

Social Media and Social Networking

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Abstract

A Social networking service (also social networking site, SNS or social media) is an online platform that is used by people to build social networks or social relations with other people who share similar personal or career interests, activities, backgrounds or real-life connections. The variety of stand-alone and built-in social networking services currently available in the online space introduces challenges of definition; however, there are some common features:

(1) social networking services are Web 2.0 internet-based applications, (2) user-generated content (UGC) is the lifeblood of SNS organisms, (3) users create service-specific profiles for the site or app that are designed and maintained by the SNS organization, and (4) social networking services facilitate the development of online social networks by connecting a user's profile with those of other individuals and/or groups. Most social network services are web-based and provide means for users to interact over the Internet, such as by e-mail and instant messaging and online forums.

Social networking sites are varied and they incorporate a range of new information and communication tools such as availability on desktop and laptops, mobile devices such as tablet computers and smart phones, digital photo/video/sharing and "web logging" diary entries online (blogging). Online community services are sometimes considered a social network service, though in a broader sense, social network service usually means an individual-centered service whereas online community services are group-centered. Social networking sites allow users to share ideas, digital photos and videos, posts, and inform others about online or real world activities and events with people in their network. While in-person social networking, such as gathering in a village market to talk about events has existed since the earliest developments of towns, the Web enables people to connect with others who live in different locations, ranging from across a city to across the world. Depending on the social media platform, members may be able to contact any other member.

Key words : Social Networking, e-mail, Web-based, Social Media, Face Book .

Introduction :

The potential for computer networking to facilitate newly improved forms of computer-mediated social interaction was suggested early on. Efforts to support social networks via computer-mediated communication were made in many early online services, including Usenet, ARPANET, LISTSERV, and bulletin board services (BBS). Many prototypical features of social networking sites were also present in online services such as America Online, Prodigy, CompuServe, ChatNet, and The WELL.

Early social networking on the World Wide Web began in the form of generalized online communities such as Theglobe.com (1995), Geocities (1994) and Tripod.com (1995). Many of these early communities focused on bringing people together to interact with each other through chat rooms, and encouraged users to share personal information and ideas via personal webpages by providing easy-to-use publishing tools and free or inexpensive webspace. Some communities – such as Classmates.com – took a different approach by simply having people link to each other via email addresses. PlanetAll started in 1996.

In the late 1990s, user profiles became a central feature of social networking sites, allowing users to compile lists of "friends" and search for other users with similar interests. New social networking methods were developed by the end of the 1990s, and many sites began to develop more advanced features for users to find and manage friends. This newer generation of social networking sites began to flourish with the emergence of SixDegrees.com in 1997, followed by Make out club in 2000, Hub Culture and Friendster in 2002, and soon became part of the Internet mainstream. However, thanks to the nation's high Internet penetration rate, the first mass social networking site was the South Korean service, Cyworld, launched as a blog-based site in 1999 and social networking features added in 2001. It also became one of the first companies to profit from the sale of virtual goods. Friendster was followed by MySpace and LinkedIn a year later, and eventually Bebo. Friendster became very popular in the Pacific Islands. Orkut became the first popular social networking service in Brazil (although most of its very first users were from the United States) and quickly grew in popularity in India (Madhavan, 2007). Attesting to the rapid increase in social networking sites' popularity, by 2005, it was reported that Myspace was getting more page views than Google. Facebook, launched in 2004, became the largest social networking site in the world in early 2009. Facebook was first introduced (in 2004) as a Harvard social networking site, expanding to other universities and eventually, anyone. The term social media was introduced and soon became widespread.

Social impact :

Web-based social networking services make it possible to connect people

who share interests and activities across political, economic, and geographic borders. Through e- mail and instant messaging, online communities are created where a gift economy and reciprocal altruism are encouraged through cooperation. Information is suited to a gift economy, as information is a non rival good and can be gifted at practically no cost. Scholars have noted that the term "social" cannot account for technological features of the social network platforms alone. Hence, the level of network sociability should determine by the actual performances of its users. According to the communication theory of uses and gratifications, an increasing amount of individuals are looking to the Internet and social media to fulfill cognitive, affective, personal integrative, social integrative, and tension free needs. With Internet technology as a supplement to fulfill needs, it is in turn affecting every day life, including relationships, school, church, entertainment, and family. Companies are using social media as a way to learn about potential employees' personalities and behavior. In numerous situations a candidate who might otherwise have been hired has been rejected due to offensive or otherwise unseemly photos or comments posted to social networks or appearing on a newsfeed.

Facebook and other social networking tools are increasingly the object of scholarly research. Scholars in many fields have begun to investigate the impact of social networking sites, investigating how such sites may play into issues of identity, privacy, social capital, youth culture, and education. Research has also suggested that individuals add offline friends on Facebook to maintain contact and often this blurs the lines between work and home lives. According to a study in 2015, 63% of the users of Facebook or Twitter in the USA consider these networks to be their main source of news, with entertainment news being the most seen. In the times of breaking news, Twitter users are more likely to stay invested in the story. In some cases when the news story is more political, users may be more likely to voice their opinion on a linked Facebook story with a comment or like, while Twitter users will just follow the sites feed and/ or retweet the article.

