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Is Facebook-A Global Library?

Rengarajan Amirtharajan, M. Sai Krishna Karthik, L. Radhika and J.B.B. Rayappan
Department of Electronics and Communication Engineering, School of Electrical and Electronics Engineering,
SASTRA University, Thanjavur, 613 401, India

Abstract: Facebook is a networking site, which connects people all over the world, making the Earth a global village. This social networking giant was launched by Mark Zuckerberg and his friends. The website mainly aims at connecting people or helps them socialise and makes its revenue out of advertising. This paper mainly tries to tell what facebook is all about and concentrates on how it can be used for educational purposes. It also highlights few of the security problems faced by the users of facebook. This paper mainly tells about the student- teacher interaction, students' council on facebook and how it will be useful to their education above and beyond portraying results of a FB opinion poll which can divulge and justify the creation of this study.

Key words: Facebook, survey, students, teachers

INTRODUCTION

Facebook was founded by Mark Zuckerberg and his roommates at Harvard. He initially founded a website called 'Facemash' for Harvard students. Since the website attracted many users, he was motivated to programme 'Facebook'. Initially, the usage of this website was limited to Harvard students. Later, seeing the response that this website received, it was extended to the students of other universities as well. In 2009, the services of this website were made global to anyone above the age of 13.

The users of this website have to create an account using a valid e-mail- id. Each user has a separate profile, which bears some personal information about the user. Users can edit their profile, add pictures, post on their wall (a wall is a private space provided by this webpage. It is more or less like a personal notice board, where in, users can write, comment, add videos, pictures, etc.), send messages (the message option is more or less like the email and is a secure communication link) or even poke their friends (a partially fun and partially boring event to let other users know that you exist). Users are also allowed to customize the privacy settings for their profiles, where, the contents of their profiles will be viewed only by their friends, or a selected, customized few.

Any registered user can search for and add any other member as friend, provided the other person accepts the 'friend request'. Users can also categorize their friends as close friends, family, high school friends, etc. to keep track of their close ones' activities. Further, users are allowed to create or join groups of their interests. Users are also allowed to create 'Events' and send out online invitations with the RSVP option thus providing the

organizer an efficient and simple tool to make their 'organizing' a huge success! Facebook also provides notifications, where in users are reminded about various important happenings, meetings, dates, etc. This interface also informs users if they have been tagged on someone-else's profile. Facebook provides the chart, calendar and clock applications as well.

Facebook has emerged as a new dais not only for mere communication but for learning and teaching as well. With the help of breakthrough technology, facebook is supported in all mobiles, tabs and computers. This indeed has turned FB as a teaching platform where we can share materials, have a discussion, conduct contests and assessments and above all it requires no pre-training to start with (Shiu *et al.*, 2010). Even though FB users range from school going children to elderly people, the ratio of teens and college students is substantially large. The reasons behind this are it is a new-fangled venue to utter and convey themselves, innocuous lurking, identity marking apart from acquaintances, mythoi and quixotic affairs, which are the prime facades of juvenile growth. Elaborate cram based on the time the college youth spend per day, how and why they exercise FB also portray the same end results (Pempek *et al.*, 2009).

From both the students and teachers point of view, facebook can be efficaciously practiced as a social network; Students envision FB as a course and métier for vigorous participation, to solidify self pride and poise etc., whereas rendering inferential outcomes, explicating diverse didactics, adapting and updating to the scenario of expectations of students etc are some added vantages to the teachers (Grossecka *et al.*, 2011). Another angle of approach is how facebook can be made use of to dig into instructors' strike of self-revelation which tops on a



Fig. 1: Snapshot of the facebook profile

student's reliability in addition to immediate apprehension. Studies are going on in this invited research area which analyses the essence of computer-liased teacher disclosure. Facebook is likely happened to be a worthy asset to abide academic alliance with faculty. Findings indicate that the latter's self-revealing tendency may stimulate students for efficacious learning by means of interactive sessions (Mazer *et al.*, 2009; Roblyer *et al.*, 2010).

Prior to be used for educational purposes, FB is nowadays used by the students to pre-register to engage with an educational institution, to socialize and to integrate with the other students (Madge *et al.*, 2009). Detailed works shed light on social networks' evolution, people's horizon, FB's entailment on executives, its prospects on campus networking in time to come and also mentionable is interface with studying environs (Pearson, 2010). Apart from just learning, it definitely acts as a powerful medium in spreading a social matter which draws attention of millions in just a few seconds. More theories deal with this thought and several analyses are done for the practical possibilities (Cheung *et al.*, 2011).

Apart from general studies, final reports state that several SNSs (certainly including FB) have come under daily cum inevitable means of (academic) communication. Statistics, surveys, questionnaires etc render helping hand to know the diversified impression of SNSs. Having mentioned that, via those one can come to an idea of their grandness, innovation, requisite, uses and intention. Though SNSs have some drawbacks, their overhaul and resources have grown their usance to a phenomenal extent and, which, now have become very common. Some grounds of FB which have made it unimaginably popular

are self expression, entertainment quotient, maintaining relations, visual familiarity, global updates of all forms, media drenching, following famous icons regularly etc. (Madhusudhan, 2012; Dogruer *et al.*, 2011).

Not only meant for entertainment and educational platform, through FB, researchers across the globe are experiment the mental attitude, especially of students', depression references. There exist some strategies to approach a person who have expressed his/her personal opinion about something or somebody. Since it is now a rising issue, this topic is worth discussion (Whitehill *et al.*, 2013).

