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ABSTRACT

Social media, in the sense of being social, is made up of society or individuals connecting with one another. Social media is a form of social interaction. In this paper, the authors elaborate the need of social media in the context of education especially in the pandemic situation. The classification and merits of social media in the view of an academician is presented in the study.

Keywords: Communication, Education, Social media, Social networking sites

INTRODUCTION

Social media is a modern computer-utilized technique to communicate ideas, views and information through the creation of virtual networks and communities. Social media, by definition, is web-based and allows individuals to transfer materials electronically in real time. Content examples include personally identifiable information, documents, films and photographs. Web based software or programmes on the PC, tablet or smartphone helps to interact with users of social media (Sujith & Laiju, 2019).

Many people use social media to remain in touch with friends and family and to communicate with each other. Many companies will merchandise for promoting their products using social media. In addition, in business to consumer websites, social components, such as comment fields for users are provided. Additional tools to track the number of mentions and perception of the brand have been created.

It's vast and unconstrained that characterises social media. Although many social media enterprises set certain restrictions on how to remove images depicting violence and nudity, there are much less restrictions than traditional forms of mass communication such as newspapers, radio stations and television channels. There are numerous social media companies.

Anyone who connects to the Internet can open an account with social media. You can share anything you like on this account, and anything you share will be accessible to everyone who sees your page or profile.

WHAT IS SOCIAL MEDIA?

Social media was created as a means of connecting friends with family, but companies were quick to use an inventive avenue to reach their customers. The influence of social media is in the capacity, on the planet or with an enormous number of people, to link and exchange knowledge (Akakandelwa & Walubita, 2017).

Around 3.8 billion social media users are present worldwide. Every year, TikTok and Clubhouse develop new social media platforms, which join major social networks such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and Instagram. By 2023, there are predicted to be 257 million social media users in the United States (Digital in 2020, 2020).

According to Pew Research Center, social media users are generally younger. Almost 90% of respondents between the ages of 18 and 29 used some sort of social media. Furthermore, these individuals are more educated and somewhat wealthy, earning more than \$75,000 per year.

The purpose of these technologies is different since social networks cover so many different types of websites and applications (Talebi & Javidi, 2022). On the other hand, most social media platforms normally start constructing a profile with the user providing a name and an e-mail address. After creating a profile, users can generate and share content. For example, a new user can shoot and submit a snapshot with a picture on their profile from an Instagram account. In addition to entering information for their profile, social media users can also identify other people whose material they wish to follow or comment on. Another person may be "followed," inserted onto another user's profile as a "friend," or "subscribed," depending on the kind of social media.

Social media often uses "feed" that enable users to browse material. The material that displays and the order it appears in social media companies is based on user profile data using algorithms. The content is displayed on the stream by "following" individuals as well as by entities paying to advertise their content. Social Media Features:

CHARACTERISTICS OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Some of the characteristics that distinguish social media are discussed here. Social media is widely accessible, and it is also where today's internet-savvy population congregates. A large percentage of the entire social media user population is made up of the younger generation, teenagers, and middle-aged adults (Walelign et al., 2021). Social media allows for direct contact with clients without the need for a third party. When compared to the prices of print, television, and other traditional media, advertising on social media is relatively inexpensive. Search engine optimization and increased ranks of any company's website are also aided by social media.

There are adequate reasons to use social media. In the fields of education, marketing and communication, social networking sites have become requisite devices. The use of social media pervades the life of every student (Akshay et al., 2019). It is frequently effortless to access information, provide information, and communicate via social media. Tutors and students can communicate with one another and benefit from these platforms in their learning and teaching (Khan & Abdullah, 2019).

CLASSIFICATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is a multimedia platform that has no limitations in terms of communication mode. The sort of media used is determined by the issue and the persons involved. As engaging individuals' technological skills improve, more effective media can be used to communicate in social media. Even for the purposes of comprehending social media, we may divide them into six categories (Lomborg, 2015; Mayfield, 2008).

1. Texters

Email is a highly prevalent type of texter. Instead of utilising words and sentences, Texter allows users to converse through text messages. There is the option of employing emoticons, which are icons. An emoticon is a way to convey facial expressions on a keyboard using a combination of characters. Despite the fact that it is just one of several emoticons accessible, they are more generally referred to as smileys.