Emerging trends :

While the popularity of social networking consistently rises, new uses for the technology are frequently being observed. At the forefront of emerging trends in social networking sites is the concept of "real-time web" and "location-based." Real-time allows users to contribute contents, which is then broadcast as it is being uploaded - the concept is analogous to live radio and television broadcasts. Twitter set the trend for "real-time" services, wherein users can broadcast to the world what they are doing, or what is on their minds within a 140-character limit. Facebook followed suit with their "Live Feed" where users' activities are streamed as soon as it happens. While Twitter focuses on words,

Clixtr, another real-time service, focuses on group photo sharing wherein users can update their photo streams with photos while at an event. Facebook, however, remains the largest photo sharing site - Facebook application and photo aggregator Pixable estimates that Facebook will have 100 billion photos by Summer 2012 . In April, 2012, the image-based social media network Pinterest had become the third largest social network in the United States.

Companies have begun to merge business technologies and solutions, such as cloud computing, with social networking concepts. Instead of connecting individuals based on social interest, companies are developing interactive communities that connect individuals based on shared business needs or experiences. Many provide specialized networking tools and applications that can be accessed via their websites, such as LinkedIn. Others companies, such as Monster.com, have been steadily developing a more "socialized" feel to their career center sites to harness some of the power of social networking sites. These more business related sites have their own nomenclature for the most part but the most common naming conventions are "Vocational Networking Sites" or "Vocational Media Networks", with the former more closely tied to individual networking relationships based on social networking principles.

Education :

The advent of social networking platforms may also be impacting the way(s) in which learners engage with technology in general. For a number of years, Prensky's (2001) dichotomy between Digital Natives and Digital Immigrants has been considered a relatively accurate representation of the ease with which people of a certain age range—in particular those born before and after 1980—use technology. Prensky's theory has been largely disproved, however, and not least on account of the burgeoning popularity of social networking sites and other metaphors such as White and Le Cornu's "Visitors" and "Residents" (2011) are greater currency. The use of online social networks by school libraries is also increasingly prevalent and they are being used to communicate with potential library users, as well as extending the services provided by individual school libraries. Social networks and their educational uses are of interest to many researchers.

Social interaction :

People use social networking sites for meeting new friends, finding old friends, or locating people who have the same problems or interests they have, called niche networking. More and more relationships and friendships are being formed online and then carried to an offline setting. Psychologist and University of Hamburg professor Erich H. Witte says that relationships which start online are much more likely to succeed. Witte has said that in less than 10 years, online dating will be the predominant way for people to start a relationship. One online dating site claims that 2% of all marriages begin at its site, the equivalent of 236 marriages a day. Other sites claim one in five relationships begin online. Users do not necessarily share with others the content which is of most interest to them, but rather that which projects a good impression of themselves. While everyone agrees that social networking has had a significant impact on social interaction, there remains a substantial disagreement as to whether the nature of this impact is completely positive. A number of scholars have done research on the negative effects of Internet communication as well. These researchers have contended that this form of communication is an impoverished version of conventional face-to-face social interactions, and therefore produce negative outcomes such as loneliness and depression for users who rely on social networking entirely. By engaging solely in online communication, interactions between communities, families, and other social groups are weakened.

Friends :

It has never been easier to make friends than it is right now, mainly thanks to social networking sites. Just a few decades ago it was pretty tough to connect with people, unless you were the overly outgoing type able to make conversation with anyone at a party. The rise of mobile phones helped change this, connecting people in a new way, but then social networks sprang up and the whole idea of friendship changed once more and for ever.

Empathy :

Each of us spends a little too long talking about ourselves on social networking sites. Which is perfectly natural. We're sharing our lives – the ups and downs, the twists and turns – with people we think will care. They generally do care, and will tell you so. They will listen to what you have to say, and help you deal with any problems you may be facing. If this isn't the case then you may want to find new friends. The point is that by all of us sharing our experiences, both good and bad, on social networking sites, we're able to empathize with each other.

Speedy Communication :

Our time is being stretched thinner and thinner by work and family commitments, but social networking sites offer a chance to communicate in a speedy and efficient manner. Writing an update for Twitter takes all of 20 seconds, and with cross-posting over other social networks switched on, that update reaches everyone you want it to reach (and probably more besides) in an instant.

In Touch With The World :

It isn't just your inner circle of close friends and even closer family members that social networking sites allow you to communicate with easily and effectively, either. They open the world up to you, making it a smaller place than it has ever been before. So much so that I actually haven't a clue where many of my contacts reside. When it comes to social networks everyone is equal, regardless of location.

Building Relationships :

There is no doubting that social networking sites can lead to the breaking up of relationships. But there is another side to the tale, which is that people are moving onto other, perhaps better, relationships at the same time. Social networks can put you (back) in touch with those you have lots in common with, and that common ground is often the starting point for long-lasting relationships.

Finding Common Ground In An Open Society :

As previously mentioned, social networking sites can help you find people you share interests with. Facebook, for example, asks you to list who and what you are into right from the start, meaning common ground with others is much easier to find. On Twitter you will follow those who have something to say that you're interested in, making connections with like-minded individuals much easier than is possible offline.

Conclusion :

Most of the existing SNS sites use one or multiple dedicated data centers to serve all its users. Such infrastructure-based systems faces over-provisioning during non-peak hours, while may encounter service outage during peak hours, due to the highly dynamic of SNS users' activities. The increasing number of messages and social relationships embedded in SNS also increases the amount of social information demanding a reaction from SNS users. Consequently, SNS users perceive they are giving too much social support to other SNS friends. This dark side of SNS usage is called 'social overload'. It is caused by the extent of usage, number of friends, subjective social support norms, and type of relationship (online-only vs offline friends) while age has only an indirect effect. The psychological and behavioral consequences of social overload include perceptions of SNS exhaustion, low user satisfaction, and high intentions to reduce or stop using SNS.

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