ENCOURAGING SOCIAL MEDIA WITH SCHOOL EDUCATION

Abstract:
Digital era is more focusing on communications which is becoming very easier day by day and covering as possible as long distances. Hence, global world is coming to closer and approachable. And this is blessed by ICT (Information and Communication Technology). ICT can be constituted with mass media, mobile technology and internet technology. Looking to this trends and demands, school education is also seeking to enhance practices of ICT in education with various advanced ICT tools/components. In the context of the ICT in school education, it is essential to encourage and create scope to utilise advanced ICT tools/components to get involve in educational and academic practices. This paper is designed to focus on advanced ICT – especially Social Media. It is considered that Social Media also have merits and demerits in the school context, but author is focusing on positive aspects for practicing Social Media in Education in terms to encourage positive learning experiences.

INTRODUCTION
Day by day, ICT is growing very rapidly to speed up the communications and cover the longer distances. This gives the feelings of ‘world is small’ or even ‘in our hand’ or as ‘at our fingertips’. With such advancements, one also needs to get updated with such knowledge and practices to cope up with the global world. And this thought also needs to implement in the schools or classrooms with the aim to give maximum exposure of real world to the learners.

Social Media / social networks are the emerging and appropriate platforms through which school can improve the communication / interaction with their stakeholders and to world also. Even proper usage of social media under the appropriate policy guidelines, increases the span for learning opportunities and experiences of the learners. Social Media can be used as powerful tool to disseminate and share the necessary information quickly.

The purpose of this paper is to present the possible and positive aspects for the practices of the Social Media in Education and especially in the school context. It is considered that there are many risk factors while using the social media in the school education, but with some norms, regulations and under the
proper observation / monitoring, these risk factors can be minimized or reduced. The proceeding sections are presenting about the social media and its implications at school education.

SOCIAL MEDIA
Social media refers to the means of interactions among people in which they create, share, and exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks. The trend of social media was started in 1969 and kept on evolving with various services and facilities. Earlier very few application of social media were used or popular. But from last few years, social media is extensively used to establish social relationships and for regular communications/interactions. Social Media is used through internet where any user can share or disseminate any text, photo, pictures, videos or audios. Basically, it is based on the Web 2.0 technology where two way interactions are possible and constituted with many social networks. Every social networks have their own features and services is explained in the next section.

Social Networks are means to the system providing the facilities and services to internet users to communicate /interact with many other users and to form the groups to share or disseminate the information / ideas / chat. Following are some of the popular social networks that have been used worldwide by number of people.

1. **Facebook**: Facebook is the most Popular social networking site in this world which was founded by Mark Zuckerberg, Eduardo Saverin, Andrew McCollum, Dustin Moskovitz, Chris Hughes in 2004. The site has more then 1 Billion registered users. Using Facebook you can create pages, Groups by which you can share images, video, texts etc. [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)

2. **Twitter**: Twitter one of the Popular social networking site which was founded by Jack Dorsey in 2006. The site has almost 500 million users, the site is popular for sharing short text messages of 140 words which are known as “Tweets”. According to some reports the site generates 340 million tweets daily and handles over 1.6 billion search queries per day. [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com)

3. **Google+**: Google+ is a multilingual social networking, which is owned by Google and was launched in 2011. The site has about 500 Million users. Google describes Google+ as a “social layer” which does not consist a single site, but rather an overarching “layer” which covers many of its online properties. [www.plus.google.com](http://www.plus.google.com)

4. **LinkedIn**: LinkedIn is a social networking website for people in professional occupations. It was Founded in December 2002 and was launched on May 5, 2003. It has about 200 Million users and is available in various languages. [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com)

5. **Pinterest**: A network of bulletin boards onto which people “pin” photos with links to external sources (recipes, online stores, etc.). It boasts 85.5 million users, and is used most often for marketing, social media, business and crafts. [www.pinterest.com/](http://www.pinterest.com/)

6. **LiveJournal**: LiveJournal is an online blogging community with about 20 million users. People use LiveJournal to create personal blogs and connect with other bloggers in the community. LiveJournal has limited functionality and caters to a younger demographic. If you want to create a company blog, you’re better off with a self-hosted platform, like Blogger, WordPress, or Typepad. [www.livejournal.com/](http://www.livejournal.com/)

