

Chapter 10

Uses and Implementation of Social Media at University: The Case of Schools of Communication in Spain

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ABSTRACT

There have been many contributions to scientific literature which have helped develop a theoretical framework in the field of education and Information Technologies. The contributions have come from the educational sciences and from the communication processes and collaboration perspectives. The purpose of this chapter is to make a contribution within the specific scope of university teaching and social media. In order to achieve this objective, a case study methodology was chosen to analyze the use and implementations of social media networks in Spanish Schools of Communication. The parameters used were chosen out of the same social media nature (potential use). The success of social media presence at Schools of Communications must follow an initial plan and a further control and supervision of the plan. The relationship of social media with the university community depends greatly upon the specific community manager's profile and commitment.

BACKGROUND

There is a vast body of scientific literature which contributes to developing a theoretical framework and conceptualization of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), originating both

from the educational sciences and communication processes. Many contributions to social media are found with specific interests such as the business world, marketing, public relations and advertising. The recently published book by Bradley and McDonald (2011, 2012 for the Spanish transla-

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tion) is an example of this. McAfee is another example of strong research in the field, however focused specifically on how IT changes the way companies perform, organize themselves, and compete (2009, Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2011). Nevertheless, academic pieces specifically tackling the relationship between social media with university activities, as well as university teaching, are much more difficult to find. Therefore, the aimed in this chapter is to make a contribution in this field.

The chapter takes as a starting point the following social media concept: “an online environment created for the purpose of mass collaboration. It is where mass collaboration occurs, not the technology per se” (Bradley & McDonald, 2011, p. 10). That is to say, an online environment open to mass collaboration, one in which all participants that are invited may create, upload, classify, improve, discover, consume and share content without a direct intermediary partner. Lester offers an interesting literature review on the concepts of social media and digital generations, illustrated in an applied advertising project incorporating YouTube, Flickr, MySpace, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Ning, Tagged, Google +, and other online social networking sites, as the foundation for an integrated marketing communication strategy (Lester, 2012). Following Orihuela’s statement, communication technology changed along history. However, this change is now happening at an extraordinary speed rate. Changes used to happen over several generations and there was enough time to adapt cultures to each new technology; nowadays, we have a technological revolution every week. Social media are an integral part of today’s youngsters’ reality, they are part of their ecosystem, they are part of their closest culture. Social media entail connectivity, real time, multimedia, sharing, learning together and collaboration.

However, all these characteristics belong to the University, don’t they? Exactly this is what social media are performing. Many of the values at the

root of social media are university values: building up content, collaborating in order to generate content, efficiently distributing that content etc. And this content may very well be in the form of text, audio or video. These media allow to foster values that are very interesting to teachers such as collaboration, understood as being able to work in groups along with people who complement each other’s talents, and not necessarily being friends among them. In real life, that is exactly what happens.

Social media are intuitive for youngsters; however, traditional university teaching methodologies are foreign to them. They have to make a strong effort in order to follow and these methodologies are far from their daily experiences. Furthermore, these media are free. Most of these applications are stored via cloud computing, and are available on a permanent basis. Everything has to be in the cloud: their contact list, their pictures, videos and above all, their favorite music (Orihuela, 2011). Along this line, the work by Gómez, Roses and Farias (2012) may be considered, about the academic use of social media by university students, taking University of Málaga, in Spain, as a case study. The abilities developed by university students in social media are coherent with those proposed by European Higher Education Area (EHEA): personal competences (self-learning and critical thought, diversity appreciation); instrumental (visual culture, information systems abilities); or systemic (research potential or case-based learning) (Alonso and López, 2008). How the same students perceive their own way of learning, points out that they feel comfortable in the Web. Michael Wesh experience developed in collaboration with 200 students at Kansas State University is very illustrative. Such experience was shared in YouTube and was titled *A Vision of Students Today* (Wesch, 2007). Another interesting experience is the one by Wodzick, Schwämmlein y Moskaliuk (2012) on StudiVZ, the German replica of Facebook, and recently published.

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