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Social networking and its effects in the new millennium

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Abstract

Social Networks are modern communication tools; however, not only benefits, but also subsequent damage caused by its abusive use must be monitored. Many users with abusive usage and dependence recognize significant losses in their personal, professional, academic, social and family lives. Further investigation is needed to determine if abusive Facebook usage is a new psychiatric classification or merely the substrate of other disorders. A persistent decline in use of the “old” media, such as books, newspapers and radio is demonstrated, while the social role of television is shown to be undergoing a transformation comparable to what happened to book reading centuries earlier.

Keywords: Social networking, social media abuse, social networking sites addiction

Introduction

Social media is an online platform that people use to share content, views, insights, experiences and perspectives. They are interactive digital platforms that enable users to create, form, or influence the audience. The social media provide various advantages to everyone. The potential of social media to enhance the networking potential or work with others regardless of distance offers innovative approaches for people. Social media used to create cost-effective strategies and campaigns in all walks of life across the globe. Social media platforms are free to use, the only cost to businesses being the time employed is on updating profiles and communicating with contacts. Social media are different from social networking sites. There are approximately 100 largest social networks in the world based on the number of active users. Social networking is two-way communication, where conversations are at the core, and through which relationships are formed to accomplish the goals of social networking and social participation for progress. In the new millennium social media have emerged as the most popular media of communication. There are several factors which have contributed to this rapid growth and development of social media. Prominent among them include technological factors (increased broadband availability, the improvement of software tools and the development of more powerful computers and mobile devices), social factors (rapid uptake of social media by younger age groups), economic factors (increasing affordability of computers and software and growing commercial interest the social media sites) and political factors (increasing political mobilization. and several political changes across the world). The world has witnessed a shift in the focus of Web applications towards social interaction, collaboration and networking. This development has also influenced education. The present article amplifies the history of social media on the basis of qualitative research method. With the rapid growth of the online community, social media websites are not only a means of communication these days. Users work, entertain, and share content via Facebook, Instagram, Tumblr, and many others. Social networks have billions of users all over the world, however, these websites are still very young.

LinkedIn and MySpace pioneered in the field of social networking. Both websites were launched in 2003. By the beginning of the new millennium, nearly 100 million people worldwide had an access to the internet, and this was the perfect time to engage in social activity online. LinkedIn was originally designed as a business-oriented social network. Today it is still used by recruiters and sales professionals. MySpace started as a file sharing online platform which further transformed into an original social network. It inspired the creation of Facebook and similar websites which appeared later.

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For some people, social networks may look all the same. Nevertheless, each website serves different purposes. MySpace redefined itself as a social network for entertainment built around music, movies, TV, and celebrities. Facebook allowed their users to add friends, engage in online communities according to the interests, exchange posts, links, and multimedia. Twitter is more suitable for making brief posts, sharing links or short videos. Flickr and Instagram are designed especially for sharing personal photos.

Social media are a great prospect for doing business. Social media marketing is already a compulsory element of selling products around the world; large and small businesses use social networks to engage with clients and employees. Some social media became more popular than others, and the number of users registered there grows rapidly.



Fig 1.

Early Social Media

The origin of social media can be traced back to the written correspondence delivered by hand from one person to another. Letters were exchanged individually. The postal service had begun in 550 B.C and it continued for several centuries as a prominent means of social communication. In 1792, the telegraph was invented by Graham Bell and it allowed messages to be delivered over a long distance far faster than a horse and rider could carry them. The telegraph messages were also effective means of social communication. The telephone was also discovered in 1890 as an effective means of social communication. But, the invention of radio in 1891 by Marconi remarkably widened the scope of social media and communication all over the world. The telephone lines and radio signals enabled people to communicate across great distance instantaneously.

Social media in the 20th century

The scientists and technocrats contributed immensely for the development of communication science and technology. The advent of television by J.L. Baird revolutionized the concept of mass communication in the world. The super computers were created in the 1940s by the scientists and engineers. They had developed the ways to create networks between those computers. Subsequently, the technocrats also gave birth to Internet which emerged as an informal university. The earliest forms of the Internet, such as Compu Serve, were developed in the 1960s. Primitive forms of email were also developed during this time. In 1971, the first e-mail service began by connecting two computers. In 1978, exchange of data over phone lines took place. The

first copies of early web browsers were distributed through Usenet in 1979 to enable the users to communicate through a virtual newsletter. During the last quarter of 20th century, new communication technologies were developed to ensure telecommunication, space communication and computer communication to the mankind. The home computers were developed in 1980s and paved the way for the emergence of more sophisticated Internet relay chats, or IRCs which were used as popular means of social communication 1990's. The Geocities was the first web-based social networking site developed in 1994. It allowed the users to create their own websites. In 1995, TheGlobe.com emerged as another site and allowed the users to publish their content and interact with the other users sharing similar interests. In 1997, AOL Instant Messenger was launched for the purpose of instant messaging. The first recognizable social media site, Six Degrees, was created in 1997 by Andrew Weinreich.

