

I399 Final Paper

Social Media 2.0

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Introduction:

Our topic deals with social media so we decided that we wanted to do extensive research on the popular social media sites Facebook, Twitter, Google+, and LinkedIn for the age groups from young adults to senior citizens. With these age groups, we captured college age students, young professionals who are just out of college and starting their career, people who have been working for years and have established lives, and seniors who may be retired. We wanted to take each of these sites and find out what users used the most and used the least and combine that knowledge to create a template for a better social media site. We believed that if we could research what makes each of these four social media sites popular, then we could create a social media platform that will serve as a one stop social media site with features that each age group would find appealing. We thought that if we could create a few suggestions for the most popular site it would help keep users on the site longer. We assumed many social media users have accounts for multiple sites so we wanted to find out what drives them to use each. However, due to time, if we could not make a full physical template, so we provided results that would help us to improve the current features for the users and benefit their experience. Our research question presented the question of: What social media site is most popular among all ages and what features do users like the most or the least? How do we create suggestions based on users responses to create a better experience for all?

With Social Media at an all time high, we believed that this project was important because it affects millions of people from various demographics. What are the differences in social media sites that pull users to one site but not to the other site? Why do users from different age groups choose the social media sites they do? Why do people from all over the world in various countries with different belief sets and different interests choose the sites they

choose to use? Is it possible to research why people use the sites they use and find suggestions to improve each one of the current social media platforms? We believed now was the right time to conduct this research because of how popular social media is in the world right now and how popular we know social media will continue to be in the future. People deserve to have a social media site that can meet all of their wants and needs. We thought if we could create such a platform then we could migrate everyone to this platform and create a broader network that allows everyone to communicate, share interests, buy and sell products, advertise, listen to music, etc. on a larger scale.

This research was relevant because a large emphasis is given to how people in general use social media and not specifically targeting sections of the audience. Not only are a lot of the sections, tabs, and words confusing to the user, but also are not clear on how they should be used. People would care about this research project because it has the potential to help connect everyone on a broader scale, which means increased viewers of advertisements, increased e-commerce, increased amounts of users with shared interests, increased music listeners, etc. We are positive that funding would be provided for this research, because we know that this social media platform could change the world. Our research would provide hard evidence and data supporting our claims that users use each social media site for specific reasons and therefore we need combine those features and come up with a more popular site. Imagine if every social media user actively used the same site and non-social media users migrated to this site. This would cause an increase in the use of social media. People could connect with a far larger amount of people than they could before. Imagine the possibilities both socially and economically; the possibilities are endless.

Background:

We grew up with the boom of social media and believe we are the right people to research and implement a better social media into society. Each of us first used sites like Myspace, then moved to Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. We saw how people were unsatisfied with Myspace and moved to Facebook because of the simplicity of Facebook. Facebook had the basic building blocks of social media that people would like (Kietzmann 5). There are hundreds of social media sites and platforms already available, ranging from blogging to video sharing. Everything we do revolves around information that we receive and information that we give. We are in the midst of the social media revolution. Social media is changing and changing fast. Sites like Facebook and Twitter need to understand where social media is heading and how to keep up with users wants and needs (Smith 7). Popular blogging sites such as Wordpress, Blogger, and Tumblr allow users to post and read other peoples posts about anything from information about companies, to personal opinions, to comments on other posts. Blogging is extremely powerful because it allows users to voice their opinions and connect with others who have the same interests. Another form of microblogging has become huge over the past few years. One of the biggest microblogging websites is none other than Twitter. Twitter differs from Blogger in the sense that it allows for smaller content portions, both actual and aggregate. Twitter is also used more so to follow celebrities and breaking news sites. Twitter allows for posts no longer than 140 characters long, just enough space to share your simple thoughts with your followers. People are more likely to read shorter posts more often than longer posts that would take longer to read. With so much information available to us at this day in age, we want things short and simple so we can move on. Also, these short blogs turned into getting news on Twitter. Twitter allows a user to get a brief overview of the story then they have to go to the actual website to get the full story. This kind of social media helps people stay up to date on what is going on around them

and around the world. Twitter is sometimes referred to as a news site rather than a social media site (Kwak 3). By allowing people to comment and interact on blogs and Twitter posts, it transformed social media into its popular form that is used today. Facebook and Myspace are both very popular forms of social networking. Social networking allows for you to connect with your friends and family by posting pictures, statuses, and the infamous liking of such posts. Facebook is one of the most popular websites on the Internet today and it only seems to keep growing. Other successful forms of social networking are photo sharing applications such as Instagram and Flickr, and video sharing applications such as YouTube and Vine. These sites are solely meant to share photos and videos and be able to customize them to make them more personal to you. A social networking site more targeted for professional occupations is LinkedIn, which allows you to basically share your resume to friends and employers in a simpler way. It also allows you to connect to people you have worked with. This could help you later in life when trying to find a job. There are so many different social media websites because everyone has different wants and needs depending on their personality. Looking into these different types of personalities and how they use social media will help us figure out what social media platform would be the best for all types of personalities (Correa 2). Of all of these successful social media sites they have one thing in common and that is the ability to create and share information and ideas in virtual communities and networks. We chose Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Google+ because they cover a wide range of the most popular uses for social media: sharing photos and videos, creating microblog posts, and a professional aspect. We took our personal preferences on likes and dislikes of each, such as disliking annoying game requests on Facebook, irrelevant posts, liking the “like” button, enjoying retweeting, and simplicity, and used that to get similar feedback from users of all ages.

