The impact of social networks on our life report examples

Introduction

Over the past decade the nature of the web, internet access, and other internet applications have become increasingly useful in the normal lives of human beings. Kedem argues that " The Internet creates new ways for citizens to communicate, congregate, and share information of a social nature. It is obvious that the Internet has and will continue to change the way we live" (2. math. umd. edu 2).

Notable in importance because of their popularity are social networks and social networking sites (SNSs). They are important also due to their effect on daily human activities. Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, MySpace, Blogs, LinkedIn, Wikis, and Second Life are just some of the many social networking options currently available on the Internet. The social networking sites are increasingly used by many persons of all ages so they can connect and interact with one another.

Kamal points out that " SNSs are the fastest growing Web 2. 0 services and also 52 % of the total Internet users will be logging into social networking sites by 2012" (eMarketer. com). The uses of social networking sites cannot be overestimated. The usage varies according to different individuals and groups. Although they began as simple forms of communication and interaction, social networks and social networking sites are transforming and transmogrifying society. Based on the above evidence I theorize that social networking is more than a tool for people to connect with other people, and that is why the impact of social networking on our lives is so profound. In

order to support this theory the benefits and uses, as well as the disadvantages of social networking sites will be assessed.

Uses of Social Networks

Share Information. Social networks and networking sites have become an avenue where Internet users have formed an online community for seeking and sharing information. The rate of information sharing on social networking sites is unusually high and it is determined by the level of connectivity and engagement with other users (Naina Buzzom. com). The information sharing rate represents a valuable source of data for different domains such as e-commerce platforms. When companies, individuals, and organizations understand the nature of information sharing on SNSs; they can further their projects by capitalizing on the increased rate associated with information sharing on the internet.

The sky seems to be the limit for social networking sites and Hoover argues that, " it's possible that these social networking tools are just the beginning of something that they could lead to ways of finding and interacting with one another we never imagined, but whatever happens, you can't dismiss these tools easily" (PCWorld. com 3).

Service Provision. Social networking sites provide an ideal platform for individuals to share their thinking and expand their learning capabilities from peers and networks. Individuals are able to discuss personal issues, business issues, and social issues without having to attend any conference or

workshops. This leads to the creation of a large regional and even global society.

Promotion of Education and News. Educational institutions, libraries, and academic related firms have embraced SNSs and social networking platforms in order to promote educational materials and news. For instance, library services have adopted the practice of embedding an information-sharing link on popular networking sites for students and librarians; this way they can easily collaborate by sharing educational information and news (Connell mspthegreek. wordpress. com 26).

Blogs and Wikis encourage students to interact and collaborate with each other by posting their comments and feedback on programs, information, and issues that affect them.

Advertising through Social Networking. If the correct context is selected, social networks can offer an ideal place for advertising products over the Internet. A lot of information regarding users is available on social networking sites. The information ranges from demographic characteristics to academic and professional qualifications and possibly behavioral characteristics. So advertisers can target their adverts to suit the needs of a particular individual demographic. Ideally this will eventually generate sales and leads. According to eMarketer. com, " the 2010 world annual budget on social network advertising was $3. 2 billion" and " the figure is set to increase to $4 billion in 2010." Their analysis demonstrates that advertising

on social networking sites will revolutionize the market of online advertising and expansion of revenue generating opportunities.

Interaction and Communicating. Arguably social networks have been a significant avenue of human interaction and communication over the past decade. The social networks present an interactive and useful platform that is essential for the process of sharing, providing, and exchanging information among individuals.

Regarding communication, social networking sites have transformed the manner of communication among individuals. Currently they form the primary means with which individuals can connect, communicate, and interact with other individuals from any place on the globe where there is Internet connectivity.

The significance placed on interaction and participation within these social networking sites is evident in the numerous ways in which communication is encouraged. For example, some social networking sites, such as MySpace and Facebook offer users the ability to create sub-groups or message boards of people based on similar interests
(Wheeldon Networkconference. netstudies. org).

Update your News. As earlier mentioned, there is a wide variety of information available on social networking sites. Other than facilitating the process of sharing information, social networking sites enable users to share information relating to personal issues. Examples of ways in which

individuals update their news include tweeting on Twitter and adding status updates on Facebook.

Conducting business. Integration of social networking tools with marketing and advertising functionalities can be used as ideal tools for driving business growth. Businesses and organizations should embrace SNSs as affordable opportunities for facilitating offline and online business initiatives. With the growing popularity and increased number of users, businesses and organizations can use less effort to market or communicate their projects to social networking users. Virtually all organizations have social networking pages, a link on social networking sites to direct individuals to the company. Business must capitalize on opportunities presented by social networking sites to further their growth and expansion initiatives. For instance, Dell Inc. claims that it generated revenues of over $3 million from posts on Twitter alone (Baldwin Reuters. com).

Turcq comments on the issue of social networks and business by arguing that social networks have become fully integrated into the field of work. This can be evidenced in several sectors within the business world such as the effects of social relations on private life and work, improvement of employee-employer relationships, employee visibility, recruitment, and personal branding. It also includes creating networks for personal development, knowledge, and expertise among others. (Networkconference. netstudies. org)

Benefits of social networking sites

In the current information age, social networking sites have presented a profound impact due to the increased popularity among the youth and professional people alike. Social networking sites are developed to suit the needs of different groups or categories. For instance, MySpace and Friendster are very popular among individuals with related interests and passions whereas LinkedIn and Twitter were developed to suit the needs of professionally oriented individuals including those aiming to promote their businesses and careers. The ' following' is one of the advantages associated with social networking sites.

