

Analyzing the Perception of Social Networking Sites as a Learning Tool among University Students: Case Study of a Business School in India

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Abstract : Universities and higher education institutes are finding it increasingly difficult to engage students fruitfully through traditional pedagogic tools. Web 2.0 technologies comprising social networking sites (SNSs) offer a platform for students to collaborate and share information, thereby enhancing their learning experience. Despite the potential and reach of SNSs, its use has been limited in academic settings promoting higher education. The purpose of this paper is to assess the perception of social networking sites among business school students in India and analyze its role in enhancing quality of student experiences in a business school leading to the proposal of an agenda for future research. In this study, more than 300 students of a reputed business school were involved in a survey of their preferences of different social networking sites and their perceptions and attitudes towards these sites. A questionnaire with three major sections was designed, validated and distributed among a sample of students, the research method being descriptive in nature. Crucial questions were addressed to the students concerning time commitment, reasons for usage, nature of interaction on these sites, and the propensity to share information leading to direct and indirect modes of learning. It was further supplemented with focus group discussion to analyze the findings. The paper notes the resistance in the adoption of new technology by a section of business school faculty, who are staunch supporters of the classical “face-to-face” instruction. In conclusion, social networking sites like Facebook and LinkedIn provide new avenues for students to express themselves and to interact with one another. Universities could take advantage of the new ways in which students are communicating with one another. Although interactive educational options such as Moodle exist, social networking sites are rarely used for academic purposes. Using this medium opens new ways of academically-oriented interactions where faculty could discover more about students’ interests, and students, in turn, might express and develop more intellectual facets of their lives. hitherto unknown intellectual facets. This study also throws up the enormous potential of mobile phones as a tool for “blended learning” in business schools going forward.

Keywords : business school, India, learning, social media, social networking, university

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