7. **Tagged**: A social discovery site that allows users to find people and share mutual interests. Tagged has approx 19,500,000 users. It was created in 2004 when Facebook was gaining popularity and the site was originally targeted to high school students, but has since grown into a larger community. It’s similar to Facebook, except that users can send each other virtual gifts. [www.tagged.com/](http://www.tagged.com/)

8. **Orkut**: Orkut is one of the most used social media websites in India and Brazil, with approx 17,500,000 users. It was created by a Google employee (by the last name of Orkut). [www.orkut.com/](http://www.orkut.com/)
EDUCATION AND SOCIAL MEDIA: LITERATURE REVIEW

The use of social media has surged globally in recent years. As of July 2011, Facebook passed 750 million users, LinkedIn had over 100 million members, Twitter had over 177 million tweets per day, and YouTube reached three billion views per day (Chen & Bryer, 2012). Despite the popularity social media for personal use, however, a low percentage of students and faculty use them for academic practice (Lenhart, et al., 2010; Tiryakioglu & Erzurum, 2010; Chen & Bryer, 2012). As educators look for ways to engage and motivate students, social media technologies are becoming a viable supplement to the traditional learning environment (Ebner et al., 2010). Also, educators are examining the combination of distance education delivery with instructional social media, thus, providing new approaches to teaching and learning that blend pedagogy and technology (Brady, Holcomb, & Smith, 2010; Lee & McLoughlin, 2010; Veletsianos & Navarrete, 2012). Following are some of the reviews of the literature presented about the integration of education and social media.

Usage And Interest In Social Media

Guy (2011) focused on the use of social media by students of color at several historically Black colleges (HBCs), a population that is underrepresented in the literature. The first study queried 261 undergraduate students regarding their personal use of social networking sites. Eighty-seven percent of the study participants surveyed reported having subscribed to either Facebook or MySpace while only 13% said they participate on Web sites as bloggers. Students were also asked to report their frequency of usage with specific online activities relating to social networking. The results revealed that 53% of the students reported using Facebook and/or MySpace on a daily basis. Blogging was the activity students reported performing the least at 5% daily. A second, separate but related, study surveyed 155 students at a single HBC to determine the likelihood of students going online to actively engage in the use of a social networking. The results revealed that 5.5% were not at all likely, 7.1% not very likely, 11.6% somewhat likely, 23.2% likely, and 42.6% were almost certain of going online to use social networking sites. The same study reported that the majority of students (68%) subscribe to either Facebook and/or MySpace, 53% access these sites daily, and 18% reported frequent usage.

Liu (2010) investigated students’ use of different social media tools and their attitudes and perceptions towards these tools. The author sought to identify the knowledge and trends of using 16 social media tools that included Facebook, Wiki, YouTube, Bulletin Board, LinkedIn, Blogs, Twitter, Podcasts, Virtual Worlds, RSS, StumbleUpon, Netlog, Delicious, Digg, Plurk, and Jaiku. Through an online survey, 221 students were asked to rate their knowledge level of each social media tool using a Likert scale of 1-4 (1=not at all knowledgeable, 2=somewhat knowledgeable, 3=knowledgeable, and 4=very knowledgeable). The results revealed the following: (a) 82%, 77%, and 70% were either “very knowledgeable” or “knowledgeable” about YouTube, Wiki, and Facebook, respectively; (b) 42%, 41%, and 39% were “somewhat knowledgeable” about podcasts, blogs, and forums, respectively; and (c) 42%, 40% and 25% were “not at all knowledgeable” about virtual worlds, RSS, and Twitter, respectively. The study results also revealed the top four reasons why students use social media tools. As reported, (i) 85% use such tools for social engagement, (ii) 56% use them for direct communications, (iii) 48% use them for speed of feedback/results, and (iv) 47% use them for relationship building. However, fewer than 10% of the students mentioned using social media tools for academic practice.

Poellhuber & Anderson (2011) worked together to conduct a study aimed at describing the use of and interest in social media. A 90-item online questionnaire was completed by 3,462 students between July, 2009 and February, 2010. The demographic characteristics constitute a large percentage of females (75.3%) and students of varying ages categorized by five 8-year spans: Generation Z, 16-24 (37.2%); Generation Y, 25-32 (27.2%); Generation X2, 33-40 (16.1%); Generation X1, 41-48 (10.5%); and Baby Boomers, 49 and over (5.3%). In terms of user proficiency, the results revealed that a significant percentage of study respondents reported being either advanced or expert users of social networking (69.5%), video sharing...
(52.9%), photo sharing (33.7%) and blogging (25.4%) tools. In terms of interest in using social media for academic practice, the study respondents demonstrated a higher interest in using those social media tools for which they were most familiar. Ranked by the percentage of interested respondents, the list includes the following: video sharing (58.2%), social networking (52.8%), Web conferencing (42.6%), blogging (40.2%), photo sharing (36.4%), podcasting (33.7%), wikis (31.3%), electronic portfolios (28.5%), virtual worlds (19.4%), tweeting (18.5%), and social bookmarking (18.1%).

