

The innovation of social media and its applications



The Innovation of Social Media

Since the massification of laptops and the emergence of the internet, people have increased their interactions for different purposes. This has led to the development of information systems that allow to increase and accelerate the exchange of information between them, particularly Social Media. After it was created, the relationship between people and organisations has increased and has taken an innovative direction. This may be related to its easy-to-use platforms, which enable peers to communicate instantly on a global scale. As reported by Emarsys (2019), the usage of Social Media has grown up to 3.2 billion users, approximately 42% of the population. The immense amount of data generated through these users results in valuable information for people, businesses and the society as a whole. In addition, it may be applied in a wide spectrum of fields and institutions (Ngai et al., 2015).

This research will explain the Innovation of Social Media and then describe its application for different areas, specifically the corporate reputation, emergency communications, and non-profit organisations. Finally, it will evaluate the contribution of Social Media to the society.

Several researchers have tried to define Social Media depending on their discipline and the nature of their research. In general, definitions are based on the idea that it is related to digital technologies focused on content created and exchanged by users (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). In regard of the concept of communication channels (e. g. television, newspaper, digital media, and others), other authors argued that Social Media is basically ' any interactive channel that allows for two-way interaction and feedback' (Kent,

2010, p. 645) or referred to it as a set of systems that people use to create and disseminate content (Howard & Parks, 2012). Other point of view relies on the essence of message, which can be related to personal matters, business or public affairs, among others. Thus, Social Media allows online users to communicate and collaborate between each other (Russo et al., 2008). Then, the variety of standpoints according to each background may show evidence of the lack of convergence in a common explanation.

Because of this, Carr & Hayes (2015) tried to give an interdisciplinary and holistic definition. They declared that Social Media is an internet-based means of communication, that allow individuals and/or groups to make profiles and interact with each other in a selective manner, using web and mobile apps channels to share user-generated content. These interactions may be directed to any range of audiences and they may be distributed live or time-delayed.

The Social Media began to be introduced in the world of internet, approximately from the year 2000 until the year 2005. It was based on public or semi-public profiles that exhibited its friends catalogue, who were also part of this system. These profiles were individual sites in where each user was able to set their own name and password to join (Sunden, 2003). Once the profile is created, the platform asks the user to fill out a series of personal questions, in order to complete the profile (e. g., Facebook or Twitter). Some platforms even request to add a profile picture or other types of multimedia content (e. g. MySpace, when asks the user to upload digital audio content) (Boyd, 2007). So, once the profile is ready, users were able to

create and share content in a wide range of forms such as direct messages, global news among other digital data in a simple way (Carr & Hayes, 2015).

From 2006 and beyond, Social Media has been growing in respect of functionality and developments. It has been evolving because of the improvements in the integration of Social Media platforms and the increasing volume and velocity of data that these systems are able to process. These developments has transformed the courses of interaction between users facing virtual communities (Colliander & Dahlen, 2011). In the case of individuals and small-medium enterprises, Social Media is evolving from basic social communication towards developing reputations, creating new ways of doing business and achieving new levels of income (Tang et al., 2012). The use of Social Media for large companies leads to modern and innovative business processes. What it used to be a much simpler 'one-to-many' interaction has now become in a direct 'one-to-one' communication between firms and customers, changing the form advertising reaches individuals and opening the possibility to a more personalized attention (Ngai et al., 2015, p. 33). Furthermore, Social Media has been used by the public sector to be in contact with the population, and deliver messages about governmental internal activities, the state of public services, social news and emergencies (Zheng & Zheng, 2014).

Social Media may be used in different manners. There are studies and publications that have determined that users have lately focused the approach they use this tool in a more specific form. Thus, they become in certain situations fundamental to improve business methods and even the quality of life of users. There are numerous websites and applications that <https://assignbuster.com/the-innovation-of-social-media-and-its-applications/>

support Social Media applications. The five most popular platforms are Facebook, YouTube, Whatsapp, WeChat and Instagram. These apps work through devices that support their operation, essentially computers, tablets and mobile phones (Miller et al., 2016).

These media platforms have been utilized by private companies to improve their corporate reputation. This concept is explained as a 'a collective representation of a firm's behaviour and outcomes that depicts the firm's ability to render valued results to multiple stakeholders' (Fombrun et al., 2000, p. 243). This indicator is important for customers and shareholders when they choose who to buy and who to invest, respectively. One case of study from Dijkmans (2015) provides an example from KLM Royal Dutch Airlines, which has several followers on Facebook and Twitter. Users from these platforms can join KLM's Social Media page. Once they do, they may ask questions, check for entertainment news and 'co-creation activities' (Dijkmans, 2015, p. 61), and look for lower flight prices. Furthermore, KLM is able to manage customer service online, to engage clients and to increase e-commerce revenues, respectively. All of these initiatives were proved to enhance corporate reputation and client's perception of the brand, when performed by KLM. As a result, people could be receiving faster answers for their issues and better offers.

