

Social Networking (Facebook): Wastage of Time or an Important Web Resource

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Abstract– The basic aim of choosing this topic was to check Facebook's importance as a social website amongst youth and to see whether it has turned out to us more than just a social networking website with uses like business online, advertisement etc. And also to see the how common is the use of Facebook as a hobby, a pass time and for playing online games. The important issue was; Is Facebook a bad habit? Is it a waste of time?

Keywords– Social Networking, Facebook, Web and Resource

I. INTRODUCTION

History: Facebook is a social networking website [1] introduced in February 2004 and is privately owned under the name of 'Facebook Inc.'

Facebook was initially founded by a group of college students, mainly Mark Zuckerberg and his college roommates from the computer science group including Eduardo Saverin, Dustin Muscovite and Chris Hughes. The only people who could use the website were the founders and other few students from the Harvard University. Later on the membership was expanded to other students from Lvy and Stanford universities. These all universities were located in Boston. In September 2005 Zuckerberg launched a high-school version of Facebook and this version needed an invitation from an existing user to join. Later Facebook offered invitation to employees of different companies like Microsoft and Apple.

Finally on September 26, 2006 Facebook was opened to everyone to join freely with the age limit of being over 13 and having a valid email address.

People on Facebook: Currently Facebook has more than 180 million active users and more than 50% of the active users log on to Facebook in any given day time. On an average each active user has more than 130 friends added to their profile.

Activities offered on Facebook: There are more than 900 million interactive objects on Facebook including community pages, events, groups and fan pages etc. A average user is connected to around 80 groups events and pages . Statistics tell that on an average the number of photographs uploaded on Facebook daily exceed 250 million.

Global Reach: Facebook can be used in more than 70 languages. More than 75% of Facebook users are non Americans.

Platform: More than 20 million apps are installed on Facebook every day and more than 500 million people use an application or experience Facebook's platform on other websites.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The researcher made an extensive study for the literature on the problem under study. Literature was nice on the topic and the awareness about the topic is very encouraging among the youth.

The article compares effectiveness of advertisement done on Facebook when compared to Google and shows the results in favor of Facebook because the social networking websites [2] offer better targeting with keywords and demographic-specific ads. Facebook uses the information it gathers from the profiles of the users but Google has very little information about the page visitor when compared to Facebook. Facebook has knowledge about your likes, what causes do you support, which videos do you share and how often you make recommendations to your friends. Therefore, advertising done on Facebook and other such similar social networking sites are more results oriented and effective when compared to the Google network.

CNN makes a clarification about some rumors that keep on spreading about amongst the Facebook users regarding the changes Facebook keeps on bringing to the profiles of users through the owner of Facebook Mr. Zuckerberg. He clarifies the following facts regarding the recent and upcoming changes at Facebook:

- Facebook is NOT planning to charge its profile holders for using its services thus all such rumors stand False.
- Friends on the Facebook profile can see the websites one visits only IF one makes such settings to allow them to view them.
- Facebook is introducing a timeline for all the pictures and activities one has done on their profile. Who sees what on your profile will again depend upon the settings one makes for their friends.

Therefore one's actions seem to be quite in one's own control when they use Facebook and how people see your profile information depends upon the settings you keep.

Nicole B. Ellison (2007) said in his research that Facebook is a popular social networking site, it is found to interact with measures of psychological well being, claiming it to be helping in giving satisfaction and person using Facebook feels his importance. According to him social capital is linked to a variety of positive social outcomes, it helps to maintain public health and reduces crime rates and when this social capital declines it increases social disorders, civic activities decline and create misunderstanding among community members. Social capital increases commitment to community through which we help others and can do those activities which help to reduce gaps and differences between people for the welfare of the society. Social networking keeps on changing which affects social capital, when a person moves from one place to another for any reason social capital decreases only through the internet and these social networks we can keep in touch all the time. Because of Facebook, people feel that they have a number of good qualities through which they take a positive attitude toward life.

In this article Chris Lecompte said that social websites are very effective to convince consumers about their products. He is in favor of Facebook by saying that many small businesses are jumping on it. Facebook's main motive is to provide social networking not for doing business, it is a rapidly evolving service with new features and functions, but it also provides a good starting point to get your small and non-profit organization into the 21st century of social networking.

By three ways Facebook proved to be helpful; research, implementation and measure. It is an excellent source of market, demographic and psychographic research. We can gather data just looking at people's posts, say and links. Facebook gives us an opportunity to connect with younger and older generations. We can start small businesses by spending some time on reviewing videos and pictures posted which shows the interest of the person, start building a persona of that user as it relates to our organization then use the persona to user prospects and customers through this we can reach those whom we don't know. The next step is to establish a good profile through which we can connect with friends, family, colleagues, partners, clients and others, for this we should keep our profile updated, keep checking our notifications and messages. Facebook informed us who a person on Facebook is friends with, whether they are my friend or not, it is useful because it serves us a potential way to develop that connection now for this we should be genuine and build trust.

