

A Worldwide Survey on the Use of Social Networking in Higher Education: A Teacher's Perspective

Silvia Gaftandzhieva, University of Plovdiv "Paisii Hilendarski", Bulgaria

Rositsa Doneva, University of Plovdiv "Paisii Hilendarski", Bulgaria

ABSTRACT

Social networking is becoming a more powerful tool for students for communication, information sharing, and discussions. This paper presents a study, based on a survey questionnaire, which aims to investigate to what extent and for what purposes teachers from different countries from all over the world use social networking in their teaching practice. The attitude towards the use of social networking in higher education in general is examined. The study is intended to seek dependences between the answers related to the above issues and different teachers' characteristics, on the point of view if the teachers are well informed about social networking sites, or whether they participate in interest groups or research related to social networking and higher education. Finally, summarized results of the survey are presented, depending on the continent where the countries of the participants are located.

KEYWORDS

Higher Education, Social Media, Social Networking, Teaching Practice, Worldwide Survey

INTRODUCTION

Students in the 21st century (referred to as the digital generation, digital natives) are growing up constantly connected to the world around them through smartphones, tablets, and computers. Marc Prensky (Prensky, 2001) defines the term "digital native" and applies it to a new group of students enrolling in educational establishments referring to the young generation as "native speakers" of the digital language of computers, videos, video games, social media and other sites on the internet.

Students from the digital generation thrive on creative and engaging activities, varied sources of information and a more energetic environment. Teachers are faced with the challenge of understanding how they learn, how they communicate and interact with the world in order to meet the needs of today's students and to teach more effectively. Today social networking as a powerful tool for users for communication, information sharing and discussions on various topics responds to those needs.

The wide academic and research interest in the use of social networking for educational purposes in higher education is the natural result of constantly growing popularity of social networking - according to a worldwide survey, approximately 2 billion internet users are using social networks today (Statista'2018).

According to Pearson (Seaman & Tinti-Kane, 2013, 5 p.), a learning company that promotes the effective use of technology, "A majority of faculty now use social media in a professional context (any

DOI: 10.4018/IJWLTT.20210901.oa4

This article, published as an Open Access article on July 9th, 2021 in the gold Open Access journal, the International Journal of Web-Based Learning and Teaching Technologies (converted to gold Open Access January 1st, 2021), is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>) which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and production in any medium, provided the author of the original work and original publication source are properly credited.

aspect of their profession outside of teaching). Use of social media for teaching purposes has lagged even more, but like the other patterns of use, it has increased every year. The number of faculty who use social media in the classroom still does not represent a majority, but teaching use continues its steady year-to-year growth. Faculty are sophisticated consumers of social media. In general, they see considerable potential in the application of social media and technology to their teaching, but not without a number of serious barriers”.

In recent years there has been extensive academic and research interest into the use of social networking for educational purposes related to:

- ways to enhance the teaching and learning process (Acharya, Patel, & Jethava, 2013);
- introversion and collaborative learning (Voorn & Kommers, 2013);
- the use of social networking sites as a learning management system (Wang, Woo, Quek, Yang & Liu, 2011);
- information reservoirs (Kropf, 2013);
- support of student involvement (Arquero & Romero-Frías, 2013);
- the learning communities and peer-reviews for MOOCs (Rothkrantz, 2015);
- advertising campaigns of courses (Zancanaro & Domingues, 2018)
- promotion of higher education institutions on social networks (Golubić & Lasić-Lazić, 2012; Golubić, 2017).

A number of surveys have been conducted worldwide on the use of social networks by teachers and students aiming to investigate:

- the extent to which teachers use social networking sites to connect with students and parents, and as an education tool (Hendee, 2014);
- how many teachers in higher education institutions are using social media, and in what capacity (Faculty Focus, 2011);
- the use of social networking technologies in higher education - extent of use, benefits and skills learners acquire from the use of these technologies (Zanamwe, Rupere, & Kufandimbwa, 2013);
- the effects of social media use on collaborative learning (Mardikyan & Bozanta, 2017);
- the personal and professional impacts of social media on teaching faculty (Moran, Seaman, & Tinti-Kane, 2011);
- the effects of social media on academic performance of students in university (Kolan & Dzandza, 2018);
- the influence of social networks on high school students' performance (Abu-Shanab & Al-Tarawneh, 2015).

The results of these surveys show that teachers do not use social networking sites for communication with their students (Hendee, 2014; Faculty Focus, 2011; Somova, 2014) and during lessons (Hendee, 2014). Teachers use social networking sites to share information and resources with educators, to create professional learning communities and to connect with peers and colleagues (edWeb, 2009), to improve students' engagement in their course and their educational experience (Hendee, 2014; Mardikyan & Bozanta, 2017; Rutherford, 2010; Rodriguez, 2011; Junco, Elavsky, & Heiberger, 2013). Most of these surveys are held within a university or country. Therefore, the summarised results do not allow us to draw conclusions about the attitude of teachers towards the use of social networks worldwide.

The paper presents the study on teachers' attitude towards the use of social networking sites (Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Bebo, Myspace, LinkedIn, etc.) in higher education in general. It describes the methodology, organization of the study and analyses of the results in accordance with the study objectives. The paper points to general conclusions about the latest trends in the use of

20 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/article/a-worldwide-survey-on-the-use-of-social-networking-in-higher-education/284471

Related Content

Too Many Words, Too Little Support: Vocabulary Instruction in Online Earth Science Courses

Mary F. Rice and Donald D. Deshler (2018). *International Journal of Web-Based Learning and Teaching Technologies* (pp. 46-61).

www.irma-international.org/article/too-many-words-too-little-support/198376

System-Based Ontology for Assessing Learner's Programming Practical Works Activities (S_Onto_ALPPWA)

Karima Boussaha, Farid Mokhati and Amira Hanneche (2021). *International Journal of Web-Based Learning and Teaching Technologies* (pp. 80-107).

www.irma-international.org/article/system-based-ontology-for-assessing-learners-programming-practical-works-activities-sontoalppwa/284472

Effective, Efficient, and Attractive Instructional Design for Online Learning

Ayşe Taskiran (2022). *Handbook of Research on Managing and Designing Online Courses in Synchronous and Asynchronous Environments* (pp. 140-158).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/effective-efficient-and-attractive-instructional-design-for-online-learning/292362

Performance Assessment: A Case for Rubrics in the Virtual Classroom

Apiwan D. Born and Carol M. Jessup (2003). *Virtual Education: Cases in Learning & Teaching Technologies* (pp. 210-224).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/performance-assessment-case-rubrics-virtual/30844

Student Perceptions Towards the Use of the Mobile Flipped Classroom Approach

Siti Hajar Halili, Norharyanti Mohsin and Rafiza Abdul Razak (2021). *International Journal of Web-Based Learning and Teaching Technologies* (pp. 1-13).

www.irma-international.org/article/student-perceptions-towards-the-use-of-the-mobile-flipped-classroom-approach/288045