Managing Social Networking in Web- based Society: A Need- based Approach of Present Generation Online Users

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Abstract

Web-based social networking occurs through a variety of websites that allow users to share content, interact and develop communities around similar interests. Examples include websites such as Facebook and LinkedIn. Social networking is defined as the grouping of individuals together into to specific groups, often like a small community or a neighborhood. This paper is an attempt to highlights the fundamental of social networking that would build identity and trust in this digital era.

Keywords: Online Communications, Social Networking, Collaborative Web

1. Introduction

"Imagine a world in which every single human being can freely share in the sum of all knowledge**."-**Social networking is the practice of expanding the number of one's business and/or social contacts by making connections through individuals. While social networking has gone on almost as long as societies themselves have existed, the unparalleled potential of the Internet to promote such connections is only now being fully recognized and exploited, through Web-based groups established for that purpose. Based on the six degrees of separation concept (the idea that any two people on the planet could make contact through a chain of no more than five intermediaries), social networking establishes interconnected Internet communities (sometimes known as personal networks) that help people make contacts that would be good for them to know, but that they would be unlikely to have met otherwise. In general, here's how it works: you join one of the sites and invite people you know to join as well. Those people invite their contacts to join, who in turn invite their contacts to join, and the process repeats for each person. In theory, any individual can make contact through anyone they have a connection to, to any of the people that person has a connection to, and so on. Web sites dedicated to social networking include Friendster, Linkedin, Spoke, and Tribe Networks. IBM and Microsoft are among organizations said to be considering entering this market.

2. Why Social Networking is needed in Digital Environment

Social Networking is a way for one person to meet up with other people on the Net. That's not all though. Some people use social networking sites for meeting new friends on the Net. Other's use it to find old friends. Then there are those who use it to find people who have the same problems or interests they have, this is called niche networking. A niche is a specialized group of something larger. So niche networking sites are specialized groups of social networking sites. There are niche networking sites for people who want to learn a language and control their finances.

2.1 Social Networking Guide

Despite what you might think, social networking is not something new. As this social networking guide will explain, social networks have been around for far longer than we have been on the web. We have all belonged to social networks, and we still participate in social networks. This social networking guide will simply help you navigate the web's version of social networks.

2.2 Cliques

High school is an excellent example of basic social networking in action. There are various cliques like the geeks, the socials, the athletes, the band, etc. These cliques are social groups, and a person can be a member of one of them, a member of several, or a member of none. Joining a social network can be much like moving to a new high school. On your first day, you don't have any friends. But, as you get to know your new classmates, you start finding people of similar interests. Some like to join groups to kick start their social integration, while others are so shy they barely get to know anyone. And, even if we didn't much know or care for a particular classmate, they become a fellow group member as we move out into the world. Society as a whole is a social network, and the groups consist of high schools, colleges, fraternities, work place, work industry, etc.

2.3 Friends

Social networks are built around the friends' concept. They aren't always called "friends." Linkedin, a business-oriented social network, calls them "connections." But, they operate in much the same way regardless of what they are called. Friends are trusted members of the social network that are often allowed to do things that non-friends are not

allowed to do. For example, you might restrict getting private messages from anyone that is not on your friends list. Some social networks allow you to make your entire profile private to the public at large and only allow friends to view it. Friends can be anyone from a real-life friend, to someone who has similar interests, to someone who lives in the same region, to someone you simply found interesting.

2.4 Groups

Basic groups include a city, a state, a high school, a college, etc. Most social networks allow you to join these types of groups to either look for a long-lost friend or family member, or just get to know people. Groups can also cover interests such as video games, sports, books, movies, music, etc. Groups serve two purposes: First, they are a good way to meet people who share a similar interest. Social networks allow you to express yourself in many different ways. The most basic way of expressing yourself is to fill out a profile that gives basic information such as your hobbies, interests, education, work, etc. Most social networks also allow you to customize your profile page with various themes which can include the colour scheme and the background picture. Some take this to the extreme allowing users to pick out playlists of their favorite artists, video clips they find funny or interesting, and even widgets or third-party applications. Social networks can also include a blog to let people know what is going on, a photo gallery, or other forms of expressing yourself.

2.5 Fun and Business

There are many different reasons to join a social network from meeting people to learning more about a subject, but the two most popular reasons are to have fun or to do business. The having fun

part is simple, so long as you choose the right social network and become involved in the community. Not all social networks are created equal, of course, so it could take several tries to find the social network right for you, but with new social networking sites popping up all the time, you should be able to find one that meets your expectations. Social networking also has its business side beyond just social networks dedicated to business like Linkedin or XING. If you look on MySpace, you will find profiles of actors, musicians, comedians, etc. These are people doing business on MySpace by helping to cultivate a fanbase. But it goes beyond just entertainers. Businesses of all types set up profiles on social networking sites both to help advertise their services and to let people know the current news.