Methods:

We thought we would be able to get the large set of data by conducting a questionnaire and sending it to specific age groups of people we know. By doing this we thought we would get better, and more truthful responses due to having personal relationships with the people who took it. For example, we each sent it to our parents, grandparents, siblings that were 18 and over, and other family members and friends we knew that would take it seriously. Some of the questions on the questionnaire were basic to get demographic information such as age and gender which would help us correlate the data, such as which age groups liked what features. We also had a few specific questions: Which site do you visit most frequently? How many hours do you spend on social media a day? How long do you spend on social media each instance you access it? What are features you find most annoying? What features would you be interested in seeing on Facebook (if you use it)? etc. We ended up getting around 50 people to answer the questionnaire. On top of gathering quantitative results from the questionnaire, we observed and interviewed people we knew, such as roommates or parents, to get a more in depth and real response. For example, we know most people use Facebook to ‘creep’ and we didn’t think people would admit that in a questionnaire but they would if they were asked face to face by someone they know personally, which worked. We got a better understanding of how people use Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Google+ and got decent results by doing this. On top of reaching out to other people, we discussed each social media site on how we used them and our likes and dislikes. We also did background research to gain insight that would help us draw conclusions from the data.

Results:

As we suspected, Facebook was the most popular social media platform out of the four we chose to study. We had 50 people take the questionnaire, and observed 15 others and every person had a Facebook account, only two people said that they do not use Facebook as their most often used social media site. It was clear that we should focus on Facebook and how it could be improved to keep people on Facebook longer or enhance their experience on the site. We found that the most annoying features on Facebook were game requests, pop-ups, advertisements, pokes, and social media knowing too much about you. We decided to focus on game requests and pokes because these are the only ones that we would actually be able to change. We decided to make a way to turn off all game requests so people would not be bothered by the notifications of getting these requests. We decided to do the same for pokes also.

We also saw that people would like to have radio/music, news, and sports incorporated more into Facebook. To accommodate this want of these features, we came up with a prototype of how a sports page would look. In this sports page, a person could customize what teams they wanted to see updates on. After clicking on the specific team that they have in their teams, they can see the schedule, Facebook feed, and breaking news. We also considered putting in the roster and other relevant information to the team. With news, the layout would be about the same. Instead of teams, there would be news sites and based on a person's Facebook likes and interests, it would automatically generate articles that would be of interest to users. For example, if a user likes a lot of technology companies and tends to click on technology related articles that their friends post, the news most recommended to them would be technology news. Since we only decided to focus on two features, we did not come up with a way to incorporate music/radio into Facebook. Also, there is a music feature on Facebook now but it does need updated to be better and more fitted to users.

We also discovered that more people play games online in general than do on Facebook. Because of this, we concluded that Facebook has more of an audience for games than it is currently servicing. In order to get these other gamers to play games on Facebook, Facebook needs to find a better way of organizing the app store and also having more games to suit the wide variety of gamers online. We also discovered that people in the 44+ age range want news on Facebook but they are in the age range of not spending too much time on Facebook. In order to make them spend more time on Facebook, they need to incorporate a news feature like suggested earlier in this paper. This would keep people on Facebook rather than going to other websites for news.

Another finding was that people mainly used Facebook but that has changed over the past year. More people are starting to use Twitter and Google+. This could be because people are not liking Facebook's updates of their site or like the simplicity of twitter or the circles in Google+. Also, people could just be getting bored with Facebook and need something new. Regardless, Facebook needs to find a way to keep users on Facebook and improve some features and this is why we suggested the improvements that we did.

Discussion:

Research question: What social media site is most popular among all ages and what features do users like the most or the least? How do we create suggestions based on users responses to create a better experience for all?

We answered this question by surveying many people from all different age groups. We found that Facebook was the most popular social media site among all ages. We also found that these users like sharing and receiving information, liking content, and being able to upload photos. The two features that people liked the least were game requests and pokes. We then took

this information and figured out how to incorporate these features that people liked the most more and how to turn off game requests and pokes. We also came up with prototypes on how to get people to stay on Facebook longer since we also found that people have been exploring other sites more and spending less time on Facebook because of these other sites like Twitter and Google+.

Conclusion:

We worked as a group greatly by splitting the work up fairly. We all contributed to the papers and presentations equally. We also all had input on the questionnaire. Cody was the one who finalized the questionnaire. We all sent this out to our people to take the questionnaire and Cody took the results and sorted them and then took the data made them into graphs. We all also observed people using social media. Julie made the slideshow for every presentation and Kelsi designed most of the poster. Julie made the prototypes for the game requests and the sports section. Cody was the speaker for our project video, Kelsi researched information for the video, and Julie put the video together and edited it. Kelsi kept the website updated throughout the project by putting all the contributions of the project on the website.

The potential impact of our research will help society by providing a better social media for people of all ages. From our survey, we found that many people are not very satisfied with the social media of today so our suggestions might make them like social media more and make them stay on social media for longer periods of time. Our research could potentially make more people look into how to change social media to make it better for users of all ages. There would be more features coming out of work by these other people looking into possible changes that need to be made. This would make more people use social media. More people 44+ might be

more interested in being on social media. This would open up more of a market for social media sites to expand.

Future work on this project could be finding new designs on how Facebook could improve its app and music features and possibly take off features that are less used to make room for the new features and make it simpler for people to know what all features are available to them. Also, in the future of this project, users could test the features suggested and see how they feel about these changes. The features would be able to be improved after doing this user experience tests.

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Website URL:

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