The SixDegrees.com was a social network service website which was based on the Web of Contacts model of social networking. It functioned effectively as a social media network till 2001. It was named after the six degrees of separation concept and allowed users to list friends, family members and acquaintances both on the site and externally; external contacts were invited to join the site. Users could send messages and post bulletin board items to people in their first, second, and third degrees, and see their connection to any other user on the site. It was one of the first manifestations of social networking websites in the format now seen today. From Six Degrees, the Internet moved into the era of blogging and instant messaging. Although blogging may not seem like social media precisely, the term fits because people were suddenly able to communicate with a blog other instantly as well as other readers. The Six Degrees was followed by more successful social networking sites based on the social-circles network model' such as Friendster, My Space, LinkedIn, XING and Face book. An era of blogging began subsequently. Jorn Barger coined the word Weblog'. A weblog or blog is a listing of text, images, or other objects that are arranged in chronological order. The weblog appeared in 1998 and blogs were maintained and run by a single individual. A weblog, sometimes written as web log or Weblog is a Web site that consists of a series of entries arranged in reverse chronological order, often updated on frequently with new information about particular topics. The information can be written by the site owner, gleaned from other Web sites or other sources, or contributed by users. They were updated daily in order to disseminate personal remarks about current issues or personal issues. The weblogs are like a personal journal or a look into another individual's life and can be a way to learn about people, events, places, and more from people around the world.

Social networking in the new millennium

By the year 2000, around 100 million people had access to the internet, and it became quite common for people to be engaged socially online. LinkedIn was founded in 2002 by Reid Hoffman but it was officially launched on May 05, 2003. It was basically business-oriented social networking service. It is mainly used for professional networking. As of 2016, most of the site's revenue comes from selling access to information about its users to recruiters and sales professionals. Myspace was the original social media profile website, leading into and inspiring websites like Face book.

MySpace was invented in 2003 by using ColdFusion. The project was managed by Brad Greenspan and a team of specialists and programmers. Toan Nguyen played a crucial role in stabilizing the MySpace platform. By 2004, it was transitioned from a file storage service to a social networking site. But even though MySpace has a very small user base today compared to Facebook and Twitter, there are musicians who have used MySpace to promote their music and even be heard by record producers and other artists.

MySpace was considered as the leading social networking site, and consistently beat out main competitor Facebook in traffic subsequently.

MySpace had attempted to redefine itself as a social entertainment website, with more of a focus on music, movies, celebrities, and TV, instead of a social networking website. MySpace also developed a linkup with Facebook that would allow musicians and bands to manage their Facebook profiles. Mark Zuckerberg with his Harvard College roommates and fellow students Eduardo Saverin, Andrew McCollum, Dustin Moskovitz and Chris Hughes established another social networking site called Facebook in Menlo Park, California. The users were enabled to create a user profile, add other users as friends, exchange messages, post status updates and photos, share videos and receive notifications when others update their profiles. The users were able to join common-interest user groups, organized by workplace, school or college, or other characteristics, and categorize their friends into lists such as People from Work or Close Friends. Facebook had over 1.20 billion monthly active users as of December 2015.

Emergence of Social Media

Social media are favorable to timely, interactive communication and foster conversation and content exchange amongst messaging consumers and creators. The online Social Networking facilitates people to maintain and to extend their networks individually and also professionally. Mobile communications and social media have achieved a great deal of attention and research for their potential to increase awareness of issues, enhance monitoring of environmental and social facts, and as social networking for more suitable governance and development. The function of social media in modern times is highly visible.

Social media, recognized as a group of unique kinds of online media, which share most or all of the following features. The web site gives free web space to the users to upload the contents. The web address empowers the users to post and share all their content on this web address. The build profile assists the users to maintain personal details and connects individuals. This content can be text, images, audio, video or even symbolic likes and dislikes. The social media promote conversations between like-minded people. All posts are time-stamped, making it accessible to follow the posts. Social media encourages contributions and feedback from everyone interested. It blurs the line between media and audience.

Social media is one of the prominent means of social interaction across the world today. It is user-generated content circulated through the Internet to be shared and to promote conversation between users. There are rarely any restrictions to access and make use of content – password-protected content frowns. Most kinds of social media

increase on their connectedness, making use of links to other sites, resources and people. The social media ensure emotional bonding with a circle of friends that provides a real opportunity of support in an otherwise uncontrollable situation.