According to Libby Copeland's research Facebook makes ourselves feel lousy. After logging to Facebook and scrolling through others' attractive photos, accomplished bios and status updates we are easily convinced that everyone else was leading a perfect life but which is not true, it is the human habit of overestimating others' happiness is nothing new and we always want to be happy more than other people which is difficult. She is of the view that the sites have a special power to make us sadder and lonelier. Her research found that students underestimated others' negative emotions, the more they tended to report feeling lonely and brooding

over their own miseries. She also points out that the site's have the "like" option without a corresponding "Hate" option. In short by helping other people look happy, Facebook is making us sad.

According to this research information about an individual's place and date of birth can be easily exploited to predict individual's social security number (SSN). In the United States identifiers for accounts tracking individual earnings have been created which turned into sensitive authentic devices, they realized that it was possible to predict by SSNs therefore mitigating strategies were implemented, the predictability of SSNs exposes them to risks of identifying theft on mass scales. He assumed that first three digits of SSN are called its area number, next 2 are its group number, and last 4 are its serial number. Their prediction exploited the observation that individuals with close birthdates and identical state of SSN assignment are likely to share similar SSNs. DMF employs as a public source of information about SSNs assigned over time and across states. According to his prediction more than half of million DMF records of deceased individuals, however DMF records also apply to the SSNs assigned to individuals. SSN exposes the privacy tradeoffs of information-disclosure policies. It was designed as identifiers at a time when personal computers and identity theft were unthinkable. The SSA had proposed randomizing part of the SSNs assignment scheme which would eliminate the statistical predictability of newly assigned SSNs. There is a need to reassess the perilous reliance on SSNs for authentication, and on consumers' impossible duty to protect them.

The article by ROB CROSSLEY says that Facebook is transforming its applications business in a new bid to bring social games to smart phones, but the heavy lifting needs to be done by studios. As part of a comprehensive package of changes to the Facebook platform, rich media services such as games can now be rebuilt for HTML5 and appear on Android and other smartphones. EA, Wswooga and Zinga are three of many games studios already on board. The changes also allow users to purchase Facebook Credits via mobile.

The article by Verne G. Kopytoff [6] says that Yahoo introduced a new service to let users see and share which Yahoo news articles they and their Facebook friends have read. By showing what are essentially recommendations Yahoo is hoping that people will click on more articles. The new service was timed to Facebook's F8 conference in San Francisco. To sign up for the new service, users must have Facebook accounts which according to Yahoo 85% of Yahoo users have one. Users will see images of their Facebook friends who are already signed up at the top of Yahoo news pages and clicking on the images brings up a list of Yahoo news articles that those people have read.

The article by Nick Bilton [7] says that Facebook plans to add a series of photo filters to its mobile applications. The company also tried to acquire Instagram, a photo-sharing Website that features unusual photo altering filters. The engineers said that Facebook will introduce almost a dozen photo filters, including some that are similar to Instagram like old style camera lenses. Facebook will also try to introduce new styles of filters with the hopes of drawing users away from others photo apps.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The chosen sample was about a 50 random people comprising mostly of students and teachers from a particular private college in DHA Karachi. Teachers were also taken in the sample to check on general the effect of Facebook over the people and not only over the youth. The Population size would be about 500 people. The basis for choosing the sample size was “all we could afford”.

The cost of the total research was about Rs. 500 including the printing of questionnaires and printing of the research paper. There were a total of 11 questions asked from the respondents using different question formats.

IV. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Out of 50 respondents, 4 people were not the users of Facebook with their own reasons for not joining it including:

- Lack of technological know how
- Lack of time
- They prefer meeting people live and interacting

Out of the remaining 46 people 32 people login daily, 6 login weekly, 7 login rarely and 1 remains logged in 24/7.

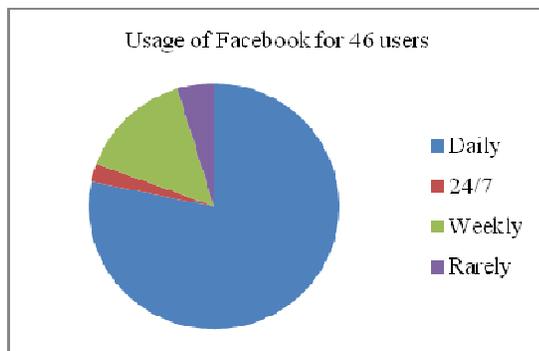


Fig. 1: Usage of Facebook for 46 users

Source: Computed

The 17 people out of 46 play games on Facebook. This makes 39%.

15 users play games daily:

- More than 3 hours: 1 user
- 2 hours: 3 users
- 1 hour: 9 users
- 30 minutes: 2 users

1 user plays games on Facebook for 1 hour weekly and 1 user who loges in rarely claims to play games whenever he does login for an hour.

From the remaining 29 respondents who do not play games on Facebook, 18 users login daily, 5 users login weekly and 6 users open their Facebook account rarely.

The following chart shows a summarized view for the total users and their login trend.

