and web-based technologies to create, share, discuss, and modify consumer-generated content.

These are some common features of social media [5,6]:

1. **Accessibility:** They are easily accessible with little or no cost.
2. **Connectedness:** They facilitate the development of online social networks by connecting people and bringing the world together.
3. **Communications:** They foster communication between individuals or organizations.

How to cite this paper: Matthew N. O. Sadiku | Sunday S. Adekunle | Sarhan M. Musa "Social Media in Education: A Primer" Published in International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development (ijtsrd), ISSN: 2456-6470, Volume-4 | Issue-5, August 2020, pp.1522-1526, URL: www.ijtsrd.com/papers/ijtsrd33011.pdf



Copyright © 2020 by author(s) and International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development Journal. This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY 4.0) (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>)



4. **Reach:** They offer unlimited reach to all content available to anyone, anywhere.
5. **News media:** They allow political news and information, true or not, to spread quickly.
6. **Collaboration:** They are computer-mediated technologies that facilitate the creation and sharing of information and ideas.

Social media takes on many forms. The six basic forms are [7]: (1) social networks such as Facebook and Twitter, (2) blogs - websites which allow users to subscribe, update, and leave comment, (3) wikis - collaborative website such Wikipedia which used to edit content, (4) podcasts - audio or video files that are published on the Internet, (5) content communities which share particular kinds of content, and (6) micro blogging - allows instant publishing of content via Twitter. Blogs is probably the most commonly employed social media tool. Other forms include Internet forums, photographs or pictures, video, and social bookmarking. These and other activities on the social media are illustrated in Figure 1 [8].

POPULAR SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is consumer-generated media that covers a variety of new sources of online information, created, and used by consumers with the intent on sharing information with others. It employs mobile and web-based technologies to create, share, discuss, and modify consumer-generated content. Consumers are most likely to leverage their power in social media to be more demanding of marketers [9]. The four most popular social media platforms are described here.

- **Facebook:** This is the most popular social media in the US and the rest of the world. It was launched on February 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg. Facebook can sensitize individuals (consumers) about many products and services. A company can use Facebook to communicate their core values to a wide range of customers.
- Facebook consists of six primary components: personal profiles, status updates, networks (geographic regions, schools, companies), groups, applications, and fan pages.
- **Twitter:** Twitter was launched on July 2006 to provide a micro blogging service. It allows individuals and companies to post short messages, share content, and have conversations with other Twitter users. Many Twitter posts (or "tweets") focus on the minutiae of everyday life.
- **LinkedIn:** This a networking website for the business community. It allows people to create professional profiles, post resumes, and communicate with other professionals. LinkedIn is where companies see the largest audiences.
- **YouTube:** YouTube has established itself as social media. It was launched in May 2005. It allows individuals to watch and share videos. YouTube may serve as home to aspiring filmmakers who might not have industry connections. YouTube can be both a blessing and a curse for some companies.
- **MySpace:** This social networking site bases its existence on advertisers who are paying for page views. It is an

online community that allows you to meet your friends' friends, share photos, journals, and interests. It has a lot that users could do. There are MySpace sites in United Kingdom, Ireland, and Australia.

- **Instagram:** This is an image-based social media platform with more than 700 million active monthly users. The design is centered on a visual mobile experience. Instagram allows a simple and creative way to capture, edit, and share photos, videos and messages with friends and family.

Other social media include WhatsApp, Reddit, Pinterest, Flickr, Snapchat, WeChat, and Vine Camera.

APPLICATIONS

Social media is an umbrella term that describes social networking sites where users create their personal profiles and share content with other users. It has penetrated many fields of educational practices and processes. Figure 2 illustrates several uses of social media in education [10]. Here we present the best practice applications of social media in various aspects of education.

- **Elementary Education:** Education is the process of learning and knowing. Learning is a process to acquire knowledge. Technology now provides customization of the learning process to the needs of each student. This allows learners to actively create their own learning process rather than passively consume content. Thus, learners become co-producers of knowledge. Students' perceptions of social media serves as an effective pedagogical tool. Social media is not currently being utilized fully in K-12 education. We should stop worrying about what could go wrong and realize that there is a huge opportunity here to extend the learning experience for children. Strong importance is placed on social interaction in K-12 physical and health education [11]. Figure 3 shows a typical use of social media in education [12].
- **Higher Education:** Higher education is usually slow and reluctant to adopt new technology, and social media is no different. Higher education institutions are now using social media to reach potential students, keep contact with current students and alumni, and enhance interaction in the classroom. The main benefit of using social networks in education is that it can enhance communication and interaction among students, and between faculty members and students. Social media can also be used to engage student, prevent boredom, and promote interactions between students and teachers. Teachers can use social media to show students videos and articles related to their classes.
- **Business Education:** The use of social media in the business community has become almost ubiquitous. Several companies have started to fully integrate social media into their business strategies. Business educators can utilize social media as a tool in the delivery and assessment of their courses. Many business educators integrate Web 2.0 interactive tools into the business school curriculum. Some have reported success in the adaptation of blogs and YouTube in class assignments. The advantages of such integration and adaptation

