

The main aim of social networking

[Sociology](#), [Social Networking](#)



The main purpose of social networking sites is to enable people to build networks and connect with individuals with whom they have something in common. According to Lusted (2011), the main reason why social networking has become a fundamental part of our daily routine is because it has made it easier for Internet users to communicate and share their ideas, interests and activities. According to Lee (2013), that is why as of 2011 Facebook and Twitter had 900 million active users altogether, while YouTube had 1 billion unique visitors every month. Even though these figures are usually analysed in relation to social and demographic phenomena, recent research has showed that an increasing number of organisations use social networking websites to find suitable candidates and to collect information about them. In this regard, Quast (2012) argued that employers should be very careful when using social media to find information, as they may assess potential candidates on the basis of what they post to their close friends or family members, thus risking violating their privacy and/or engaging in unethical practices. In spite of that, it can't be denied that social media has revolutionised the way organisations recruit and screen candidates, which is why more attention should be paid to the relationship between on-line social networking and career. That is why this essay will evaluate the impact that social networking sites can have on career progress, paying particular attention to the positive and negative changes they have brought about.

A new approach to recruiting

Social networking sites are meant to enable Internet users to easily interact and connect with each other. Although Facebook, Twitter and other popular sites don't have a specific purpose, apart from facilitating users' interaction,

there are numerous social networking sites which were designed specifically to help users create professional profiles and build work relations, discuss specific hobbies, exchange information about their personal experiences, communicating with people who share their religious beliefs and so forth. (Lusted, M. A., 2011)

According to Anand (2010), even though staffing professionals should focus on social networking sites like LinkedIn to screen candidates and post job advertisements, due to its business-related nature, the truth is that the recruiting industry relies heavily on Twitter, Facebook and other social platforms which are usually meant for private use. Although more research will have to be done on the ethical implications of these practices, it is important that job seekers, employees and self-employed people become aware of the significant impact social media could have on their career progress.

Positive and negative effects

Transparency

One of the most important changes brought about by social media is increased transparency, which can have both positive and negative effects on people's career progress, depending on how well they know social networking sites and the purposes for which they use them. With regards to the impact of social media on the entire recruiting industry and, therefore, on people's career, Flynn (2012) reported that a survey conducted in 2009 revealed that 13% of American employers use social networking sites to find and evaluate potential candidates and that 3% of employers have

disregarded various applicants because of their private social networking profiles and blogs.

Privacy and freedom-related issues

According to Anand (2010), more and more employers will use online social networking to screen candidates and recruit workers in the future, mainly because social networking sites allow them to collect both private and work-related information. Obviously, this practice may affect the way Internet users interact through social networking sites, as knowing that a recruiter may check their private profiles anytime would almost certainly discourage them from sharing personal information and opinions which may be perceived negatively by potential employers or clients.

Opportunities

In spite of their importance, increased transparency and privacy-related issues are not the most significant effects of social media on career progress. In fact, it should be noted that social media has revolutionised the job market, providing job seekers with the opportunity to make a good impression on recruiters, by publishing information about themselves which they know any employer would appreciate. According to Crompton and Sautter (2011), this process, which they refer to as self-promotion, can help individuals build relations thanks to which they may advance their career and/or increase their businesses' revenues. Moreover, social networking sites have made it easy for Internet users to contact individuals and businesses, as well as to seize career opportunities, by simply doing keyword-specific web searches. (Crompton, D. and Sautter, E., 2011)

Conclusion

The data and viewpoints analysed in this essay clearly indicate that on-line social networking has had and is having a significant impact on career progression. In fact, social media has enabled employers and staffing professionals to easily collect a wealth of private and work-related information about potential candidates, on the basis of which they can make informed decisions. (Anand, R., 2010) It is crucial that Internet users should become aware of the important changes brought about by social networking sites, in order to be able to seize career opportunities and avoid disclosing personal information which may be misused or perceived negatively by potential recruiters. Although this state of things raises questions as to whether employers should be allowed to check job applicants' personal profiles to determine their eligibility, it cannot be denied that social media can affect anyone's career progress, allowing them to build fruitful business relations and to attract employers and/or clients through their social networking accounts. In conclusion, even though there are still several aspects of on-line social networking which will need to be addressed in order to protect Internet users' privacy and rights, social media has certainly changed the way individuals advance their career, look for employment, seize job opportunities and promote their professional image.