Good social media and ourselves essay example

Technology, Internet

Social Media as complicated as it may seem is best realized as a set of online media that shares participation, openness, community, conservation and connectedness (Mayfield, 2009). The social media encourages an environment wherein all opinions and contributions matter. Social media are very much open to feedback that only a few barriers limit the people's access on certain information. This kind of medium also encourages a two-way conversation that enhances the relationship between two people. According to Mayfield (2009), as of present there are six forms of social media that we know of. These are social networking sites (sites that allow people to make personal web pages). Examples of these sites are myspace, bebo and facebook. Another kind is the blog or the online journal. Next is the wikis or sites that allow people to add content or information found on them. Another is podcasts, then forums, content communities and lastly, there is microblogging or blogging in bite sized content. Twitter is the most common example of this kind. Because of the networked public that created by social media, it has allowed people to see themselves as parts of a broader community with greater access to a broader set of information.

The online community has evolved so much that nobody can even remember where it all began. The time where there were fewer ways of communicating and social media did not exist yet. To understand the goals, it will be a good start to divulge in the social media history. There are ongoing debates whether email should be a part of social media. However, in 1971, computer engineer Ray Tomlin invented the electronic mail. There are a few considerations to note why the email is not considered as a part of social

media. First the email is considered as a distributive mechanism on the opposite, social media is considered as a collective mechanism.

However, Sajithra & Patel (2013) state that email qualifies if it's qualified by the definition that it is a tool where conversations happen online, in light of its social media counterpart.

Next on the historical timeline of social media, is Usenet. In 1979, usenet existed as an internet discussion system that was a product from two Duke University graduate students, Tom Truscott and Jim Ellis. Usenet according toSajithra & Patel (2013) was created out of a necessity. They developed Usenet to recreate the functions of email wherein they were able to allow users to share categorized messages. People could read and post to one or more categories. This concept is what we now call newsgroups (Sajithra & Patel 2013).

In 1984, Listserv happened and was able to upscale the email functions. Before Listserv, email lists were manually entered. People had to contact the administrator and asked for inclusion in the list. Come 1984, Eric Thomson an engineering student automated the process of managing electronic mail lists. In 1988, although email, usenet and listserv managed to enable people in sharing messages, through a list, these media could still not duplicate the ease of conversing with each other face to face. Then in 1988, the Internet Relay Chat (IRC) emerged. The IRC is chatting originally designed for group chatting in forums. The Internet Relay Chat allowed a one on one private conversation for both parties with the convenience of exchanging files online. After the IRC, personal websites, discussion groups and chats began. In the 90s, because of the limited internet access given to people, the

private internet service providers materialized and paved the way for millions of users to experience the beauty of the internet. Then in 1995, the social networking site, classmate. com was developed. Randy Conrads, the developer of the said site, aimed to reconnect former classmates and friends throughout their lives. Long lost friends as far back as kindergarten are in this site. Classmates. com had a record of over fifty million users.

After the age of classmates. com, the online diary evolved to become the modern blog that we know of today. Justin Hall was among those who began the movement for personal blogging in 1994 and is generally recognized as one of the early bloggers of our time. Blog usage heavily spread in 1999 and the years after being popularized by many blog tools. So then in 2005 up to date, the term web 2. 0 has heavily affected the way that we interact online. The web 2. 0 is commonly associated with the applications that allow interactive sharing, user-centered design and interoperability (Sajithra & Patel 2013).

Because of the growing interest in technology, Boyd (2014) made an attempt to explain how technology alters the conversations of today. Boyd mentioned four affordances that affect the environments found in social media. These are: persistence or the stability of online content, visibility or the audience, who are witnesses, spreadability or the ease of sharing content and searchability or the ease of searching for content.

As we delve into the affordances of social media, it is but important to discuss to whom are these networked publics intended for? As Boyd (2014) mentioned, social media is public by nature and it takes quite an effort to make it private; however, as Boyd (2014) discusses its impact on the

American youth, it is almost recognizable that the social media is a niche for most of these teens. Networked publics by definition are the space made available through networked technologies and it is an imagined community made by people, practice and technology. Social media enabled these teens to take part in a place of their own where they can make sense of the world beyond their homes. They are very passionate about finding their place in the world thus social media made it possible for them to exercise autonomy and they are able to connect socially because of social media.

Because of the growing participation of teens in these networked publics, adults view this as a way of endangering the teens' privacy. In opposite, Boyd (2014) explains that these networked publics are environments wherein these teens can exercise privacy and autonomy over the information that they share. Their ability to enable privacy in their lives is most of the time undermined by adults but what they don't know is that these teens continue to discover creative ways on how to give value their privacy while actively engaging in the public domain. These teens enjoy both the benefits of belonging in a public group and they also enjoy the benefits of being able to have control over their situation (Boyd, 2014).

The intended audience in a public domain matters as much as who the real audience are. Unfortunately, certain adults believe whatever it is that they see even without the full context of the material (Boyd, 2014). Boyd (2014) also discusses that the ability to understand the context, the audience and the identity intersect is what challenges the social media users of today. For teens, they often see their audience as those people whom they've chosen to accept as friends or those whom they have chosen to

follow. This fact is regardless of what the audience sees in their profiles (Boyd, 2014). As discussed, these social media tools have with them privacy settings that allow teens autonomy over who sees and who doesn't see the information that they offer online. These settings create the sense that they can limit the audience of those who have access to a certain teen's profile. Likewise, some teens also have good reasons for delimiting their profile access to other users. Teens who disable privacy settings might want to interact with other teens who share the same interest. Other teens may also realize the fact that these privacy settings do so little to prevent parents from accessing their profiles. On the other hand, not because someone is a part of a teen's network, it doesn't mean that these audiences actually read what is on their " friend's" profile. When the social media offers access to a great stream of information or content, people most of the time intend the content for the people they follow, but, the truth is, the people that they follow might not necessarily follow them in return thus, the main objective of having the actual intended audience goes blank. In conclusion, these teens struggle with the process of who sees their profile, those who do see it, and how those who see their information interpret what they see (Boyd, 2014).

Taking from Boyd's perspective on the intended audience, Gerbaudo (2012) conceptualized a few strategies where social media might be useful and the situations where a person can maximize the effectiveness of social media. According to Gerbaudo (2012), social media is now seen as a modern version of a newspaper that of which we have used for centuries in order to move the news towards the people. Social media today is not only intended to transport opinions but it is also an attempt to shape the people's ability to

come together or to assemble and to create a choreographed collective action. A choreography of assembly as a process is the symbolic building of public space that facilitates the physical " assembling" of a dispersed constituency (Gerbaudo, 2012). Facebook administrators and activists become choreographers involved in constructing a setting and space where an active assembly can evolve.

Gerbaudo (2012) also argues in his book the use social media as an important tool in orchestrating the people to move towards a current ideal. Social media provides an area for protests and suggestions on how to react and sustain their assembly in a public place. Social media, for Gerbaudo (2012) is a vehicle creating alternatives to what we formerly knew as face-to-face interaction. However, there is a risk of isolation that happens by assembling through social media. When these groups establish their sense of privacy, it limits their impact on those who don't have facebook or social media accounts. Without the accompanied street-work or interaction, audiences that have access to the information are only those who belong in the " choreographed assembly" (Gerbaudo, 2012).

Although viewed as " leaderless," social media has managed to create soft, complex and liquid forms of leadership (Gerbaudo, 2012). The developed social media served as tools for liquid organizational practices developed against official organizations. Gerbaudo's (2012) findings on the use of social media in the society highlights its contribution on the attempt to generate a new space developed against the setting of a dispersed society.

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