Intention .v. Reality: Exploring the use of Facebook for teaching and learning in three sports marketing modules

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Introduction & Study Rationale

• Facebook is the leading social networking site in the UK, with 24.2 million users in 2010 (ClickyMedia, 2010)

• High Facebook penetration among students
  – “Students live on Facebook. So study tools that act like social networks should be student magnets-and maybe even have an academic benefit.” (Parry and Young, 2010)

• Extensive use of social networking in the world of marketing (Cardon and Okoro, 2010)
  – Educational benefits of learning in use
Study Rationale

- Creation of learning communities (Boostrom *et al*., 2009)
- Blending of formal and informal learning (Hoyer *et al*., 2010)
- Web 2.0 technologies mirror good models of learning as they encourage collaboration and active user participation (Maloney, 2007)
  - User-friendly Facebook interface
That sounds great, but...

- Concerns over whether social networking sites can fit within current pedagogical paradigms (Selwyn, 2009)
- Potential conflict between social role of social networking sites and their use in formal educational settings (Conole and Alevizou, 2010)
- Risk of information overload for students and increased workload for staff (Hung and Yuen, 2010)
Background to the Study

- Facebook pages created for 3 modules in sports marketing (2 UG level, 1 PG level)
- Pages set up so students “Like” a page, without need to become lecturer’s “friend”
- Lecturer posted links to relevant articles and associated questions for discussion on a weekly basis
- Student participation was voluntary and non-assessed
Methodology

Online questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current use of social networking sites</th>
<th>Use of email and eLearn (WebCT)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Views on using Facebook for university purposes</td>
<td>n = 112</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Creation and updating of module Facebook pages

| Weekly updates with links to relevant articles | Links would appear in students’ Facebook news feeds |

Focus Groups

| Students on the modules with Facebook pages (2 groups) | Students not on the modules using Facebook pages (2 groups) |
Questionnaire Sample Characteristics

- Males = 69%
- Females = 31%
  - Questionnaire sent to sports students, possibly accounting for gender bias

- 76% aged 18 – 21

- 96% of sample were full-time student

- 93% of sample were UK (home) students

- 72% of sample lived on campus/in Preston during term-time
Facebook Dominates

• 97% of sample use social networking sites, with 95% using Facebook
  – 12% use Twitter, with less than 1% using other sites such as MySpace, LinkedIn, Ning and Renren

• 60% acces Facebook on a mobile phone or other mobile device, with 72% of these accessing Facebook mobile at least once a day
# Current Use of Facebook

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seeing what friends are doing</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live chat</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posting status updates</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arranging/organising events</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking at/commenting on photographs</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posting photographs</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessing links/videos posted by friends</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posting links/videos</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing games</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ n = 106 \]

Facebook seen as a social tool

“Definitely just a social tool.”
Current Use of Facebook

- Evidence of informal educational use of Facebook by students
  - Group work
    “Use it a bit during group work...it’s easier to just do it there and lay the groundwork over Facebook and then meet up when you’re further into the assignment”
  - Assignment help/questions
    “No, I’ve not really used Facebook for university purposes...during assignment times, everyone changes their status to assignment...there’s always comments to do with the assignment so that kind of helped...someone might say something which you’ve not included in your assignment so you can pick up points”
Would you be interested in using Facebook for...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>% very interested or interested</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accessing links/articles related to modules being studied</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sending messages to fellow students about university work</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Updates or changes to times/venues of lectures</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussing university work with staff and other students</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downloading/viewing lecture notes</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sending messages to lecturers</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posting links/articles related to modules being studied</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussions/commenting on links/articles related to modules</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online chat/tutorials with lecturers</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n = 102
Would you be interested in using Facebook for...

- **Admin updates**
  - Deadlines
  - Room changes

- **Assignment support**

  "Put your deadlines on as an event on the Facebook page perhaps."

  "Teachers could use it...they could say if there’s changes [to the room] or if they’re absent or [as you to] bring certain documents...[and] you’d get it immediately because everyone goes on Facebook."

  "Other peoples’ questions could help you because they could ask a question and you’d be like ‘oh I never thought of doing that in the work.’ That can help you with yours."
Student use of module Facebook pages...some reflections

• Reasonable uptake of pages, via “Like” function
  – 62% of students on undergraduate modules
  – 67% of students on postgraduate module

• One way communication (information dissemination)

• No student comments on articles
Module Facebook pages: the student view

“But you can’t put too much information on it...I think if there’s too much...you won’t bother looking at it.”

“If you updated it a lot more...maybe...people would go on it a lot more.”

“Because we update status like once a day at least so if it’s only once a week you won’t see that at all in the news feed because everyone is constantly updating.”

“You’d have to make it more regular for people to keep seeing it otherwise you will forget about it.”
...would put me off using Facebook for university purposes

• 33% of survey sample felt there was something that would put them off from using Facebook for university work

• Facebook not as good as other tools for university work (13%)

"I think a lot of problems that you have with social networking is sorting the wheat from the chaff...the heck of a lot of absolute nonsense...that you’ve got to sort through...If I’m doing university work and doing assignment work then I’ll go specifically to known places for materials”

• Don’t access Facebook regularly enough (7%)

“you’re relying on everybody being on Facebook and using in regularly, when that’s not necessarily the case.”
...would put me off using Facebook for university purposes

– Facebook only for personal life (11%)

“I just wouldn’t like any sort of link with University life as in modules and assessments...not with Facebook. Because I see Facebook as something completely different. It’s your personal life.”

– Don’t want lecturers to see personal pages (10%)

“I think maybe having a tutor as a friend on Facebook would make you less expressive with your photos, with your statuses and stuff so it might actually ruin Facebook for you.”

– Distractions

“there’s loads of distractions when you go on Facebook”

“if you’re on Facebook for you know normal social purposes then you’re not really going to be in the frame of mind to sit down to an academic study that’s been posted on there.”
eLearning Failures

• Insufficient purpose for the intervention
  – Commenting on the links to articles posted on the module Facebook pages:
    “I think it’s background material.”

• Failure to build online element into day to day teaching/assessment on the module (Brenton, 2009)
  “I think a lot of what Leah puts on there is of interest, if you fancy reading it, whereas perhaps more people would use it if she put stuff on there that was a requirement to be read.”
Facebook and Collaborative Learning?

• Social networking sites encourage collective knowledge and collaboration (Maloney, 2007)

• Evidence of informal learning by students using Facebook to discuss assignments/group work (Madge et al, 2009; Selwyn, 2009)

• BUT...some evidence that students don’t want to share resources with each other, particularly when it comes to assignments

“you think well if I’m searching for it, why should everyone else get it”
Key Conclusions

- Mismatch between stated intentions and actions
- To get student buy-in to such initiatives requires student ownership (Hoyer et al., 2010; Salavuo, 2008) and the purpose to be user-defined
- Facebook seen as a social tool
  - Invasion of students’ “personal” space

“It’s a good idea in theory but in practice...
Looking Forward...

• Creation of a bespoke university social networking site

• Let students define their academic use of Facebook

• Explore use of other social media for teaching & learning purposes
References

- Madge, C., Meek, J., Wellens, J. & Hooley, T. (2009). Facebook, social integration and informal learning at University: it is more for socialising and talking to friends about work than for actually doing work. *Learning, Media and Technology*, 34 (2), 141–155
- Selwyn, N. (2009) Faceworking: exploring students’ education-related use of Facebook, *Learning, Media and Technology* 34 (2) 157-174
Thank you for listening

ANY QUESTIONS?