Social Networking

Sean Carlo

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Humans, by nature are, social beings. This belief, ties into the psychological theory of Nature vs. Nurture, more so nurture. The rationale behind “Nurture” is simple, in that, it attributes individual behavior to a multitude of environmental factors that shape who we are and who we become. This factors can include early childhood experiences, upbringing, and especially social relationships. Currently, in 2018 , the manner in which people interact with each other is constantly evolving at an ever quickening rate. The emergence of Social Networking in particular, has forever impacted the various ways in which humans communicate, connect, and learn from each other

Social Networking platforms, can be characterized as being any online space/site where technology, social interaction, and user-generated content converge. It allows members to download and share content, publish a profile consisting of personal information, and connect with others whom they may or may not know (Siapera, Eugenia “Understanding New Media” Detroit: SAGE, 2018, Print). Recently, various social networking platforms have granted users new levels of functionality, with the inclusion of features such as:

* Live Video Streaming
* Article Publishing
* Ecommerce (marketplace)
* Access to virtual reality via Oculus
* Streaming Full Movies
* And even ordering food

These advancements, among others, have made the experience of interacting and learning from different environmental factors effortless and easy to access. Primarily, these platforms are used for their communicative and connective aspects, linking friends and family alike in a shared, online community.

Many are familiar with Mark Zuckerberg’s brainchild, Facebook , or even Tom Anderson’s Myspace, but these do not represent the genesis of social networking sites. In fact, it is widely agreed upon that the initial inception of true social media occurred in 1997, with the creation of a site called SixDegrees. It was named after the ‘six degrees of separation’ theory, and was widely used between 1997 and 2001. The platform allowed users to create a profile and then friend other users. As society charged into to twenty first century, internet usage exploded among the masses, giving way to such sites as Friendster (2001), Myspace (2003), and Linkedin (2003) Myspace is thought of as the original social networking profile space, inspiring and leading to the eventual conception of Facebook. Linkedin operated in a similar manner, although it sought to give professionals a space in which to network. In 2004, Facebook was released exclusively for the students of Harvard. Zuckerberg, seeing the monumental potential of the site, decided to make his site accessible to the world. During this time, another form of social networking was born, a space where users could share their photos. Sites like Photobucket(2003) and Flickr(2004) paved the way for the photo sharing giant of today, Instagram (2010). 2006 saw the creation of Twitter, as Jack Dorsey, Biz Stone, Noah Glass and Evan Williams sought to capitalize on the popularity of SMS and text messages. Their online space was a sort of microblog, which allowed users to send “tweets”, or short 140 character posts. ( Keith, “The History of Social Media: Social Networking Evolution!” History Cooperative, 6 July 2015, historycooperative.org/the-history-of-social-media/)

When examining the uses of social networking sites, there are a host of options to choose from. Some of more obscure, and contemporary spaces include **Telegram, Reddit, and Tumblr.**

**Telegram**

* Launched in 2013, Telegram acts as a cloud based, encrypted instant messaging service.
* It is a multi platform app that can support private groups of up to 10000, or utilize specific topic/company channels that act as a shared community between users. A space where they can share ideas, files, or even call each other.
* The technology also supports hashtags, gifs, replies, and mentions
* Many businesses and large communities use telegram due
* It can be used as a platform to leverage brand awareness, or simply discuss and collect feedback

(Telegram F.A.Q. , https://telegram.org/faq#q-what-is-telegram-what-do-i-do-here, accessed Sept 18, 2018 )

**Reddit**

* Founded in 2005, Reddit has become a substantial hub for a staggering amount of different communities
* Users can create subreddits for specific topics, post to message boards, share content, vote on posts, and submit links.
* While not the traditional social networking space, Reddit’s large community of active users engaging with one another exemplifies the definition of social networking. It is an online message board where social interaction and user-generated content converge.
* Reddit has cross platform app capabilities

(Reddit F.A.Q. https://www.reddit.com/wiki/faq, accessed Sept 18 2018)

**Tumblr**

* Created in 2007, Tumblr operates as a social media and microblogging space
* It almost defies the traditional understanding of what a blog is, as users seek to publish and post content for their personal following, or even for themselves, as opposed to a general audience.
* The content can consist of photos, video, memes, gifs, long form content posts, and music
* A big feature of Tumblr is “reblogging” , akin to retweeting or reposting
* Tumblr is cross platform

Social Networking embodies innovation and ease of use. Never before has it been easier to connect, and share ideas with a community of people from around the world. Most functions are a simple mouse click, or phone tap away. This is especially true with the dawn of smartphones, making social media apps readily available anywhere and everywhere. This new technology is compellingly effective at serving its designed purpose, that is, giving us a space for self expression, communication, and learning. Each year there are various updates and changes made in order to shape these tools as user friendly, and effective as possible. In the future, these tools can be used to help connect people face to face in an artificially created space via virtual reality. Facebook is already experimenting with Oculus technology, and it is possible that, with the creation of an immersive, augmented reality, humans would never have to leave home, in order to visit a destination, or see a friendly face.