The Risks and Benefits of Social Media, and Its Place in Higher Education: a literature review

IEEE Publication Technology, *Staff, IEEE,*

***Abstract*—Finding your place socially at university can be very daunting, especially if you have been unable to find your way into any large social events, or onto any student run social channels such as Discord etc, if any such things are in place at all. Failure to find such places can have a major impact on not only the university experience, but also their mental health, as they can find themselves isolated. I plan to research into the question; could a social media platform embedded into higher education institutions be of a benefit to students starting university by aiding their integration into their new social setting.**

***Index Terms*—Article submission, IEEE, IEEEtran, journal, LaTeX, paper, template, typesetting.**

I. Introduction

II. Literature review

This literature review investigates the risks and benefits attached to social media and the potentital advantages that it could bring forward as a tool in higher education and pedagogy. Social media has made a massive impact on society in many ways, and using it one way or another has become commonplace in most of our lives, but do we fully understand the risks and advantages that it presents? This thematic analysis of recent (2010-2022) research papers aims to explore findings on the possible side effects of social media in an effort to weigh the pros against the cons in regard to the integration of social media with higher education (HE) and pedagogy. We hypothesize, that with proper application, social media could become a valuable tool within HE institutions and could help increase engagement with learning materials and courses.

A. Social Media in Higher Education

Liu (2010) acknowledges that each social media platform comes with its own set of strengths and weaknesses and that the integration of such into pedagogy must be planned cautiously, ensuring that it is the platforms strengths that are leveraged and not the potential distractions and difficulties that could hinder student learning. Liu talks of each social media platform being a tool, each in its own specefic right and each with its designated purpose, so a one size fits all approach would only bring about nuisance. The author notes, for instance, that we could capitalize on Facebook's ubiquity and capabilities for collaboration. Liu (2010) and Baruah (2012) both talk about the integration of social media into higher education and both conclude sharing their thought on that it would be an advantage to implement social media elements as tools within higher education. Kelm (2011) also implemented social media into their course and noticed an increase in engagement from their students and reported a greater sense of team ethic between classmates. Evans (2014) encouraged students to interact with him and their peers through Twitter and found that the amount of Twitter usage was associated with increased student engagement. Course related tweeting showed no evidence of being realted to interpersonal relations vetween students and their tutor, and finally that Twitter usage did not relate to class attendance.

B. The Effects of Social Media

III. methodology

Talk about the methodology, all of the papers I have read so far that conduct any kind of data collection, all do so through online survey, which greatly justifies my chosen method.

I will conduct a within participant study to survey a collection of first year students on their experience of starting university. This will be around week 7 (after reading week). We will research into how they found integrating into their new social environment and if they have been able to find their cohort socially. We will question how they have been coping mentally, whether they have attended any student union events, or engaged in any other activities such as group gaming session. We will also look into how current iterations of social media have played a role in their experience so far.

The same group of students will then be surveyed again through means of within participant study after week 7 of semester 2 after some exposure to my prototype platform to gauge if they think that such a platform would have been of a benefit to them when they started university.

We have chosen a within participant study as opposed to A/B testing as we will not be subjecting testers to side-by-side version of the platform with some form of variable changed. By design of the within participant study, testers will be subjected to all features and functions of the website.

IV. Conclusion

The conclusion goes here.

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