



Networked Knowledge Activities on Social Media

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Introduction

- Social media as a whole has grown exponentially since it was first introduced in the early 2000's. Now with algorithms and a larger audience, social media has moved from being used for entertainment, to how people share information and stories, that can help the user become more well-rounded, socially, academically, politically, etc.
- Though, after extensive searching there continues to be a negative stigma around social media, labeling it as "toxic" and "unhealthy" for users. Since there is so little research on how social media can be beneficial for users, our research group chose this topic of interest as way to create a more well-rounded narrative about social media, specifically on how users have gained knowledge through the app.
- A specific way we tackle this topic is by asking how social media plays a role in the role of academic gain in the classroom and outside the classroom.
- Based on previous knowledge of how social media has expanded into a resource professors use to stay connected with students and an alternative way of understanding information taught in class, our group hypothesized that social media has a larger impact on how college student at FSU learn today, more specifically, Social media plays a large role in how students learn information today, inside and outside the classroom. In other words, our research question asks, how informative social media can be for students.

Methodology

- For the interviews, subjects were contacted by our principal investigator where subjects were invited to take part of the study.
 - Subjects were given a brief overview about the study, what will occur during the interview, privacy concerns, and benefits/risks associated with the research.
- The interviews are supposed to last approximately 30 minutes where the subjects will do a card sorting activity while explaining their thought process when completing the activity.
- Interviewers would ask the subjects a few intro questions before starting the card sorting activity to get some basic background information about the subject.
- 1st card sort activity is sorting activities online into categories that represent how frequently the subject does that activity. (Figure 1)
- 2nd card sort activity is categorizing the activities into six different groups, with the three main topics being Communication, Creation, and Management. And for each of those three topics, there was a subtopic of either Network or Knowledge.
- 3rd card sort activity is sorting the activities into seven new categories. Those being collect, curate, share, broker, negotiate, create, and network.
- After the card sorting activity was completed subjects would be asked how difficult they found the card sorting activity to be and why. As well as asked if this activity made them reflect on their own activities on social media.

Discussion

- Based on the results gathered, from the pre-interview questions and card sort, data showed that many participants used information learned for social media in their everyday lives and classes.
- Some examples of this were found through the card sort, in which many informative pieces that participants were exposed to usually ended up being sent to their peers through forms of direct message, saving in folders, email, etc.
- Through, the card sort participants were asked to categorize different acts of learning the social media based off how frequently and infrequently they used it, based on the data collected many student frequently learned educational elements through social media, as well as through apps provided by their professor, though, when it came to sharing this information learned, participants were more hesitant in sharing their new findings with their peers due to sensitivity regarding subjects, as well as not having an interest in discussing what they learned.
- Due to the negative and unprofessional stigma that social media hold, many students who showed signs of learning through social media were unaware, as social media is seen more an entertainment app rather than an academic one.
- Though, this study was conducted properly through the IRB protocols, one limitation was that participants struggled understanding the second and third section of the card sort, usually resulting in the participants randomizing the categories they placed their cards, rather than thinking thoroughly about their selection, like the interview protocols intended
- One way to improve this limitation is to provide deeper explanation or modify the way the categories and cards are being pretend.
- For example, instead of having the second card sort be categorized by different words that are challenging for the participant to understand how they relate to the cards they were asked to categorize, simplifying the words, or changing them into phrases such as " sharing information with a friend", "Not sharing information with a friend" participants would be less likely to be confused on what exactly is being asked of them.
- Some strengths of this study were the layout in which the interview was conducted. By starting with pre-interview questions that asked the participant how they incorporated social media into how they learn information and educate themselves, and then asking them to complete the card sort, and lastly asking post- interview questions based of the participants experience with the card sort, this allowed for the researchers to have a complete understanding of the limitations that the interview had as well as an understanding the change in awareness in the participant about how they use social media academically more frequently then they originally believed.
- In more simpler terms, the layout of the interview allowed for a deeper perspective when and where throughout the interview the participants awareness to their academic sue of social media shifted from being less aware to more aware, which also allowed for the elimination for the stigma the participants may or may not have had on social media before the interview was conducted and after.

Figure 1: Example of card sort
Participants were asked to sort cards that described commonly used action on social media, based off how often they use these actions.

Card List (10)	Never/Rarely	Occasionally	Often
Evaluate an item before sharing it online			
Follow people who I know on social media			
Organize online resources/bookmarks by topic			
Adjust my privacy settings			
Download interesting resources to my computer			
Offer my opinion in response to someone else's post			
Delete items I have posted online			
Leave an online group			
Send friend/connection requests to people			
Post resources that I have created to my own social media account			
	Apply tags to resources to help describe them for myself	Offer my expertise in response to someone else's post	Initiate a conversation in a group forum, live chat, or threaded conversation
	Use social media to find resources	Write a description of an item before saving or sharing it	Develop media (posts, photos, essays, memes, videos, podcasts, etc.) to share my expertise online
	Send a private message to someone with whom I do not have an existing relationship	Apply tags to resources to help describe them for other people	Follow an account that shares interesting things
	Email things I find online to other people	Develop media (posts, photos, essays, memes, videos, podcasts, etc.) to share my opinion online	Tag another person to call their attention to a resource
	Email things I find online to myself	Share resources from my face to face network with my online network	Use search engines to find resources
	Apply tags to resources to attract other people's attention	Post resources that I have created to an online group or community	Respond to a conversation in a group forum, live chat, or threaded conversation
	Unfriend or unfollow an individual	Ask for advice online	Share resources from my online network to my face to face network
	Share or post resources from one social media platform to another (e.g. share a YouTube video on Facebook)	Tag another person to respond to them	Send a private message to someone with whom I have an existing relationship
		Search online using tags to locate resources	Follow people with whom I do not yet have established relationships on social media
		Correct misconceptions or misinformation that others have posted online	Apply tags to resources for organizational purposes
		Make a remix or mashup of existing online items	Tag another person to give them credit for their work
			Bookmark interesting resources

Figure 2: Commonly used social media apps
Examples of social media apps that majority of participants used



Results

- During the first semester of this research studies, interviews were mainly conducted for our research group to find data to analyze in the upcoming semester.
- Through the interviews conducted, researchers were able to gather data that focused on whether the participant used social media in an informative way and how, as well as ways professors and other educational setting incorporated the use of social media, and apps to help further student understanding of topics being learned.
- Based on the data many participants in the beginning of the interview weren't aware of what apps were used for academic purposes or ways they incorporate what they learn from social media with what they were taught in school.
- Though, as the interviews continued, after the card sort, participants changed their opinion on how they use social media and other technologic apps to their advantage in an academic setting being more aware of apps such as GroupMe, online textbooks, Kahn academy, etc., and the role they play in student academic process.
- **In total there were 63 participants for the interviews (n = 63)**
- **Some Percentage results of different reasoning of why participants use social media:**
 - 95.2% Connect with friends/family
 - 95.2% Entertainment
 - 66.7% School/schoolwork
- **Top 3 activities participants engaged in were:**
 - Use search engine to find resources (60)
 - Follow people I know on social media (58)
 - Send a private message to someone with whom I have an existing relationship (53)
- **Top 3 activities participants were least likely to do were:**
 - Make a remix or mashup of existing online items (54)
 - Correct misconceptions or misinformation that others have posted online (45)
 - Send a private message to someone whom I do not have an existing relationship (45)

References

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