

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

Daniel T. Daley, *Falmouth University*

Abstract—

Index Terms—Social Media, Social Networking, Higher Education.

I. INTRODUCTION

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.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review investigates the risks and benefits attached to social media and the potential 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 literary 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 [1] 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 specific 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 [1] and Baruah [4] 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. Baruah further empowers Liu's point about different platform providing different tools, by discussing how much easier collaboration becomes when using online facilities. Online mediums that provide the features allowing users to co-draft documents, organize members, arrange meetings, spread information and gauge opinion, all while having the capability to reach audiences all over the world. Wang concludes that there will be a greater capacity for groups to participate in collective action, going on to say that it is the hallmark of civil society. Kelm [3] 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. Kelm concluded with a note stating that the secret for educators is to observe how technology is used in everyday life and then implement that use into our education systems. Wang et al. [2] mentions in the paper that there is a call for an approach to try and better balance the relationship between social media and academic study but pays a great deal of respect to the potential benefits that it can offer. The paper goes on to mention that students are very likely to be affected by social media, whilst it provides a world in which to make new friends and release pressure, it can absolutely impact students lives and grades, calling for the aforementioned balance. Evans [5] 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 related to interpersonal relations between students and their tutor, and finally that Twitter usage did not relate to class attendance.

Williams [6] talks of the capabilities that social media brings forward as advantages in enhancing learner engagement in a very efficient way and reiterates the points provided by Junco et al [7]. The paper from Junco et al, follows a similar experiment to Evans and his 2014 paper [5] but in a slightly more robust and comprehensive fashion. This was achieved by using two separate groups, the first consisting of 125 students, half of which were required to use Twitter while the other half were required to use Ning, whereas the participation of Twitter and Ning usage was voluntary for study group 2. The study recognised greater motivation towards engagement from study group 1 (those required to use Twitter and Ning). The paper concludes stating that new technologies being incorporated into contemporary classrooms is an important development in an effort to produce more effective learning strategies and outcomes, while calling for contemporary students to improve their capacity to engage in more self-directed collaborative practices in order to better take ownership of their learning.

Tripathi [8] observed that nearly two-thirds of faculty at their institution had used social media in a class session, some even posting content for students to further read outside of classes, which saw promising levels of engagement while other members of faculty ask students explicitly to utilise social media as part of course assignments. On an end note the paper reaffirms that the presence of social media within HE is increasingly visible as instructors continue to further employ technology to enhance their teaching methods and promote active learning for students.

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.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This should be a simple paragraph before the References to thank those individuals and institutions who have supported your work on this article.

APPENDIX

PROOF OF THE ZONKLAR EQUATIONS

Use `\appendix` if you have a single appendix: Do not use `\section` anymore after `\appendix`, only `\section*`. If you have multiple appendixes use `\appendices` then use `\section` to start each appendix. You must declare a `\section` before using any `\subsection` or using `\label` (`\appendices` by itself starts a section numbered zero.)

SIMPLE REFERENCES

You can manually copy in the resultant .bbl file and set second argument of `\begin` to the number of references (used to reserve space for the reference number labels box).

REFERENCES

- [1] Youmei Liu *Social Media Tools as a Learning Resource* Journal of Educational Technology Development and Exchange (JETDE): Vol. 3 : Iss. 1, Article 8, 2010
- [2] Qingya Wang, Wei Chen, Yu Liang *The Effects of Social Media on College Students*.MBA Student Scholarship, Paper 5. 2011.
- [3] Orlando R. Kelm *Social Media: It's What Students Do*.Business Communication Quarterly, Volume 74, Number 4, December 2011.
- [4] Trisha Dowerah Baruah *Effectiveness of Social Media As a Tool Of Communication And Its Potential For Technology Enables Connections: A Study.*, New York, NY, USA: Springer, 2007.
- [5] Chris Evans *Twitter for Teaching: Can Social Media Be Used To Enhance The Process Of Learning?* British Journal of Education Technology Vol 45, No 5, 2014.
- [6] Ryan Thomas Williams *Social Networking Services (SNS) In Education* Asian Journal of advances in Research. 17(1): 1-4, 2022.
- [7] Reynol Junco, C. Michael Elavsky and Greg Heiberger *Putting Twitter to the test: Assessing outcomes for student collaboration, engagement and success*. British journal of Education Technology. Vol 44 No 2 2013
- [8] Dr. Sheel Nidhi Tripathi *Social Media in Higher Education* Communication Today, January-June, 2022.

BIOGRAPHY SECTION

If you have an EPS/PDF photo (graphicx package needed), extra braces are needed around the contents of the optional argument to biography to prevent the LaTeX parser from getting confused when it sees the complicated `\includegraphics` command within an optional argument. (You can create your own custom macro containing the `\includegraphics` command to make things simpler here.)

If you include a photo:



Michael Shell Use `\begin{IEEEbiography}` and then for the 1st argument use `\includegraphics` to declare and link the author photo. Use the author name as the 3rd argument followed by the biography text.

If you will not include a photo:

John Doe Use `\begin{IEEEbiographynophoto}` and the author name as the argument followed by the biography text.