

Chapter 4

Facilitating Knowledge Sharing on Social Media for Students of International Relations and Conflict Studies in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This chapter has examined ways of facilitating knowledge sharing for the benefit of students of international relations and conflict studies in Nigerian universities. It is evident that tertiary institutions' students of the 21st Century cannot study now without the use of social media which serves as a platform for information sharing and knowledge production. It is a medium through which knowledge is transferred to users by think tanks and organisations across the world. Given that not only students benefit, people from all walks of life are not also left out as social networks record large number of users daily. This explains how social media serves as data bank for scholars and why students now need to continuously search to find related materials on social media. Using qualitative data the author used observation method in the classroom setting in the University of Ibadan and Wellspring University, Benin City, Nigeria. It should be stated that the type of digital device used by students can as well determine their level of access to the social media in Nigeria. Observations show that social media is very relevant for students especially in the study and teaching of international relations and conflict studies given the number of global courses like new states in world politics, democracy and human rights, post-cold war politics, global refugee regimes, international law problems of peacemaking and peacekeeping, among others which all generate issues on daily basis that need to be shared as relevant academic materials for among students.

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INTRODUCTION

We need to reach out to social media, those who know the story better than Journalists – #Africa Summit, 2014.

The information revolution that emerged in the 21st Century was heralded by most people across the world, a situation that manifested in the embrace given to new media technologies which facilitate social networking and development of new platforms/applications. The 21st Century is replete with various technological innovations that now facilitate the coverage of terrorism as there are satellites, mobile phones, Ipad and Iphones. That is why acts of terrorism now trend on social media. In contemporary international socio-economic and political system, we have not only social networks' but also the networks of terror most of which operate beyond their continents of origin as they export their acts of terror. Social networks have become critical tools for addressing issues of concern on terror in the public sphere to the extent that people visit their pages/accounts or status to learn the trending issues.

Social media has increasingly become so relevant in contemporary international relations where intergroup and inter-state relations are characterised by disputable issues. International relations and conflicts studies are disciplines that require adequate utilisation on the social media considering its potency in offering timely information discrimination and knowledge management. The question is how many students of the two disciplines under investigation are aware of the potentials of social media in enhancing their studies? The issue is that most final year students even write their projects to complete their degrees and end up not benefiting from the rich information and data available on social media especially in the areas of international relations and conflict studies.

Knowledge management has increasingly become a notable attribute of the social media which gives users the opportunity to share information need to enhance their understanding. The nature of international relations and conflict studies are in such a way that collaborative information retrieval makes studies and understanding more interesting. In collaborative information retrieval sharing of information becomes easier given that no man is an island of knowledge.

As earlier noted by Smith (2014, p.9) 'partnership and collaboration are key to achieving set vision'. This is based on the fact that the global village phenomenon as contained in globalisation agenda, 'is facilitated by the modern information and communications technologies' (Odejobi, 2015, p.748). The revolution in the information and communication technologies (ICT) has transformed the global landscape for conducting governance, doing business and trade as well as managing international relationships (Eboh, 2009, p.24). There is no disputation that the growth of knowledge-intensive technologies has not only facilitated the transition to a new qualitative level of development of knowledge economy but has also enhanced the awareness of people on the relevance of such technologies (Vlasov & Panikarova, 2015, p.475). Also, the availability of distributed data collection, communication and control channels in institutions and think tanks led to the creation of a platform for suitable environment that gives room for collaboration. This means that non-governmental organizations, governments and individuals would definitely work in isolation in solving if we must address issues of global academic significance. According to London (1995) collaboration is a synergy between two or more organizations, or other agents to produce a combined effect greater than the sum of their separate effects. Through collaboration, individually generated information becomes general and people-oriented data for further research both in the area of affairs and activities of nation states and the conflict that involve state actors and non state actors.

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