**Feasibility Study about**

**Social Media**

**Innovation in ITMT**

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**Introduction**

**Social media has permeated throughout many aspects of contemporary society, changing the way in which we communicate and interact with each other. It is defined as any media which allows for social interaction and is typically embodied by Web based services, accessible both via traditional desktop computers and mobile devices. The true power of social media arises from its scalability, with people being able to communicate not only amongst themselves, but also able to publish their thoughts and opinions on a global scale. Whilst expressing one views, it is not a recent phenomenon, social media made it easier, faster and more convenient.**

**Research Hypothesis and Objectives**

**Based on the research presented in the Background, we have generated the following hypothesis: The current degree of mobile Web application usage within the undergraduate population at the University suggests WhatsApp and Facebook are viable tools to evaluate the quality of student’s learning experience.**

**Project Aims**

**The project will assess the following:**

**• The viability of using Facebook to evaluate learning and teaching in Higher Education**

**• The viability of using WhatsApp to evaluate learning and teaching in Higher Education**

**• How the use of social media affects learner participation in the evaluation process**

**• The attitudes of academic staff towards receiving feedback in this manner**

**• The impact of continuous, rather than summative, evaluations at the end of each module**

**• The viability of processing large amounts of continuous, qualitative data.**

**The project will also produce a framework and protocol for the collection, dissemination and analysis of qualitative data.**

**Measureable Objectives**

**Measurable objectives include: number of participants (students); number of comments; duration of participation; perceived impact from both lectures and students; investigation into external impact of social media on the University’s profile.**

**The project will communicate with all staff and students through a public website. The project will also maintain an intranet with output highlights and will develop an interactive module for staffs at the Institution that introduces theoretical approaches to social media.**

**Timeliness and Novelty**

**Use of social networking technology research suggests is now naturalized and routine amongst students. However, student usage of social networks is still a relatively nascent area of research. While, for example their motivations for using social networks have been discussed, an investigation into using Facebook and Whatsapp on mobile web platforms to assess learning experience is timely. Current methods of capturing the student learning experience within the Institutions are not standardized across departments and data is not uniformly produced in a reusable format, therefore not exploiting the Institutions Computer Engineering Laboratory.**

**This study will enhance the Institution reputation in e-learning and contribute to its Web profile. It will also reinforce the Software Department Research Group’s reputation as an interdisciplinary field offering practical, innovative solutions with its multidisciplinary team of investigators and multifaceted approaches to understanding the nature of the Web.**

**Programme and Methodology**

**Methodology**

**The study will take a grounded theoretical approach by employing techniques which track participation with social media tools and by engaging in qualitative data collection and analysis from stakeholders. This study seeks to identify and develop appropriate metrics for the analysis of qualitative and quantitative social media data. The theoretical approaches of this projects output, in the form of a methodological framework for the use of social media as an evaluative tool, will be comprehensive in its coverage. The study includes methods for analysis, considering both the use of social media as a tool, and the theoretical approaches to attitudes about the ubiquity of social media usage in Higher Education.**

**The study aims to produce not only a data set but also a framework and protocol for capturing, anonymizing, storing and analyzing information resulting from the use of Facebook and Twitter for assessment of learning and teaching. Both the dataset and the resulting model can aid further research and academic analysis. This method could offer a means to achieve continuous assessment and may further engage students in their learning. In doing so, the resultant improvements to module design and the increase in instances of student-staff communication will lead to positive effects on the Institution profile on-and off-line. The methodology and resulting data will be published on ITMT open access repository making it available to other disciplines and schools, such as Sociology, Psychology and Education.**

**Justification of Resources**

**Allocated Staff**

**The five principle investigators will allocate time to prepare for and attend meetings; brief research assistants; write publications to be distributed to stakeholders and write papers.**

**Workshops**

**Workshops will be held in order to implement the impact plan to inform lecturers about the theory of utilizing social media, including the costs of the research assistant hosting the workshops, rooms in which to hold the workshops and provision of refreshments.**

**Travel**

**During the course of the study, the research assistants will need to travel to different campus sites and to other institutions we are collaborating with and to the various conferences.**

**Website**

**A website will need to be developed in order to provide participants with any information they might need as well as to advertise our project to other researchers.**

**Future research and Limitations**

**One of the limitations to the use of social media in an Institution is lack of structure in informal social media communications which may necessitate careful mining of data for useful information. Another limitation may result from personal privacy issues (and privacy settings on various social media e.g Facebook).The case study described here is based on several assumptions that cannot be verified at this point. A future study could consider carrying out controlled experiments where social media innovation in ITMT and organizational productivity and quality management is systematically investigated.**

**Conclusion**

**This paper identified the potential use of social media platform innovation in ITMT. Theories of social learning, connectives, and diffusion of innovations are used to explain mechanisms through which social media contributes to learning. A conceptual framework showing the moderating relationship between social media and other team inputs and processes is suggested. The Innovation outcome is further proposed as having an effect on academic productivity. The findings are useful for Institutions which increasingly have the need to stay connected across organizational hierarchies.**