include low financial expenditure, flexibility, immediacy, collaboration, exchangeability, didactic innovation, and creativity [13].

- **Medical Education:** Social media sites and applications have found their way into the toolboxes of physicians, physicians-in-training, and medical educators across the world. Social media platforms, particularly Twitter and blogs, have been used to promote clinical concepts, disseminate evidence-based medicine, and circulate conference material to residents. YouTube is another social media platform being used to promote scholarship in graduate medical education [14].
- **Nursing Education:** Nurse educators have started to explore strategies of applying social media into nursing curricula. Social media can assist nursing faculty to help students gain greater understanding of communication, professionalism, healthcare policy, and ethics. Blogging, Twitter Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn are common places to begin social media integration into nursing programs [15].
- **Social Work Education:** This is designed for educating students and socializing practitioners into the profession. Due to the ethical issues involved in the profession, social work educators must hold students accountable for their behavior or any appearance of impropriety. Social work educators and students should be aware of how their online profile impacts their professional presence [16].
- **Music Education:** Integration of social media in music education classes can help facilitate learning experiences. Social media can assist educators to create interactive learning experiences in the music classroom. Music educators can use social networks to create online learning communities [17].

Other areas of applications of SM in education include adult education, distance education, open education, sex education, quality education, teacher education, nutrition education, management education, physical education, teacher education, home schooling or tutoring, community education, tourism education, journalism education, religious education, dental education, and leadership education.

BENEFITS

One can confidently claim that social media and education go hand in hand in the modern society. The ubiquitous nature of social media is undeniable. Social media in the classroom may be good or bad depending on how it is used. Social media can powerfully enhance the way students learn. Students in higher education rely on social media as one of the key resources for information and communication. They use social media mainly due to convenience, leisure, and social connection. Social media increases teacher-student and student-student interaction, improves performance. Social media is an effective teaching and learning tool in education in developing nations. Some universities use social media to brand themselves.

It can also improve the academic performance of students in the following ways [18]:

1. Social media is an educational tool for students to get their education
2. Improve communication among students and teachers
3. Regular face-to-face communication is easier, faster, and more convenient
4. Encourage partnership and collaboration on student projects and assignments
5. Easy access to plenty of information online
6. Social media help the parents stay involved in the child's learning
7. Improve literacy, communication, and reading skills
8. Provide distance learning opportunities for students who live in remote areas
9. Stay in touch with their friends
10. Prepare students for the future and for lifelong learning

CHALLENGES

Just as social media has its advantages, it has its disadvantages. Educators often face challenges in adapting new technologies. Use of social media by physicians and physicians-in-training has given rise to concerns about patient privacy and online professionalism. Students can post inappropriate content like pornography on social media. This is one of the major reasons some parents and educators strongly discourage using social media in schools; it is difficult for teachers to keep eye on students how they use social media.

Other challenges or disadvantages include the following [19]

1. It can be distracting
2. It limits face-to-face communication
3. Social media makes it easier for cyberbullying
4. Social media use poses a real risk to student privacy
5. Lack of head-on communication
6. Lack of control for inappropriate content
7. Relying on social media for all contact
8. Social media can be a time suck
9. Exposing the "haves" and "have nots."

In spite of these challenges, social media use is growing rapidly.

CONCLUSION

We live in an era of social media and social networks. Social media essentially consist of on-line communications channels dedicated to network primarily for interaction, content-sharing and collaboration. They have become an indispensable part of our modern lives providing new environments to communicate. The use of social media in education is swiftly growing and has become a global phenomenon. Today social media has become a platform where students in higher education can connect with their instructors and fellow students.

