Implications of social media use on instruction and student learning: An exploratory study

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ABSTRACT

Use of multimedia technology is a norm in contemporary organizations including in academia. In particular, we have seen a rise in the use of social media applications such as Facebook, tweeter, Instagram, skype, flickr, and blogging. Despite being ubiquitous, we have limited understanding how the marriage between multimedia technology and social media (Cao et al., 2010) might impact the learning process. In this paper we explore the potential implications of social media use on instruction and on student learning. Termed Multimedia Information Network (MINet), these structured media collections such as documents, images and videos are connected and linked by nodes (Cao et al., 2010). MINets arose from the influx of web images and the popularity of online community as a result of overwhelming growth of various forms of social media such as Facebook which host billions of images that are linked to each other via users, groups, and tags. Despite such increase in general usage, the relative newness of social media in academia means that we have limited data or awareness of impacts and potential implications on student learning. However, given that content delivery is a major component of instruction, the rich multimedia content in MINets and ongoing developments in social media and the MINet technology invites the academia to leverage these forms for content delivery and knowledge transfer.

In this paper we explore the use of social media on the content delivery aspects of instruction and potential impacts on student learning. It is our conjecture that impacts of social media use might depend on factors such as the interface of particular medium and learning style, teaching style and instructor skill, and the demographics of students and their instructors. We propose a framework that links instructor to students through social media. That is, social media becomes a channel though which learning occurs. Classifying multimedia technology as tools and social media as interactive Web 2.0 Internet-based applications, we employ case studies in developing the framework and we follow up with a discussion of potential implications of social media applications in academia.

KEYWORDS: Multimedia, Social Media, Instruction delivery, Student Learning