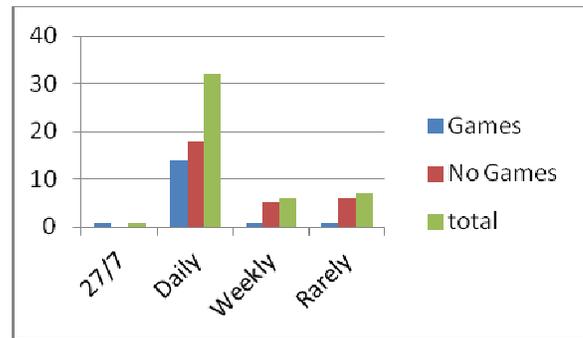


Fig. 2: A summarized view for the total users and their login trend

Source: Computed

Following chart shows the number of Facebook friends added in the 46 respondent’s accounts.

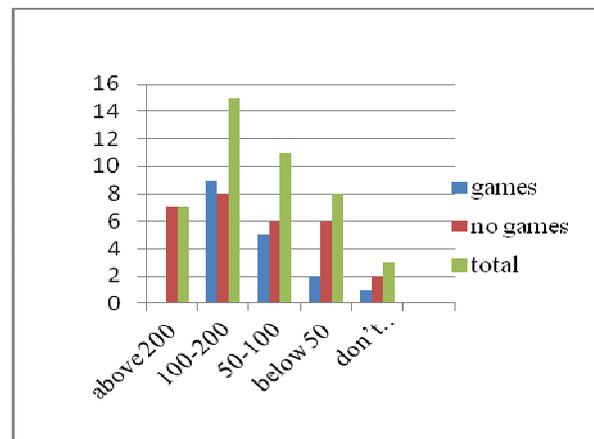


Fig. 3: Number of Facebook friends added in the 46 respondent’s accounts

Source: Computed

An important issue was to ask people their opinion about the security settings provided by Facebook, a majority of 22 from 46 agreed that yes that Facebook does provide good security settings. From the remaining respondents, 12 had no comments about the security settings and 12 users were not satisfied with the current security settings. This is also shown in the pie diagram (Fig. 4):

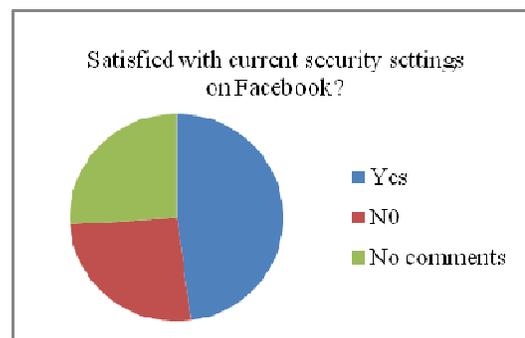


Fig. 4: Pie diagram for security settings

Source: Computed

To the question that what was the actual motive of joining Facebook there were four options,

- Meeting and interacting with old/new friends.
- Play games
- Find business and promote a product
- Any other motive

41 users ticked option 'a' and the remaining ticked option 'b'

Over all 43 respondents (93%) agree that Facebook is playing an important role in globalization and only 3 (7%) disagree to this.

On the other hand 33 respondents said that Facebook is source of spreading false news and rumors and 4 do not agree to this statement. The 9 respondent have no comments about this issue. As shown in the following bar chart (Fig. 5):

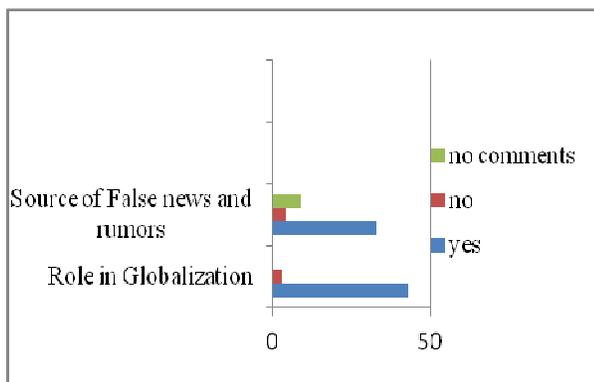


Fig. 5: Bar chart for source of false news

Source: Computed

A question asked if the users thought that in near future Facebook would loosen its popularity and some other social networking website would take over. To this 6 respondents thought it was not possible in near future. 12 agreed that this was possible and they would switch to the more popular social networking website. 24 trusted Facebook and agreed that since Facebook keeps on upgrading itself it can easily face any other website. 4 respondents had other opinion, 2 had no comments about this issue and 2 were unsure of as to what they would do in such situation.

The last question was about Facebook acting not only as a social networking website but also as a source of advertisement and business popularity, 42 agreed to the statement, 1 disagreed and 3 had no comments. As shown below:

V. CONCLUSION

On the basis of above research we can conclude that although people join Facebook to play games and pass time, but it is an important and very popular social networking website used by people with a motive to keep in touch with their friends and families. Also it is being popularly used for promotion of various products and services. It may be a source of spreading rumors but it is true that it keeps one

updated with the latest updates and happenings around the world.

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