Communication. Social networking sites offer a free platform whereby users can communicate easily with each other irrespective of their location. Social networking users can share information, hold discussions involving current issues, and reconnect with long-lost individuals and family members. The latest information and happenings within the community and around the world are easily communicated on social networking sites (Hogan semioticon. com). Arguably it is appropriate that social networking is referred to as the ' Third Place.' And it's an evolution of communication; given that the communication process is shorter with response being provided at the earliest time possible. This enables a profound effect on the manner individuals get in touch with one another. Lately, social networking sites such as Facebook have introduced internet-calling services whereby users utilize Voice-over Internet Protocols to communicate with others.

Discovering and getting in touch with individuals of similar interests/issues. The internet is the major vehicle that enables individuals to connect in addition to acting as a locus for a range of interactions through various channels. Among the popular channels that offer a gateway and connection array is the social networking platform. Social networking sites such as Facebook, MySpace, and Friendster are popular with individuals having similar interests, passions, and/or issues whereas LinkedIn and Twitter is common among professionals, celebrities, and high profile individuals. As such, persons can find like-minded individuals, interact, and share information relating to issues that affect them.

Keeping in touch with your friends and family. Social networking sites offer new avenues for people to interact because social networking channels reduce the distance between people while at the same time allowing interactions to take place within the shortest time possible. The process of communicating and getting in touch with distant relatives, colleagues, and friends is shortened from weeks to instantaneous. For such reasons, individuals are able to maintain stronger ties and relationships with an expanded group of individuals than ever before. Equally as important, social networking channels such as LinkedIn and Facebook relieves individuals from some of the social burden of recording or maintaining contacts because it offers a platform where individuals can easily track their contacts and determine the last time they connected.

Learn and share skills. Social networking sites enable individuals to learn and share a wide variety of knowledge, information, and skills that are necessary

for their future. For instance, individuals become technologically proficient due to continued practice on technical aspects associated with social networking sites. Examples of such things include designing albums and uploading photos and videos into them, creating and updating blogs, and management of online groups in the case when an individual is an administration or staff member. Categorization of items on social networking sites can enable individuals to educate themselves on various issues that affect their lives directly or indirectly.

Disadvantages of social networking sites

Everything has its good and bad sides and the use of social networking sites is no different. The disadvantages range from security issues such as identify theft, scams, and fraud to cases of consuming too much time when workers cannot concentrate on productive work but rather prefer to spend their time chatting with their online friends.

Security. Security is one of the leading issues that needs serious consideration when it comes to social networking sites. Opening accounts in social networking sites involves filling out forms that require personal details to be revealed. For instance, personal location, real names, and email addresses are some of the things required to open an account with social networking sites. Due to increasing cases of fake identities on social networking sites, fraudsters can use stolen identities to commit illegal activities that might not only spoil ones image but also an individual user into serious troubles. Equally worrying is the lack of anonymity because

scammers will find a way of getting information and using it for the wrong reasons.

Harassment and Scams. Social networking sites are associated with cases of failed security measures whether being used for personal or business purposes. As such, unauthorized individuals get access to personal private data and use the data for non-authorized reasons. Cases of cyber-stalking, harassment, identity theft, and increased online swindles are common on the internet and one might wonder how the fraudsters accessed his or her private information. These are examples of the dangers associated with social networking sites.

Time Consuming. Social networking sites were developed to enable individuals to connect with each other while at the same time having fun. However, overdoing it at the expense of other important factors can be irresponsible and lead to losses in terms of productivity and time. Billions of dollars in terms of productivity are lost each day when individuals spend their time on social networking sites at the expense of their work.

Discouraging for Business. Using social networking sites for facilitating business initiatives can be quite discouraging because it requires persistence, resilience, and thorough understanding of how social networks operate as far business purposes are concerned. Hinchclife states that adding social media functionalities into products of organizations poses great challenges for organizations in efforts aimed at assembling mature sets of capabilities into business (Dachisgroup. com). He further argues that each

social media requires different social identity, social architecture, and search functionality (Dachisgroup. com).

Equally discouraging is the act of using social networks for advertisement purposes. The majority of individuals on social networking sites might not have the corporate appeal associated with the image of the business. A clear example is the case where social networking sites are filled with unnecessary images or comments that might scare away serious individuals from the corporate world. This can lead to a loss of money on advertising as well as dampen the reputation of the company.

Lack of seriousness. While social networking sites were originally meant to help individuals connect with friends and family. Nearly half of the individuals on the sites have virtual friends that they have never met nor have no intention of meeting in their lifetimes. Sadly, individuals might be having more than one profile on the same social networking sites.

You may never know the credibility of individuals that one interacts with on such sites. A discouraging example entails a situation where persons fake gender identities and therefore, one chats under the pretense of being a woman when in reality one chatting with a man.

Conclusion

Clearly the impacts of social networking on our life are so profound because social networking is more than a tool for people to connect with other people. Advancements in technology and increased use of the Internet have

transformed the manner with which individuals connect, communicate, and interact.

Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, MySpace, Blogs, LinkedIn, Wikis, and Second Life are just a few of the many social networking options currently available on the Internet. The social networking sites are increasingly used by individuals of all ages to connect and interact with one another. All that is required is a communication device with Internet connectivity capabilities and one is connected to the world.

Social networking sites are suitable for both personal and business activities. Nevertheless social networking sites are associated with both advantages and disadvantages. For that reason great care and understanding must be taken when communicating over the internet using social networking sites.

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