

Chapter 7

Communicating in the Age of Web 2.0: Social Networking Use among Academics in Turkey

Tanfer Emin Tunc
Hacettepe University, Turkey

Esin Sultan Oguz
Hacettepe University, Turkey

ABSTRACT

This qualitative study examines the current status of Web 2.0 technologies in Turkey and focuses specifically on the use of such technologies by academics. The main focus of the chapter involves presenting the results of two surveys (using samples of convenience) conducted on faculty members at Hacettepe University (a public research-oriented institution located in Ankara) and Bilkent University (a private research-oriented institution, also located in Ankara). In both universities, the majority of instruction is done in English, and English is the native language or second language of most faculty members. The chapter also examines the applicability of Web 2.0 technologies in the Turkish academic setting and the future implications of these technologies both in Turkey and around the world.

INTRODUCTION

The Internet has radically altered not only the way we communicate with each other, but also the way that research, especially in the academic

setting, is conducted. We are now able to send messages transnationally in a matter of seconds and collaborate with colleagues that we most likely would have never met in the “paper and pencil” age. Accessing research materials such as online journal articles and e-books has also catalyzed the production of new knowledge and has led to

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-60960-833-0.ch007

the spreading of ideas almost instantaneously in a global “information explosion.”

As a secular Muslim “nation that eludes categorization—part of Europe and Asia, but somehow beyond the socially constructed label ‘Eurasian’; bordered by the Mediterranean Sea, but somehow not ‘Mediterranean’; contiguous with the Middle East, but not ‘Middle Eastern’”—Turkey embodies the changing nature of communication in online environments in a global age (Tunc, 2009, pp. 131-132). The globalization of the Internet, and its parent language English, has facilitated the infiltration of communication technologies into Turkey, where only ten years ago fewer than 10% of Turks owned personal computers. In today’s Turkey, computer-mediated communication (CMC) has become a part of daily life, and it involves both men and women and includes members of different social classes. A tourist, for example, can readily observe peasants living in self-constructed homes with coal burning stoves communicating with relatives in Europe, North America, or even Australia using 3G cell phones, or through laptops with Internet access (via portals such as Skype), all while listening to Michael Jackson on their iPods.

Like most developed and developing countries, Turkey has become a nation of technological convergence (i.e., a nation where technologies intertwine). The same cell phone that is used for phone calls is also used to access the Internet, take pictures, listen to music, and even locate one’s global position through GPS tracking. Turks also use their computers in multiple ways—to communicate, to entertain, and to archive their lives. Thus, it is not surprising that their use of social networking applications also converge in a similar fashion. Facebook, YouTube, MySpace, LinkedIn, Twitter, and other Web 2.0 social networking sites (SNS) have become important components of Turkish life in the same way they have infiltrated the communications market globally. These media are employed for personal reasons (i.e., to contact friends and family members be-

yond national borders, access information about hobbies and interests, and self-expression) and are increasingly being used for professional and educational reasons, even though many of these technologies were never intended for the latter. The simplicity of these technologies, and their ability to be personalized at little or no cost, make them attractive, user-generated, modes of communication. Moreover, they also facilitate the building of social capital, especially among academics and students who have fast-paced lifestyles.

The Web 2.0 social networking of academics in Turkey has, to date, eluded in-depth consideration.¹ Examining the use of CMC technologies within this group is particularly important due to the increasing number of college and university students in Turkey. Moreover, being computer literate enough to navigate one’s way through a social network with electronic resources, and to be able to interact with colleagues and virtual librarians, will be essential skills in the future, especially in developing nations that do not have rich paper resources (like books and professional journals). In this context, social networking could concurrently function as a leisure activity that occupies free time or allows one to “keep in touch” with family and friends, as well as an academic tool used to access new information and network cross-culturally with colleagues in foreign countries.

The qualitative study presented in this chapter examines these issues, as well as the current status of Web 2.0 technologies in Turkey. The particular focus of this research is on the use of such technologies by academics. It will report the results of two surveys (using samples of convenience), conducted on faculty members at two different universities in Turkey. The first university, Hacettepe University, is a *public* research-oriented institution located in Ankara. The second institution, Bilkent University, is a *private* research-oriented university that is also located in Ankara. At both of these universities, the majority of the instruction is done in English. Moreover, English is either the native language

15 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:

www.igi-global.com/chapter/communicating-age-web/55563

Related Content

Breastfeeding, Authority, and Genre: Women's Ethos in Wikipedia and Blogs

Alison A. Lukowski and Erika M. Sparby (2017). *Establishing and Evaluating Digital Ethos and Online Credibility* (pp. 329-347).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/breastfeeding-authority-and-genre/171551

Using the Classical Rhetorical Concept of "Ethos" to Solve Online Collaboration Problems of Trust and Presence: The Case of Slack

Benjamin J. Cline (2018). *Online Collaboration and Communication in Contemporary Organizations* (pp. 82-98).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/using-the-classical-rhetorical-concept-of-ethos-to-solve-online-collaboration-problems-of-trust-and-presence/202131

The Differences of Hedonic Shopping Value and Purchase Intention in the Multichannel Shopping Environment for Apparel Shopping

Charanya Nopnukulviset, Laden Husamaldin and Gordon Bowen (2019). *Leveraging Computer-Mediated Marketing Environments* (pp. 125-142).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/the-differences-of-hedonic-shopping-value-and-purchase-intention-in-the-multichannel-shopping-environment-for-apparel-shopping/221507

The Blending of Work, Play & Learning Online: The Pajama Effect

(2011). *Anonymity and Learning in Digitally Mediated Communications: Authenticity and Trust in Cyber Education* (pp. 155-180).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/blending-work-play-learning-online/53393

Smartphones: Resource Dimensions and Uses

Ibelema Sam-Epelle and Kenneth Appiah (2019). *Leveraging Computer-Mediated Marketing Environments* (pp. 237-248).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/smartphones/221512