Advantages of social networking

Social networking websites are the tools for anyone to make the best use out of it. Millions of people around the world are using social media platforms for, fundraising, social awareness, promoting local business, and so many good things. There are so many benefits of social networking sites if used properly. Below is the list of pros of social media platforms.

Networking without border: One of the primary goals of any social networking site, networking is a primary feature any social media platform has to offer to consider the platform as a social networking site. One of the most important and noteworthy advantages of social networking sites is that it enables everyone to connect no matter which country they belong to.

Instant News and Information: Before the social media era, we used to communicate on email and instant messengers like Yahoo, AOL, and MSN. All those IMs and communication tools were mostly one to one communication. But in Social networking sites, communication can be one-to-many instantly. We do not have to look for the news visiting different news websites, the news will find us on the modern social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter.

Great marketing channel for Business: Social networking sites are one of the best marketing channels available in this world. Social Media Marketing is the term described for the marketing technique used on social networking sites or platforms like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, YouTube, etc. There are currently over 4 billion social media users globally ready to discover your information about your business or service.

Awareness and Activism: We have already witnessed the great modern revolutions and events around the world. Social networking sites played a very important role in such revolutions and events like Occupy Wallstreet, Arab Spring, The Libyan Revolution, Hongkong protests, etc. Almost all internet users do use at least one social media platform. It is easy to spread the message and invite many people to take part in events for awareness and activism.

Exchange of ideas and Collaboration: Social networking sites like Facebook do have collaboration features like Group and Document sharing. One can create a group and start to share ideas and information for a specific purpose. Social networking sites are very useful to collect feedback and comments on the various idea.

Stay in touch: While ignoring the rest of the advantages of social media, some people prefer to use it just like a contact book. Not being actively engaged in the social feed, social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram are also being used only for communication purposes. Such platforms help us easily stay in touch with friends and family, and other like-minded people as well.

Disadvantages of Social Media Sites

Like any other tool available for humans, Social Media Websites also have many disadvantages if you do not use consciously. Unware social media users may encounter many different types of problems while using social networking sites. Here we list a few but most important cons of social media that everyone should be aware of.

Addiction: The compulsive behavior developed due to social networking sites like Facebook, Instagram, Tiktok, YouTube, etc leads to negative effects. Social networking addict constantly checks Social Media Feed or checks out people's profiles for hours and hours. The compulsion to use social media can make one social media addict.

Mental Illness: Social networking sites are linked to increased risk of mental health problems like depression, anxiety, and loneliness. Too much time spent scrolling through social media can result in symptoms of anxiety and/or depression. Teenager's mental health is often negatively affected by this culture of comparison as well.

Frauds & Scams: This is yet another challenge for social media companies. There are billions of fake accounts on various social networking sites including Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Facebook removes more than 3 billion fake accounts in six months and Five percent of Facebook's monthly active users are fake, the company said.

Misleading Information: This is probably the most challenging problem for social media companies. Fake news and misleading information can go viral in no time on social media platforms. On Facebook, more than 80% of people who react on the link do not read the complete article or content. Due to which many publishers and spammers are misusing the platforms by sharing fake and misleading information.

Cyberbullying: Since anyone can use and express on social networking sites, many use it to express hatred and aggression. The public figures are the commonly targeted victims of cyberbullying. Teenagers, in particular, are at risk of cyberbullying through the use of social networking sites like Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, etc. Cyber bullying is also associated with depression, anxiety, and an elevated risk of suicidal thoughts.

Hacking: Most of the users of social media sites are not fully aware of the security measures they need to take care of while using social media platforms. People share thoughts, personal experience, photos, etc. on social media sites. Such information can be helpful for hackers to hack your accounts in social media, emails, or even your mobile phone.

Conclusion

The social media platforms serve multi-purposes and they continue to play a vital role in future. The social network sites (SNSs) are increasingly attracting the attention of academic and industry researchers intrigued by their affordances and reach. Indeed, social media is simply asystem, a communication channel; it is not a location that you visit. In contrast, social networking is a two-way communication, where conversations are at the core, and

through which relationships are developed. The social media also help in integrating all the parts of the world including subcultures and minority groups who otherwise never get the physical means and space to practice their views and beliefs. The use of social networking sites has been the focus of a large number of research studies. Internet access is the means that allows individuals and organizations to connect to the Internet using modern devices like computers, mobile devices, sometimes via computer networks. Modern educational institutes also have encouraged the academicians, researchers and students to employ social networking sites for educational interaction and advancement. The social network sites are increasingly attracting the attention of academic and industry researchers interested by their affordances and reach.

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