Chapter 14
Awareness and Use of Social Media:
A Case Study of Alagappa University

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ABSTRACT

In this chapter, Social Media Networks (SMNs), a subset of ICTs, are defined as online tools and utilities that allow communication of information online and participation and collaboration. Additionally, social media tools are websites that interact with the users, while giving them information. It is this two-way nature of SMNs that is central to this argument, and the role they played in the Egyptian uprisings. This chapter further defines the four most widely and effectively used SMNs: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and blogging. It is observed that only 81.75% of the respondents have their own blog, 73.64% of the respondents read blogs, while 74.32% of respondents add posts to blogs. The study shows the respondents' extent of level of use of specific online social media by gender.

INTRODUCTION

Humans are social entities who have found innovative ways to communicate with one another throughout history. Although orality1 has been and will remain a primary form of communication, socialization in the graphic form dates back to pre-historic times - in the form of cave drawings. With new technologies, new social, and socialization media emerged, such as stele and papyri. Later, with the immense work of monks in scriptoria and other elites all over the world, albeit in arcane languages that only a relatively few in the general population could understand, this trend continued. Then came the Gutenberg Revolution, which allowed books and news in the form of print/texts in the vernacular to reach the masses and several centuries later the electronic age (first with the telephone and telegraph, an early form of tweets), followed shortly by television as a form of mass communication and computers as a form of mass participation and recursively to smart phones as

multimedia instruments of mass communication and participation. With the dawn of the Internet, a new information and communication revolution occurred. The near ubiquitous access to information and communication technologies (ICT), and later on, mobile forms of ICTs led to the adoption of social media as we know it today (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, and Wikipedia). This evolution has been well documented in media studies; most notably by Herbert Marshall McLuhan in 1964 in the book *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man.*

Social Media and Web 2.0

Today, social media are a vehicle for "social interaction, using highly accessible, and scalable, communication techniques. The term refers to the use of web-based and mobile technologies to turn communication into interactive dialogue". These include a spectrum of digital content including, but not limited to: videos, images, print-based materials, status updates, websites, and hyperlinks to other types of media. Social media, often semantically linked with web 2.0, is a term used by industry in the Silicon Valley (California, USA) to denote the new Web of the early 2000s, the key feature of which is that high levels of technical skill were no longer required to make new websites. Today, some of the most prolific social media websites include: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Second Life, Wikipedia, LinkedIn, Flickr, FourSquare, among many others.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Thanuskodi (2012) examined that majority 37 (61.66%) of the respondents indicated that training on introduction to Web 2.0 technologies and tools were important. The study found that, 20 (33.33%) of the respondents rated that workshop for using blogs as important. When asked about workshop on using wikis, only a very few of the respondents (15.55%). More than one fourth (31.66%) of the respondents indicated workshops for social networking was important. The study also found that, 15 (25%) of the respondents rated that workshop on managing tags as important. Finally, with respect to workshop on IM, 8 (13.33%) respondents indicated such workshop as important. Thus, majority of the respondents had indicated trainings on the various applications of Web 2.0 in libraries as important.

Thanuskodi (2011) reports the results of a study exploring that M.Phil student respondents take the first position in their overall methods of searching e-resources, post graduate student respondents the second, Ph.D. Scholar respondents the last. The study confirmed that respondents are aware of the e-resources and various types of e-resources, e-database, and e-journals. It suggests for the improvement in the access facilities with high Internet speed and subscription to more e-resources by the Dr.T.P.M. Library, Madurai Kamaraj University.

Martinez, A., Wartman, A., & Lynk, K. (2009) In the era of such online spaces as Facebook, Instant Messenger, Live Journal, Blogger, Web Shots, and campus blogs, college students are using these resources and other online sites as a social medium. Inevitably, this medium presents students with ethical decisions about social propriety, self-disclosure and acceptable behavior. Because online social networking sites have proven problematic for college students and for college administrators, this book aims to offer professional guidance to Higher Education administrators and policy makers. Online Social Networking on Campus: Understanding what matters in student culture is a professional guide for Higher Education faculty and Student Affairs administrators, which rigorously examines college students' use of online social networking sites and how they use these to develop relationships both on and off campus. Most importantly, Online Social Networking on Campus investigates how college students use online sites to explore and makes sense of their identities. Providing infor-

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