



On Some Aspects of Educational Network

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ABSTRACT

Since few years' online social networking sites like Facebook, Orkut, Twitter, etc. had grown in popularity. While most people use these social networking to connect with friends, but by going through a close study one can easily observe that their utility extends much beyond the scope of knowing and connecting like-minded peoples. These tools can also be used for learning and knowledge sharing. "Educational Networking" is the appropriate term, which is a kind of social networking technologies used for educational purposes. As the phrase "social networking" can sometime carries negative impact and connotations for educators, the phrase "educational networking" seems to be safer and more objectively towards discussing the pedagogical value. In this article, we have provided a brief overview on advantages of education. Our works include a bit of review of the concepts, definitions and categorizations available in Social Network literature. We have also argued on the central characteristic of Educational networking, which is a combination of personalization and socialization. This combination has a potential to facilitate transparency between student communities. Such transparency gives students insight into each other's work, leading to an increase in quality and benchmark of their own work.

Key words : Social Network, Education Network.

INTRODUCTION

The set of relationships between individuals where each individual is a social entity is known as Social network. Social networks represent both a collection of ties between people and the strength of those ties. Even in other case we may consider the relationship of tiger and deer in food relationship, as being social entity, it may also constitute of social network. Generally Social network is used as a measure of social "connectedness", within the social networks to observe and calculate about the quality and

quantity of information flow within individuals as well as within groups. Hence, conclusions may be drawn out of such model on relationship of correct or wrong information flow and even blockage of information at a certain node (here we represent each individual in social network as node and the connection as vertex). Building model on concept of social network can vary in size from relation between two individual to as big as interaction between two communities or even relationship of countrymen belongs to different countries.

Social network sites are web-based services that allow individuals to do various jobs like constructing a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulating a list of other users or groups with whom they share a connection, and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within that particular system (or site). The nature and nomenclature (i.e. relationship) of these connections varies for different sites. The word Social Network is of two words. Networking emphasizes relationship initiation either between strangers or between persons known to each other up to a certain degree. And since these sites are dealing with relationships, we call them social sites. Together with the features and technology of activity through computer networks, such sites are recognized as social networks.

When it comes to online social networking, websites and chatting utilities are commonly used over the Internet and intranet. These websites are known as social sites. Social networking websites function like an online community of internet users. Depending on the website in question, many of these online community members share a common interest such as hobbies, religion, or politics or even regions. Once a user is allowed to access to a social networking website he/she starts to socialize. This socialization may include putting self-details as well as reading the profile pages of other members and possibly even contacting them.

Social networking often involves grouping specific individuals or organizations together. Most of the social networking websites focus on one or other interests, but some sites have no affiliations towards any of the interest areas. Such websites without a main focus are known as 'traditional' social networking websites and are generally open to memberships. This implies, one is allowed to be a member, no matter the difference in hobbies, beliefs, or views. But, once the particular member is inside this online community, he/she can begin to create his/her own network of friends and eliminate members that do not share common interests or goals.

The friends or relations that one makes

are one among many benefits to social networking online. Another advantage includes diversity as the internet permits individuals, from around the globe to access to social networking sites. This leads to interaction between persons of different regions, religions, communities, cultures, statuses and languages and gives a wide scope to learn different issues as well as to gather a wide range of diversified information.

One of the benefits of Social Network Sites (SNSs) is that they allow individuals to meet strangers, and that too over networks make a safe place to interact and increase the social radius. This results in connections between individuals that would not otherwise have happened. While SNSs have implemented a wide variety of technical features, their backbone consists of visible profiles that are displayed to the other persons who are part of the sites. However, when analyzing these profiles, the questions that come to mind are:

1. What is the authenticity of the profiles that consist of facts that are true, honest and acceptable?
2. What guarantee can one give that the information (some times personal) these profiles have, will not be used for damaging or destruction or for wrong activities?

As per Boyd, Social network is differentiated by three features. The first one is Profiles: Which describe the background, interests and activities of a person or a group. The second one is the Relationship: It is used to connect people. It can also help to determine who can see what part of a person's profile and comments. And the third one is Comments: It may be notes, messages, asynchronous communication and video materials. He has also described the four types of Social network media: (i) Persistent (Content can be saved for further reference), (ii) Searchable (Contents can be searched easily using fuzzy searching techniques), (iii) Replicable (Contents can be copied easily) and (iv) Allow invisible Audience (It can be difficult to know who might see given information).

When we discuss about categorizing about different types of social networks, we have:

1. Creators: Publish web pages, write blogs , upload videos and pictures
2. Critics: Comment on blogs and post ratings and reviews
3. Joiners: Use social networking sites
4. Spectators: Read blogs, watch videos and pictures
5. Collectors: They only collect and gather information's(web pages, videos)
6. Inactive: These users are online but not yet used any social networking sites.

EDUCATION NETWORK

Educational networking is a social networking site for students, teachers, anything related to study. One can set up a group for once class, college, school, learning group or university to make learning and teaching easier. Such education site helps the community to share the knowledge, helps is carrying out the research, assignments and homework.

In the paper we have argued about a central characteristic of Educational networking sites which is a combination of personalization and socialization. This combination has a potential to facilitate transparency between student community. Transparency between students means that they have insight into each other's work, thoughts, and productions. Not least within online education, transparency is not a given. Students might work at a distance and individually, and, thus, they are not necessarily aware of the activities of other students. In their individual work, however, students write notes, search for literature, find relevant websites, write assignments, etc. This information and these products are relevant to other students and the entire community.