Education on social media is needed now more than ever. Social media is here to stay as a game changer and we cannot ignore it in our lives. More information about the use of social media in education can be found in the books in [20-25] and the following related journals:

- *International Journal of Social Media*
- *Interactive Learning Environments*
- *Journal of Educational Technology Systems*

REFERENCES

[1] S. Zhu et al., "Understanding social media competence in higher education: Development and validation of an instrument," *Journal of Educational Computing Research*, vol. 57, no. 8, 2020, pp. 1935-1955.

[2] M. N. O. Sadiku, M. Tembely, and S.M. Musa, "Social media for beginners," *International Journal of Advanced Research in Computer Science and Software Engineering*, vol. 8, no. 3, March 2018, pp. 24-26.

[3] M. N. O. Sadiku, A. E. Shadare, and S. M. Musa, "Digital natives," *International Journal of Advanced Research in Computer Science and Software Engineering*, vol. 7, no. 7, July 2017, pp. 125-126.

[4] A. V. D. Beemt, M. Thurlings, and M. Willems, "Towards an understanding of social media use in the classroom: A literature review," *Technology, Pedagogy and Education*, vol. 29, no. 1, 2020, pp. 35-55.

[5] "Social media," *Wikipedia*, the free encyclopedia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_media

[6] V. Taprial and P. Kanwar, "Understanding social media," <http://bookboon.com/en/understanding-social-media-ebook>

[7] A. Mayfield, *What is Social Media? An e-book* iCrossing. http://www.icrossing.com/uk/sites/default/files_uk/insight_pdf_files/What%20is%20Social%20Media_iCrossing_ebook.pdf

[8] S. Bowie, "Social work and the role of social media best practices," <http://www.csus.edu/faculty/b/bowies/docs/what%20is%20social%20media%20use%20this.pdf>

[9] C. Kohli, R. Surib, and A. Kapoor, "Will social media kill branding?" *Business Horizons*, 2015, vol. 58, pp. 35-44.

[10] "The ability of social media in education and learning," May 2018, <http://www.aesopmonkeyrescue.org/the-ability-of-social-media-in-education-and-learning/>

[11] M. J. Vollum, "The potential for social media use in K-12 physical and health education," *Computers in Human Behavior*, vol. 35, June 2014, pp. 560-564.

[12] L. Chesser, "25 Awesome social media tools for education," November 2013, <https://www.opencolleges.edu.au/informed/features/social-media-tools-for-education/>

[13] C. Piotrowski, "Pedagogical applications of social media in business education: Student and faculty perspectives," *Journal of Educational Technology Systems*, vol. 43, no. 3, 2015, pp. 257-265.

[14] M. Sterling et al., "The use of social media in graduate medical education: A systematic review," *Acad Med.*, vol. 92, no. 7, July 2017, pp. 1043-1056.

[15] T. Schmitt, S. Sims-Giddens, and R. Booth, "Social media use in nursing education" *OJIN: The Online Journal of Issues in Nursing*, vol. 17, no. 3, September 2012.

[16] R. Duncan-Daston, M. Hunter-Sloan, and E. Fullmer, "Considering the ethical implications of social media in social work education," *Ethics and Information Technology*, vol. 15, 2013, pp. 35-43.

[17] D. J. Albert, "Social media in music education extending learning to where students 'live,'" *Music Educators Journal*, December 2015, pp. 31-38.

[18] M. Willbold, "Social media in education: Can they improve the learning?" April 2019, <https://elearningindustry.com/social-media-in-education-improve-learning>

[19] "Pros and cons of social media in education," <https://www.ozassignments.com/pros-and-cons-of-social-media-in-education/>

[20] T. Issa, P. Isaias, and P. Kommer (eds.), *Social Networking and Education: Global Perspectives*. Springer, 2015.

[21] M. Patrut and B. Patrut (eds.), *Social Media in Higher Education; Teaching in Web 2.0*. Information Science Reference, 2013.

[22] H. S. Noor Al-Deen and J. A. Hendricks (eds.), *Social Media: Usage and Impact*. New York: Lexington Books, 2012.

[23] V. J. Callan and M. A. Johnston, *Social Media and Student Outcomes: Teacher, Student and Employer Views*. Adelaide, Australia: NCVER, 2017.

[24] T. Rudolph and J. Frankel, *YouTube in Music Education*. New York: Hal Leonard, 2009.

[25] Information Resources Management Association (USA), *Social Media in Education: Breakthroughs in Research and Practice*. IGI Global, 2018.



Figure 1 Activities on social media [8].



Figure 2 Several uses of social media in education [10].



Figure 3 Social media in education [12].