

Using Social network in Higher Education A case Study on the University of Palestine

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ABSTRACT

The users which are using social networking sites nowadays by various strata of society such as students, teachers, engineers, housewives and elderly people are increasing. So the goal of this paper is to invest social networking in education especially at the universities.

Student spending more time on the social networking sites than on the e-learning programs, so social networking can be used in a useful way to support e-learning. 54% of people who were surveyed about the usage of social Networks said they used Facebook daily while 9% used MOODLE.

So this paper uses the social networks for e-learning as a case study on the university of Palestine.

Keywords – Sochical Network, e-learning, education, Facebook, Twitter

I. INTRODUCTION

The 21st century continues to usher in technological advances that adjust the nature of communication, socialization, firstly began with web1, then web2 in which many technologies appeared such as social network and blogs.

Nowadays the vision change to how to use the social network on business, education, training not only for entertainment.

The term social networking is called on a group of sites on the World Wide Web, enables communication between individuals in a virtual community[1,2], united by interest or belonging to a country or a school or a particular class, in a global system for the transfer of information, as examples for the various social networks: Facebook, Twitter and Instagram as shown in Fig 1.

According to the result of a questionnaire which was done for this paper, 91% of users are using Facebook in Gaza strip. From the result of questionnaire, we began to think of a mechanism to take advantage of the Facebook in particular and social networking sites in general.

II. RELATED WORKS

Yu-ching Chen found that Facebook provided a common interaction environment which helps in problem solving and reasoning of the people

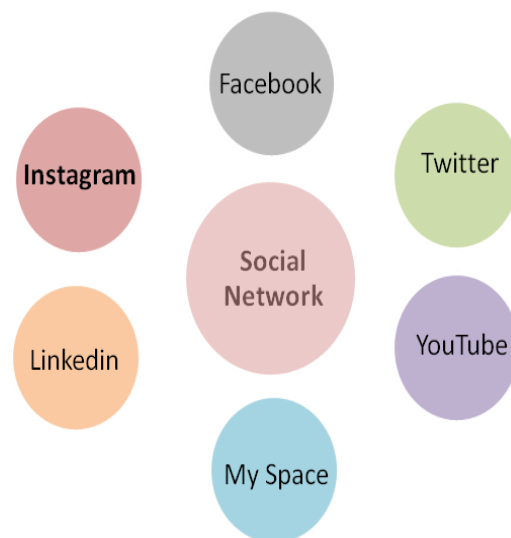


Figure1: Examples of Social Networks

which was reflected by the user satisfaction of Facebook and improved academic performance of the students. The study also found that students found Facebook simple, suitable, user friendly and effortless for academic discussion[3].

The study by Madgea et.al proposed that Facebook can act as an important tool to assist students in settling in the classroom. They also proposed that Facebook can improve their team work and organizational skills [4].

Dunn said that experimental group (28 undergraduate students) used a closed Facebook group to share ideas, thoughts and resources for a period of six weeks. 16 of them offered feedback for this study.

They all posted a status update or engaged with peer comments. 81% also engaged with a member of staff, to ask questions or to raise issues connected to the course. 75% indicated that they found the social network very supportive, 18% indicated that it was supportive and 7% indicated that it was a little supportive. None of the participants described the experience as not supportive or unsure. They all thought that student to teacher interaction had amplified. When asked if the use of social media had enhanced their learning experience, 15 said yes and 1 remained neutral[5].

Firpo and Ractham explored the opportunity of using Web 2.0 technology, specially social networking technology, to support a community of practice in a graduate-level classroom setting in order to improve learning, here utilized Facebook show the results of five-month study, and found that as a learning resource for an MIS course for learners to share prior knowledge and experience, and Facebook offers an easy-to-use and well-known technology for learners to control social networking to share and produce tacit knowledge between each other within the small group environment[6].

III. SOCIAL NETWORK FOR E-LEARNING

There are several ways can be used to invest social networking in education or e-learning – which is support education using technology – not only for universities also training centers, primary schools, and secondary schools, there are several countries uses social networking in education or training.

There are many features in using social networks that is already implemented, but the idea is how to adapt social networks for eLearning. Social network provides many feature that can help in using it for eLearning as the infrastructure (servers, application, and platform) established, the owners of the networks used several methodologies for security and there are no restrictions on the number of users.

As advantage for using social network in eLearning, the quick delivery of advertisements and news for students, provide exchange experiences between students. Provide the ability to share files easily, encourage the dialogue between teachers and their students, reduces tension among students and teachers and working on to add a social aspect to student, and participation of all parties in the education system from the beginning of the school principal and the teacher and the parents and not only focus on providing schedules for students

3.1 ELearning with Facebook

Facebook is a social networking website founded in 2004. Facebook supports a few services that can be useful in e-learning as Messages, inbox, News Feed, Notifications, Networks, groups and audio and video chats[7].

3.1.1 Using Facebook in education at the University of Palestine :

Firstly we make Closed group for the Information Technology college students, through this group : Any teacher and student in IT college on the University of Palestine can join this group.

Any teacher can insert an advertisement, a topic for discussion.

Teachers and students can communicate with each other any time.

Teachers upload various file such as PowerPoint, video, word for the students as material for every course, also supported material for any topics.

Follow on each new science in information technology.

Students can exchange experiences between others.