Guy (2012) conducted study as literature review is to examine the use of social media in higher education, specifically to reports on: (a) the use of social media by students and faculty; (b) the use of social media for academic practice in both traditional and distance learning formats; and (c) the pros and cons of using social media for academic practice. This report concluded as the effectiveness of social media in teaching and learning is limited to the use of discussions, chats, blogs, and wikis; therefore, the need exists for further exploration in determining how other social media platforms can be used for academic practice.

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These reviews revealed with current trends and scenario about the younger generation and their interest with social media can be summarised as:

- The use of social media by students for academic practice is surpassed by its use for social engagement, direct communications, and relationship building.
- A large percentage of social media use and expertise lies with college students between the ages of 18-24, also known as Generation Z.
- Facebook and YouTube are the two most commonly used social media technologies among all students.

**Research Studies On Academic Practices With Social Media**

Junco et al. (2010) examined the link between social media use and student engagement. The semester-long study consisted of two groups, experimental and control. With the experimental group, Twitter was used for various types of academic and co-curricular discussions, class and campus event reminders, faculty and student connections, providing academic and personal support, and organizing service learning projects and study groups for 70 students. Ning, a social networking site, was used to deliver the same course information to the control group of 55 students. Analyses of Twitter exchanges and survey responses showed that: (1) the experimental group had significantly greater increase in engagement and (2) both faculty and students were highly engaged in the teaching and learning process.

George (2011) developed a mini course entitled “Friending Facebook” for 15 healthcare students at Penn State. The mini course was designed with the use of a variety of social media tools as a means to provide participants with content through anecdotes and examples. For instance:

- Really Simple Syndication (RSS) readers – were used to track clinical trial data from multiple journals, to follow blogs originated by researchers, and to receive news and relevant literature regarding the latest trends in the healthcare industry.
- Twitter – was used to share and receive information from colleagues, health organization, and patients.
- Facebook and LinkedIn – were used as the course platform for networking among peers, faculty and medical professionals.
- Google Resources (Alerts, Mail, and Realtime) – were used as search tools that indexed Facebook posts and Twitter tweets and provided social updates on healthcare topics from around the world.

Deng & Yuen (2010) explored the role of academic blogs in supporting a group of 19 pre-service teachers in Hong Kong. Specifically, the purpose of the study was to investigate the pros and cons of using blogs to support self-expression, self-reflection, social interaction, and reflective dialogue among pre-service teachers. Xanga, a free commercial blogging platform, was used as a means of documenting, sharing, and reflecting on their teaching practice experiences. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected through blog frequency counts, questionnaires and interviews. The investigation revealed that only 13 pre-service teachers wrote 75 blogs entries with 62
comments exchanged; 13 participants acknowledged the values of blogs with respect to self-expression, self-reflection, and the documentation of experiences; and 12 pre-service teachers felt more connected through blogging when compared to the teaching practice in the previous year. These research studies show the positive influence of social media can be used through academic practices. Such many more academic practices can be planned / prepared using social media or social networks. Following section is presenting some of the examples of the schools are regularly practicing with such media.

**GETTING INSIGHTS FROM EXAMPLES OF SCHOOLS USING SOCIAL MEDIA**

Following are the examples of the schools are effectively and actively using the social media for their academic activities and services. According to Lepi (2012), following schools are making very good usage of social media for the academic purposes.

**Piedmont High School** in Piedmont, Calif. Principal Richard Kitchens (@piedmonthigh) uses Twitter to help students and teachers reach the school’s goal: “Achieve the Honorable.” This high school places a lot of emphasis on supporting students, so taking that to the digital realm makes perfect sense. Students can reach out to their principal, who moderates the stream, responds to mentions and direct messages, congratulates school teams, and posts updates about calendar events, educational tips, useful resources, and links.