Texters allow users to communicate quickly and without disturbing others or themselves if they are in a crowded location. Texters are allowed to react when a certain amount of time has passed when the person is free to respond.

2. Blogs

Another social media platform that can be used to effectively communicate and share information with another person or group of people in the blog. A blog is a phrase that came from the term "weblog." An online blog can be started by anyone to present content on a platform. The blog shares a topic or information about a certain issue on his blog. After reading the first item, people who are interested in the issue can leave their thoughts and opinions. This could result in two-way dialogue or a dispute about the subject.

3. Connection sites

Some kind of social media platform helps individuals to find and connect with unknown people who are having similar interests. Most of the connection sites act as online dating platforms. After creating a profile in the connection site an individual can filter the required details like age, gender orientation etc. A lot of mobile applications are available for connection sites which even help to find people who are near to us with the help of GPS location.

4. Social networking sites

Individuals can use some type of social media platform to identify and interact with strangers who share similar interests. The majority of networking sites also serve as online dating platforms. An individual can filter the needed characteristics such as age, gender orientation, and so on after creating a profile on the connection site. There are several mobile applications for social networking sites that can even assist us to identify people who are close to us using GPS positions.

5. Games and entertainments

Nowadays, there are a plethora of online gaming platforms to choose from. They're also a social media site that lets pals compete against one another in a virtual game. The game's winner may be the individual who achieves the highest score. Gaming platforms such as Pubg are social media platforms that allow players to play as a team in a virtual environment while sharing voice, tools, and ideas.

6. Vlogs

Vlog is a term that combines the words video and blog. Vloggers are persons who use social media to publish short videos. It is a communication platform with fewer opportunities for engagement, but it effectively communicates an individual's views to a large number of individuals in a short period of time. Vloggers typically share such films on YouTube.

BENEFITS OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN EDUCATION

Instantaneous online debates

People prefer to use social media to interact. Ongoing and prospective employees and students, alumni, stakeholders, and the general public can all connect with like-minded people to find answers, establish relationships, and network.

Relationships

Social media can extensively be used by the University and its faculty to have interaction with students, prospective students, researchers, and other organisations, but social media is really about developing relationships with people like you (Balalle, 2018; Perrin, 2015).

Students can make connections with:

1. Students enrolled in your course (either in your cohort or in years above/below)
2. Students from different institutions who are studying the same topic.
3. Experts in your field are willing to share their knowledge.

Knowledge Gaining

In your chosen field(s) or speciality, social media gives a forum for you to share your knowledge and establish reputation (s). You can also gain knowledge and insights from individuals who have been where you are now or have performed comparable research by joining an online group (Ibitham, B, 2021).

Cost-effective

It is usually free for the end-user and can be a very cost-effective communication tool. Not only can you utilise it to communicate, but it's also a great way to promote events, new courses, and research breakthroughs.

You can link at any moment.

Social networking is a 24 hour a day, seven days a week activity. At 3 a.m. GMT, you are unlikely to get an abrupt response from someone local, but most social networking sites are not geographically restricted, and there is usually someone to chat with from the international population. You can also pose a question and wait till daylight to answer it.

Branding

Many people are spending an increasing amount of time on social media platforms. Social media should be viewed as a broad-reaching instrument for reaching a large audience, so getting your name, and the university's identity, out there on the web in the manner we select is critical.

Search results now include content from social media. Information from social networks is increasingly being indexed and ranked by search engines such as Google and Bing. The more social media sites we have, the higher our rankings in online search results get. As a result, it's more crucial than ever to show ourselves in a positive manner.

CONCLUSION

Technological developments have absolutely revamped traditional definitions of communication. Social media becomes significant as it is capable of connecting with many people within a short span of time. Apart from its entertaining aspect, it is highly relevant in the educational scenario. With the advent of Covid-19, our educational practices are to be redefined during the process of which the role of social media becomes indispensable. All the stakeholders of education, thus, need to realize the merits of these platforms and discover innovative ways to engage the students and explore their creativity.

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