A mathematical experiment on FB and its users reveal the approximate percentage of the genders, the time each race spend, various purposes like chatting, finding friends, lurking, work and event reminder, multimedia sharing, games, business and many more (Lubisa *et al.*, 2012). Thus, Through FB walls, students can keep up tight-knit links, call off one and establish new contacts, not only generally but with other institutions as well.

As far as students are concerned, they can share and exchange information about both teaching and learning and can develop themselves better practically than by being bookish. It definitely introduced an online fashion where people can get together with their near and dears and distant pals (Selwyn, 2009). The snapshot of the facebook profile is given in Fig. 1.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Usage of facebook for networking purposes: This networking giant is the second most used website in the world and has an online traffic of about 900 million across

the world. This website is not only a platform for networking but is also useful in bettering education, making news more accessible, advertising and promoting businesses, etc.,. Because of the variety of applications provided by this network, it has almost become ubiquitous.

Use of facebook as a global classroom: A lot of teachers today feel that since the usage of facebook is very familiar with students across the globe, it may prove to provide an upper hand in their education, if used properly. Teachers and students may become facebook friends. That's way, teachers may know a lot about their students personally. The student teacher interaction which may not be plausible in the classroom may be made possible online. Teachers and students can post study related videos and articles on their wall, for other students to view and learn. If students and teachers are facebook friends, students will be able to ask doubts any time and get clarified based on the availability of the staff online. If the topics and dates of submission for assignments are posted on facebook, it would be convenient for both the staff and the student. This networking may create a bonding between the preacher and the preached that may not be possible in today's classrooms. Figure 2 shows how networking is made easier by writing in facebook.

Use of facebook as a students counsel: An online forum or group may be created in facebook wherein students can counsel among themselves. Such groups may be very interactive and useful for students to do group activities and combined studies. A new innovative idea of any student may be shared among their fellow beings any time and discussed. Discussion about any

topic on their subject or any assignment may be done online and students may get a good participation from other fellow students.

Critic's argument: Critics however say that students and teachers should not be 'friends' on facebook because it changes the entire relationship between the teacher and the taught. A few people also say that teachers or students may misuse or take advantage of this online friendship. A survey conducted by Kirschner and Karpinski on the students of Midwestern University, USA, states that students spending time in facebook were found to have lesser GPA, than the ones not using facebook. Though this might not be the only reason for these students reduced GPA, this might also have accounted for it. This might be true in the western part of world. But an emphatic study at universities in the eastern part of the world, show that the usage of facebook and GPA are not related.

Threat for privacy on facebook: There is always a threat for privacy in facebook. With the increasing use of pseudo identity by unlawful people, there is even more of a security threat on facebook. But, according to a study conducted on students, they did not face any real time security problems (for example, being stalked by strangers either online or in the real world) because of using facebook. Also, not a lot of students care about their identity being disclosed on facebook.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A survey, via a questionnaire was conducted on about two hundred and fifty students of SASTRA



Fig. 2: Networking made easy

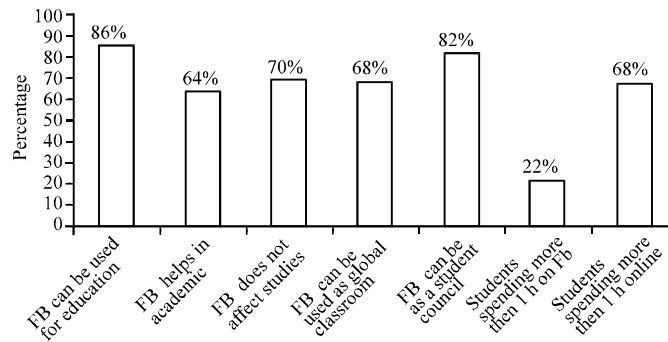


Fig. 3: Student’s usage of facebook for different purposes

University. The following questions were asked and the students were requested to answer them briefly regarding the students usage of facebook for different purposes:

- Name
- Age
- Gender
- The time that you spend on facebook
- Your marks in %
- The number of hours that you spend online
- The activities that you do in facebook
- Can facebook be used in education: yes \no
- If yes, please elaborate
- If no, please elaborate
- Does facebook in any way help you in your academics
- Does the use of facebook affect your studies
- Can facebook be used as a global classroom: yes/no
- If yes, please elaborate
- If no, please elaborate
- Can facebook be used as a student’s council: yes/no
- If yes, please elaborate
- If no, please elaborate

The following results were obtained. About 86% of students reported that facebook can be used for education, 64% of them told that facebook helps them in their academics, 70% of them agreed that facebook does not affect their studies, 68% of them voted that this networking site could be used as a global class room, 83% of them voiced that the networking giant could be used as a student’s council and the results are given in Fig. 3.

In this figure Y axis projects the percentage of users using FB and X axis gives out the various users on FB.

CONCLUSION

As we all know, there are two sides to a coin, to an untold story and to every other thing on earth. Everything

has its pros and cons. Hence, facebook, if used properly can be made a powerful educational tool. But, the students who spent more than six hours on facebook were found to have lost interest in studies and eventually, their GPA were less. But, the advantages of facebook can be made to outweigh its disadvantages if educators start using facebook as an educational tool. In conclusion, this study is all about fore fronting the emerging phases of Facebook with special attention to education and academic purposes. Therefore, this paper triggers empiric and theoretical probe on academic activities in Facebook.

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