As shown in fig. 2, Mahmoud is a student in IT college, request help from his colleagues to get the material of a web programming course. Furthermore, fig. 3, presents a survey for the students concerning the date of Information System Technology lecture.



Figure 2: Mahmoud request help from his colleagues to get the material of a web programming course



Figure 3: Presents a survey for the students.

3.2 ELearning with Twitter:

Twitter is an online social networking service that enables users to send and read short 140-4 character messages called "tweets". Users access Twitter through the website interface, SMS, or mobile device application.

Twitter was created in March 2006 by Jack Dorsey, Evan Williams, Biz Stone and Noah Glass and by July 2006 the site was launched. The service rapidly gained worldwide popularity, with more than 1006 million users who in 2012 posted 340 million tweets per day(5). The service also handled 1.6 billion search queries per day. In 2013 Twitter was one of the ten most-visited websites, and has been described as "the SMS of the Internet. As of July 2014, Twitter has more than 500 million users, out of which more than 271 million are active users[8].

3.2.1 Mechanism of application:

1. Course updates: Send messages to students about the latest news , advertisements and exams about their courses.
2. Follow up the advertisements about their college or university.
3. Dialogue and discussion: the interactivity in this service is create a channels of dialogue and

discuss about specific topics among a group of people.

Limitation on writing: this service is limited to 140 characters, this means that the user has to be clearer and more specific when writing the message ,so important information only.

Established virtual rooms between students and teacher to supported discussion, and can bring experts and specialists in different fields to this rooms.

The ability to send messages to all students for their mobile.

3.2.2 Using Twitter on education at University Of Palestine :

There is a page for Information Technology college student , the students are responsible for this page :

A Lecturer wants to communicate with the students can tweet any post from 140 characters as advertisement

Can tweet a topics for discussion between students, to explore their opinion, knowing their problems.

Follow each new science in information technology

Fig. 4. displays the page of Information Technology college students. It shows how the students can communicate with each others.

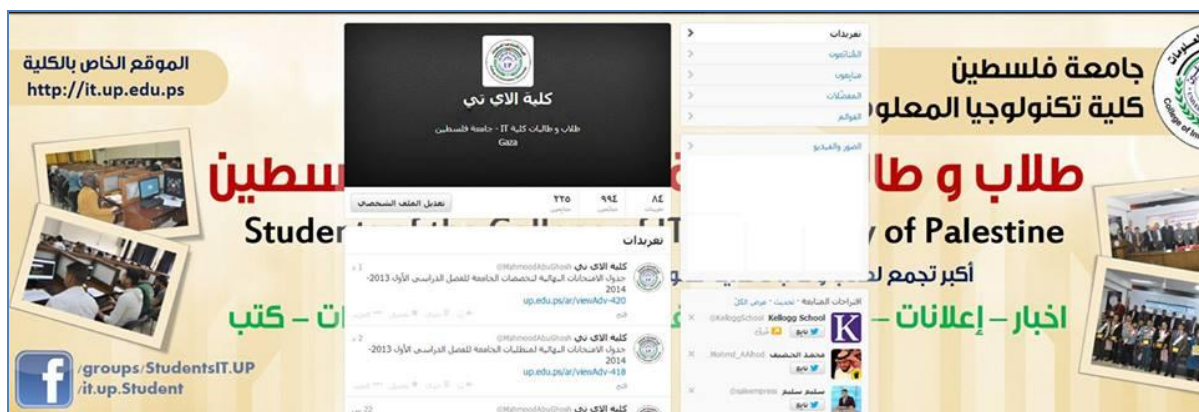


Figure 4: Displays the page of Information Technology college student

3.2.3 Plug in support Tweeter

- **Pollpigeon :**
Through this application can create a poll and follow-up results, so can use this program to create a short quiz or exam or make survey for choose a time for lecture, exam.
- **Screenr :**
It a program that supports Twitter and YouTube can record short video from inside the device without the need for any other software and save it and send it to Twitter or YouTube

3.3 ELearning with YouTube:

In YouTube, there are many supported videos for various courses can use by teachers and students, this videos can share it easily on Social network as Facebook, Twitter.

3.3.1 Using YouTube on education at University Of Palestine:

- Make a channel for Information Technology college students, can share various videos.
- Through this channel can share videos for expert's peoples in their field.
- Use a trainer videos.
- Every teacher can share this video to his students .
- This videos can share easily on social network as Facebook , Twitter .

IV. THE RESULT

Actually we made a survey for the users, this survey published on Facebook and MOODLE – is a learning management system used by University Of Palestine – as a result for our survey :

1. 100% of those who fill the survey use the social network Facebook and 73% of them use MOODLE.
2. 54% of those who fill the survey use the Facebook daily, while 9% use MOODLE daily.
3. 37% spend 1-3 hours on Facebook and 25% from 8-9 hours
4. 53% spend from 1-3 hours on MOODLE .

V. CONCLUSION

It is noted that the student are sitting on the social networking sites more than sitting on the e-learning programs, so we can use social networking in useful way to support e-learning. Social Network as Facebook and Twitter qualified to help in the educational process. We Can create a page or group for each collage. This increases the cooperation between the various universities where there are no official page to gather students and academics from various universities. Teachers and student can exchange experiences and thus the efficiency is increased between them.

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