This tool may also bring an effective means of communication between the people and emergency agencies during a natural disaster. So, when a crisis situation arises, the public connect massively to their platforms in order to reach other and to get the most updated information from the emergency agencies. They also start propagating relevant information on the event.

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Once this happens, an external system connects to the Social Media database in order to retrieve pertinent information of the catastrophe. Then, a large stream of data begins to be analysed continuously in order to be categorised in groups: warning and guidance, affected citizens, structure damage, volunteering and donations, health services, and other helpful advices. Once the data is organised, the agencies are able to deliver updated reports for every category through Social Media and other traditional means. Research shows that Twitter has been used in wildfires (e. g. San Diego, U. S., 2007), hurricanes (e. g. “ Katrina”, New Orleans, U. S., 2005) and earthquakes (e. g. Japan, 2011) (Imran, 2015). In these cases, people utilized Twitter to contact each other, make inquiries, gather and disseminate information, and coordinating aid actions. As a consequence, people could be updated about hazard warnings, hospital availability and shelter information.

Another application of this means is the use by non-profit organisations. According to Lovejoy and Saxton (2012), institutions such as World Vision, Salvation Army, and ChildFund are using Twitter to reach their stakeholders through dialogue and community commitment. Firstly, they use it to diffuse information of the foundation, their actions, or any matter of importance for their adherents. Secondly, they are applying it to cultivate relations and strengthening their networks through messages that promote interactions and dialogue. Thirdly, they send notifications for donators and activists to perform actions that allow the foundations to achieve their goals. Thus, users are able to get the most updated charity events and publications, to reach directly to their benefactors of interest through virtual conversations, and to

actively giving funds or purchasing products in order to contribute to the causes.

The impact of Social Media is remarkable, not only on an individual level but in terms of massive organization and group communication. This innovation may have break barriers that were not to be noticed until a few years ago.

This technology has reached companies all over the world. This allows all parties involved to collaborate and be part of different business practices regarding corporate reputation. According to findings found by Dijkmans (2015), the public may react positively to the efforts done by enterprises in matters related to the engagement of the customer. In this manner, the companies may obtain better perceptions of their reputation. In addition, as the number of people using social networks increases and the time they dedicate to them, people tend to increase the level of commitment they have with the activities designed by the companies. However, once a company decides to be exposed in some of these platforms, there might be issues regarding the customer responses. They might be discontent with firm's services, and that could lead them to give bad public evaluations.

Social Media may deliver a way to keep communication with everyone, no matter how inaccessible or restricted they are, even if they are facing a crisis event. The developments in data computation are leading the public and private sector to gather updated information from Social Media platforms in such situations, and then to distribute it to the people in a summarized and usable manner. So, people may increase their 'situational awareness' and may have a tool to support their decision making (Imran, 2015).

Furthermore, governments may be capable to interact with the audience in a more efficient approach in order to coordinate the aid actions. Nevertheless, there might be issues related to the increased cost of staff to be able to answer people's questions in a timely manner. There also might be concerns about the massive amounts of data to be managed and the privacy of user's information.

These internet platforms have given the chance for non-profit organisations to support their causes and raising funds in a faster and cheaper way. This may boost their power to develop networks so they can increment their adherents and their donations. Hence, the society may be allowed to be more aware of the work and efforts done by foundations. Furthermore, the initiatives taken by these institutions through Social Media could encourage followers to visit charities, donate money and to become leaders and faces of these humanitarian causes. The use of these platforms can permit non-profit groups and voluntary sector to connect and to share innovative ideas to bring more advocates and campaigners (Lovejoy and Saxton, 2012). Still, the use of social networks by charities could be affected by fraud, since unscrupulous people could mobilize virtual communities for fundraising and fulfil their own interests.

In conclusion, the Social Media is thoroughly explained in this article. Its basic elements are the use of internet-driven technologies, the creation of users and the interaction between them, and finally, the generation of valuable content through its platforms. It has successfully been applied in matters such as company's reputation, disaster concerns and charity institutions. Despite that there might be issues related to the management

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of information, the Social Media has made significant contributions to society. It engages a powerful tool for people, as well as for public and private sector. The advances in the information systems could lead the Social Media to easier and faster connections, which may increase the amount of user-generated content. All of these elements can bring positive effects, by breaking the barriers of time and space. Finally, potential advances in the analysis of information generated through Social Media may be introduced in the future. New computation techniques and capabilities could lead to more updated studies on people's behaviour, collective actions, political trends and even more.

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