3. Social Networking and present generation

For those wanting to know how to get started with social networking, the first step is to identify what you want in a social network. There are many different social networking websites. Some focus on a specific interest such as sports, music, or movies. Others are more general in nature serving the public at large. Once you identify what you want out of a social network, it is time to choose the one right for you. Don't just settle on the first one. Come up with a small list of interesting social networks and try them before making a decision. And, there's no rule that says you can't be a part of multiple networks if you find the decision hard to make. CMC can have a positive effect on student/teacher communication which can lead to positive student outcomes. The use of emoticons enables the relationship between teachers and students to become more personal.

3.1 Advantages of Social networking

♦ Social Networking websites are websites that tend to have an open membership means that anyone can join them and also to focus on a particular topic or interest, such as online dating etc.

♦ Business decision makers now prefer communication channels that are two-way dialogs, channels that resemble social networking applications. This is a great way for businesses to advertise their product and ensures effective influence to others.

♦ Social networking allows us to identify and connect with friends and strangers while on the go. Such computer mediated communication also allows us to reconnect with friends from the past whom we may have lost contact with.

♦ LinkedIn is a sns (social networking site) particularly used by jobseekers. It is a tool used to link users to people they may have worked with in the past through various jobs or institutions. Users also have the opportunity to link to certain companies they aspire to work with.

3.2 Disadvantages of Social Networking

♦ All networking applications used in the professional environment are not beneficial or successful. Some prospects experience trouble while trying to build their networks, thus they may produce ineffective work. Communicating with such technologies creates a relaxed feeling in a professional environment. But employees are now more likely than before to carry inappropriate conversations at work.

♦ One of the main disadvantages of social networking is the cost of using the networks

networking sites, most sites require a paid membership.

♦ Social web sites as rule do not allow any advertisement on their pages.

♦ Despite the cost factor, there are a large number of safety concerns that could be considered disadvantages as well. Unfortunately, the internet has made it easy for individuals to claim to be someone who they are not. There have been numerous reports of instances where online communication have resulted in abuse or inhuman.

4. Why You Should Join in a Social Network

Social networks have come a long way since the implementation of the idea several years ago. Social networking sites such as Friendster, Facebook, MySpace and Orkut all had a big part in making social networks what they are today. They have all evolved since then and become something more than what they were back then.

Now you can do so much more with a social network than just meet people and send messages. You can create photo albums, add videos, listen to your favorite music, and find old friends and so much more. Even the profile pages have evolved. Many social networks let you change the colors of your profile and even add backgrounds and change the layout.reason for joining in social network are mentioned below.

4.1 **Meet New online users**

4.2 **Searching your Old Friends**

4.3 **Unlimited Chating**

4.4 **Join Special Interest Groups(SIG)**

4.5 **Blog for Your Friends and Family Community**

4.6 **Create Photo Albums and Share Photos**

4.7 **Add Videos**

4.8 **Add Music**

4.9 **Create Your Own Style**

4.10 **Get Advice**

4.11 **Help Others**

4.12 **Sense of Belonging**

5. Top 10 Social Networking Sites

There are top ten social networking sites on basis of webometric studies. They are as follows: Facebook, Myspace.com, Hi5, 43 Things, Windows Live Space by MSN, Gather, Worlds.com, Live Mocha, Stickam, and Profilactic. The top three social networking sites are discussed herewith. These three sites are very popular among present generations which are discussed below.

5.1 Facebook

Facebook is full of fun applications that you can add to your Facebook profile. Play games with your friends, battle each other, send gifts, and create virtual pets or virtual gardens. There are just so many things you can do and so many options you can add that you'll never run out of fun things to do. Although you can't modify your Facebook profile to look any different than it does, you can create a photo album, blog and all the other things a great social networking site should have.

5.2 MySpace.com

MySpace comes in a close second. Mostly because they are so big that they have a lot to offer. The MySpace music and MySpace video sections are the favorite MySpace options. MySpace Music lets you add music to your MySpace profile of artists from all around the world. Add your own music to these large collections of music and let other people add your music to their MySpace profiles. MySpace

Video is a lot like You Tube. You can add your own videos or download other people's videos. Adding videos to your MySpace profile is a lot of fun and helps show off your character. MySpace also lets you modify your MySpace profile with HTML and CSS whereas Facebook does not.

5.3 Hi5

Like MySpace, Hi5 also has a large database of videos you can add to your profile. Add your own videos to the database and show them off on your Hi5 profile. If you have your own music you can add that too and share it with others. Organize your friends into friend folders to keep friends separate from family or acquaintances. Organize your photos the same way. Create folders and keep photos organized and easy to find. Hi5 also lets you edit your profile using CSS. So get to it and have fun with it.