Social networking sites do not necessarily involve communication, dialogue or collaboration. Instead, we here give emphasis on transparency and its feature. An interesting aspect of social interaction in social networking sites is that the starting point is the individual or personal. This is in opposition to discussion forums, in which communication always takes place in a shared forum. In a social networking site, the general trend

is that each individual has a personal page and profile, which the individual develops and modifies. Other people can view these pages and follow activities of his/her 'friends', 'community' and machine generated mappings on the people that they want to share with. In other words, actions within a social networking site are transparent. This creates a kind of indirect or "passive" form of communication and sharing. In opposition to discussion forums, people do not necessarily send messages or documents in order to communicate or share, instead, they update their profiles, add pictures, texts and comments to their own page. This is the characteristic of personalization and socialization. The starting point for this kind of social interaction is students' own work and their personal pages. The personal pages are then shared in a social network. We have tried discussing here about this approach and it may be utilized within university education by students sharing information and resources that are originally developed for themselves, but made available to others, for instance bookmarks, references, links, animation, video clips and notes.

Justifying special and dedicated Social network used by the student and teachers communities for sharing academic resources as an educational network. Teachers and Instructors are the main source of transferring knowledge to the student community. How far the media and technology improves and penetrates into the classroom environment, these aids cannot replace the importance of the teachers. Concepts and knowledge may be made available round the clock with easy explanation, but a teacher is always required to explain such concepts and clears the doubt. But it is observed in certain cases by the authors that, teaching with the modern technologies, equipments, aids including social network and education network improves the education scenario altogether.

During our study and analysis, we have observed about some practical issues that the teachers and instructors can take to prepare themselves for interacting with all students and teachers to improve education. Some of the steps that we encouraged to make during analysis are:

(a) Creating a profile and uploading the materials on those social sites that are popular in the campus. Analyzing about the features and style that make those sites to be popular among the student community. We need to make our profile and representation of our courses in the similar pattern, where teachers need not to conduct the class for demonstrating on where is the information. The teacher will tell the class about the usage of the information. As student community is well versed with the representation of information, there will be no problems by them in accessing and browsing the required information and courses.

(b) Keeping the profile public makes it easier for the students as well as people from other academic community to interact and give inputs.

(c) Adding multimedia tutorials, graphs, case studies, papers and links to various online sources encourages the student communities to understand the course work in more versatile and deeper way. It also increases social networking bonds between the teacher and student outside the classroom environments and beyond the course hours.

(d) In one of the analysis, it was observed that if a teacher invite and persuade the student to join his/her community, student may join but they lack the interest, enthusiasm and the self-motivation to be a part of the teacher's community. Whereas, when students show self-interest to join their teacher's community, achievement and involvements are more. We found that a teacher must be open in accepting the request of any and every student but should not move from self-side to make the community larger. Slowly but surely a better social site with course and knowledge information will attract the student community.

Sharing of Information and Interaction through education sites in campus

Schools and campus should encourage the student communities to interact among themselves. This will break the boundary of

localization and geographical distance and student will be updated with the research and academic activities, happening in the entire world. Social Educational sites facilities to teach students about effective collaborators in that world, interaction with people around them, to be engaged, and informed with the latest happenings in academic world. Such type of networking can also be termed as Academic Environment.

Social networks in the classroom

Social networks within a school play a high value. Today's children can be termed as the Internet generation who are always engaged with technology. During the literature review, we found with a recent study, that 96% of students reported using social networks and 60% reported using them to talk about educational subjects. Half reported using social networks for school work. And yet 62% of schools in that survey prohibited blogging or online discussion boards at school. 52% prohibited any social networking sites at school. In that same study, 76% of parents felt that social networks could conceivably improve their children's reading and writing. This is evidence of a disconnection among the participants in education, teachers, students and parents. Embracing social networking technology and harnessing for use in the classroom is a paradigm shift that is we felt is required. Placing it inside the school firewall would enhance its value dramatically while reducing school board concerns about the potential downside of these networks - cyber bullying, frivolous chat, use of explicit language, pictures or even inappropriate music. Going to a higher level i.e. the community of Graduate Students, they can also access Educational social network that enables researchers to bookmark their academic contributions and research related materials which includes publications, source code, presentations, tutorials, lecture notes, etc. Such network helps the graduate student in judging about the quantity and the quality of research without the going into vigorous search.

When we focus on the groups, that will evolve out of such kind of education network, we feel that the relationship could be between 1)

relations between students in a study group working on a joint assignment and 2) relations between individuals or study groups within the same course.

Thus, the relations do not exclude one another, but are supplementary in nature. Such relationship plays a vital role in establishing Transparency.

In this analysis, an example can be analyzed as a particular case, where the situation is relevant within a university campus, in which students are working on related projects or assignments, but not collaborating. At universities it can be difficult for students to follow the work of other students; often, they are engaged in their own assignments. However, students can make use of each other's resources. Often, students are unaware of what other students are doing, and they do not necessarily make use of each other, although their work is relevant to each other. The problem is only extended and an optimal solution can be achieved through online education, where students do not meet face-to-face but share their knowledge and academic thoughts.

CONCLUSION

Social networking sites are not the new Learning Management Systems. However, the special kind of communication and interaction is interesting and has a greater advantage, when implemented with a proper objective. In this paper, we have reviewed on various aspects of education network and its positive impacts on students from school, high school to graduate level. We have analyzed about the on the benefits of academic community, when thoughts and knowledge is shared through networks. In one way, it does not hold any boundaries. During our discussion, we analyzed several questions and situations that are evolving with the education network. Such network gives the socio-cultural approach, students' problem-oriented and self-governed activities and importance of learning through sharing of knowledge and ideas. The potential of social networking lies within transparency and the ability to create awareness between students, grow their hunger to achieve a greater level in knowledge and in sharing thoughts. Lastly, discussing on its importance, we urge on motivating students and academic community including faculties to use and share and to promote such a platform for the growth of academic in every level from School to University campus and ultimately to global community.

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