**George Middle School** in Portland, Ore. This middle school uses the more educationally oriented social networking tools like Wiggio, Edmodo and EduBlogs. Each one is used a little differently, and they’ve taken student engagement to a new level. “We now have two sections of technology learning social media techniques. [...] Our kids blog, text, whiteboard and tag. They post links and create videos,” says counselor Elizabeth Delmatoff. These systems are being used for accountability, too. “Our tardy or absent kids (and their parents) get texts to their cell phones and we have implemented a 1:1 online tutoring program. We have peer chat groups, peer study groups and teacher led groups. Not only do we have them, the kids love them.”

**Roosevelt High School** in Minneapolis, Minn. The curriculum at this high school is geared towards getting students ready for success at colleges and technical schools. Using the University of Minnesota’s DigMe (short for “digital media”) program, Roosevelt High teachers and administrators started weaving social media into the curriculum at every level. Students use social sites outside the classroom constantly, and bringing it inside the classroom has increased participation and student engagement dramatically.

**Half Moon Bay High School** in Half Moon Bay, Calif. A.P. U.S. history teacher Mike Putnam assumed that his students knew everything there was to know about using social media, but what he found was that was only true about Facebook — Twitter was a different story. Emphasizing the role Twitter is playing in politics, revolution and the general unfolding of history, Putnam gives students daily questions and teaches them to be concise through Twitter. **Freehold High School** in Western Monmouth County, N.J. With a medical science learning center, a culinary academy and a computer science academy all right on campus, Freehold High School takes their four-year program to prepare students for post-secondary studies very seriously. On campus, cell phones have been decriminalized and are now being used for Twitter, Skype and a host of other social networking tools aimed at preparing students to market themselves.

From the above examples, one can learn that various social media or social networks can be effectively practices to enhance academic activities of any level. Also it required for the academic practitioners to have hands on practices or good command over the operational knowledge of social media.

**EPISTEMOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN EDUCATION : FEW APPLICATIONS**

Implications of Social Media in Education is very easy to understand and easy to make various pedagogical/academic practices. Harper (2013) also has suggested and give some examples of different social media can be used for various academic activities are given as below.
**Facebook Classroom Page:** Facebook pages are used for small businesses, celebrity fan clubs, authors and many others who wish to have a place where they can connect with others. While the Classroom Facebook Page, it is an excellent place to post homework assignments, share updates or even humorous stories from the day. The practice of posting homework assignments each day can save students and their parents a lot of frustration, and discourage excuse-making for assignments that aren’t completed. Even if it’s not used daily, this social media gathering place can increase the community feel of the classroom.

**Twitter for Reminders:** A short, 140-character Tweet is often sufficient for giving parents and students a head’s up that there’s a test scheduled or assignment due the next day. These quick reminders can be lifesavers for busy families that spend the late afternoon and early evening running from one activity to the next. Use them for field trips, conferences or general reminders of supplies needed. Similar to the Facebook page, Twitter can also be used to increase parent-teacher communication.

**Show and Tell with Pinterest:** Pinterest is a social media venue that caters to those who are visually oriented. If you take pictures in your classroom of the students working or of classroom projects, pinning them on Pinterest can be an excellent way to share the photos with parents. Before doing this, be careful to review your students’ photo releases to see if you have permission to take and post photos. Even with this, it’s often best to post photos of projects and activity results rather than of the students themselves.

**Blogging in The Classroom:** Whether you use it as part of your English class lesson plans or for any other subject, having students participate in a classroom blog can be an excellent way to get them to map out their thoughts and practice writing. Assign a different student each day to take care of blogging. Be sure to provide guidelines and demonstrate how to follow them at the beginning of the year. Classroom blogs can be made available to parents and administrators only by maintaining a private blog that can be accessed only by approved or invited subscribers.

**CONCLUSION**

Social Media is the open platform, has many useful features that can be used for various educational purposes. Many pedagogical and academic activities are possible to design through social media. It is very useful tool to improve communications / interactions at any level or with any audience. To minimize the risk factors associated with the social media in the context of school or young students, needs to formulate proper policy guidelines /norms / regulations and also essential to have proper observance / monitoring. Also one recommendation / suggestion can be expressed by the author as looking to the risk factors associated with the social media is that school should create the features and opportunities of social media through their own school website. The features like blogging, social networking, sharing etc should be developed through their own school website in terms to connect all the stakeholders of the respective school. Even such implications should be made for higher education also which help to create our own community / social groups.

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