6. Create Your Own Social Network

There are a few places online that will let you create your own social networking site. Why, you ask, would someone want to create their own social networking site when there are so many out there already? One reason would be that there isn't currently one out that covers the niche you want covered. For instance, do you like knitting and want to meet up with other people who love to knit? As far as known, there's not a knitting social networking site out there. Another reason would be if you wanted to create a local site or a site for your organization. Social networking sites are a great way to keep in touch and stay together when you can't get together. They also give us a forum to make announcements and tell about things going on in our group. Think of this, you have a group of friends, be them school friends, work friends, club friends, whatever. You want to keep in touch and

be able to update each other on what's happening in your lives. Or you want to create a study group, work group, idea group, whatever. It will be better way to do this with social networking sites.

6.1 Where?

One of the most popular of these is Ning. There are others, but for the purposes, we're going to discuss Ning. Ning has to be one of the first sites that created the ability for the average person to create their very own social networking site. The site you create can be about anything you want it to be. When you create your own social networking site on Ning you get all the bells and whistles you would get with any social networking site. The blog on Ning is so easy to use, just click on "Create a new blog post" from your profile page and write your blog entries. Friends are easy to make on your own network because you are all there for the same reason. If you choose, you can have all the activity from the group listed right on your profile so it's easy for you to see what is going on with everyone. Upload your own music and videos to your profile too. Add music you have on your computer or from another website. Videos can also be added from your cell phone or through email. If you want to, you can even add videos from You Tube and Google Video. There is one rule, only add music and videos that you have permission to add. Of course you can add lots of photos too. Ning also has forums and groups features. Forums are great for getting opinions from members or telling about things you have done or events that are coming up. Groups add depth to your social networking site. When your members create groups they are saying that they have special needs and they want to know who else shares their need. Then they can all talk about it on the forum.

6.2 How?

1. **Sign Up:** From the Ning homepage click on the button that says "Sign up to get started". If you're not already a member of Ning, sign up now. If you're already a Ning member clicks on the link that says "Sign in here".

2. **Log In:** Log into Ning with your email address and password.

3. **Name It:** Now you will see a box that is asking you to name your new social network and to give it a URL. Think of a descriptive, yet creative name for your new social network and type it in the name box. Then type a shortened version of that name into the URL box. Click on "Create Your Network".

4. **Options:** On the next page you'll get to choose several options for your social networking site.

5. **Privacy:** The first will be to decide whether you want to open your network to the public, or make it by invitation only.

6. **Tagline:** Give your social networking site a subtitle or add a catch phrase for your site.

7. **Describe:** Tell everyone what your social networking site is about, what they can find there and what they can expect to get out of joining it.

8. **Keywords:** These are so people can find your social networking site when they're searching for it. Use words and phrases that describe your site and words and phrases that you think people would use to find it if they were doing a search.

9. **Language:** Choose a language for your site. This is pretty self explanatory.

10. **Icon:** Every site needs a picture, photo or other type of graphic to help people see what it's about and to catch people's attention. Choose carefully; make sure it's a good match for the theme of your site.

6.3 What?

1. **Choose features:** Decide which features you need and want your members to be able to use. Drag and drop the features you want onto the page, put them where you want them.

2. **Appearance:** Choose a theme. These come in different colors and with different designs on them. There are quite a few different themes to choose from. You can use the advanced color boxes to change the theme too, or use CSS and create your own.

3. **Questions:** Choose which questions you want your members to answer when they sign up for your social network. There are a few questions already in there that you can use. Make up the rest yourself. What do you think your members will want to know about the other members?

4. **Launch:** Once you click on the "Launch!" button your social network will be created. Now you can invite people or submit the address of your site around the Web to get people to join.

5. **Have Fun:** This is your site, have fun with it!

7. Conclusion

Online Communities & Social Networks are changing the way our society interacts, at a local and global level.

Community Web sites are becoming increasingly popular allowing users to chat, organize events, share opinions and photographs, make announcements, and meet new friends. We believe that social networking sites such as Facebook are

excellent environments to foster and facilitate contact and communication among members of a local community. It is also believe that as a structured, yet open, communication venue within an educational community, Facebook can also serve a place and space in which library and librarian services can be more actively and visibly promoted. MySpace, have capitalized online identity by providing tools that allow to enhance those profiles in ways that make them indistinct from personal sites, beyond the fact that the URL is on the service instead of being a personal one. Social networking sites are a great way to keep in touch and stay together when we can not get together. When used properly, social networks can be a great way to enhance knowledge. Tapping into one's social network can allow for people to fill an information gap if members of their extended social network have deep subject matter expertise in a certain area. Human beings are social creatures. The proliferations of Social networks allow people to expand their connections around interests. Social networks have significant success in the corporate market over the next few years. The features of—interactive communication, user participation, and collaboration—collate with those of the Social Networks. It is the extent to which the values embodied in a right to communicate are shared by those involved in the most recent research and development of the Web that it can be argued that Social Networks development can be seen as part of a larger human rights movement.

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