INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES ON PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL LIVES OF PEOPLE

M. Rajeswari
Associate Professor, Department of Management Studies,
Arupadai Veedu Institute of Technology, Chennai-Tamil Nadu, India

ABSTRACT

The project “Influence of Social Networking Sites on personal and professional lives of people” mainly focuses on the impact of these sites on the people and the disturbance it causes to their lives in both personal and professional.

The social networking sites are gaining a lot of popularity these days with almost all of the educated youth using one or the other such site. In this age of globalization, the world has become too small a place thanks to the electronic media and portals. These have played a crucial role in bridging boundaries and crossing the seas and enabling them to communicate on a common platform. It has become a popular and a potential mean for them to stay friends with the existing ones and to grow up their social circle at least in terms of acquaintances. It has become a potential mean to relation building and staying in touch with all known. Hence the objective that we wanted to achieve through our research is to: Find out the influence of social networking sites on the personal and professional life of the people- how it affects their relations, what are its uses for each individual and how have they been influenced by these sites. The question regarding the safety, privacy and the legal issues have been cropping up all this time. Through this research we try to find out the impact of these networking sites on the personal and professional lives of people using them. It is a very subjective question to answer and is very opinion based and the same is reflected in the research methodology adopted by us.

Key Words: Networking, Social Blog, Pop Ups, Exposure

1. INTRODUCTION

Research Background

Wikipedia states that a social network is “…a social structure made of nodes (which are generally individuals or organizations) that are tied by one or more specific types of relations…” (Social network, 2007). With the rapid growth of people who use or have access to the Internet,
social networking websites are a must for the Internet community to stay in touch with each other. Social networking websites help people keep in touch with old friends make new friends; distribute new data or product, and many more aspects of our everyday lives.

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Primary Objective
To find out the influence of social networking sites on the personal and professional life of the people- how it affects their relations, what are its uses for each individual and how have they been influenced by these sites.

Secondary Objectives
How SNS (Social Networking Sites) does works?, Different networking sites profile prevailing among the people and general issues of concern disturbing the personal and professional lives of human

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Wikipedia states Social Networking as:
“A social networking service is an online service, platform, or site that focuses on facilitating the building of social networks or social relations among people who, for example, share interests, activities, backgrounds, or real-life connections. A social network service consists of a representation of each user (often a profile), his/her social links, and a variety of additional services. Most social network services are web-based and provide means for users to interact over the Internet, such as e-mail and instant messaging. Online community services are sometimes considered as a social network service, though in a broader sense, social network service usually means an individual-centered service whereas online community services are group-centered. Social networking sites allow users to share ideas, activities, events, and interests within their individual networks.”

“Web-based social networking services make it possible to connect people who share interests and activities across political, economic, and geographic borders.[20] Through e-mail and instant messaging, online communities are created where a gift economy and reciprocal altruism are encouraged through cooperation. Information is particularly suited to gift economy, as information is a no rival good and can be gifted at practically no cost.”

Ponx says:
“Of course the internet itself had made the world a very small place a long time ago but at that time we were still connecting with other human beings through the telephone or meeting them in person. Once the online social networking bug bit us there was no looking back! Today I can connect with anyone who shares a common interest with me sitting on my chair, in the comfort of my home through the myriad of social networking websites that we have, Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, LinkedIn, Flickr etc”
Socialnetworking.com says:

“Social networking is the grouping of individuals into specific groups, like small rural communities or a neighborhood subdivision, if you will. Although social networking is possible in person, especially in the workplace, universities, and high schools, it is most popular online. When it comes to online social networking, websites are commonly used. These websites are known as social sites. Social networking websites function like an online community of internet users. Depending on the website in question, many of these online community members share common interests in hobbies, religion, politics and alternative lifestyles. Once you are granted access to a social networking website you can begin to socialize. This socialization may include reading the profile pages of other members and possibly even contacting them.”

Misna Sameer talks about the privacy:

“Another aspect is the loss of private space. For today’s generation, things that were considered personal a generation before, are all public. Status updates, wall post and tweets yell about every move we make, every step we take and every relation we make or break. We are ourselves violating the sanctity of our personal space in an attempt to keep up with the current fad of publicizing intimate details of our lives for a few minutes of attention among a few hundred people in the virtual world. How healthy a trend is this – is something to ponder over.”

Or for snail mail committee talks about the threat to people through Social sites:

“Replacing the need for face-to-face interaction, social networking has become a new addiction for many who spend hours cruising through endless profiles making connections with old friends or making new ones. In addition, www.MySpace.com has also made an attempt to crack down on predators by implementing restrictions for adults having access to underage user profiles. Although with no age verification adults can easily pose as the age group they are targeting. Inappropriate language, nudity, alcohol use, sexually provocative images, etc. are used, Predators use it to gather information. No real method of age verification and some Social Networking services allow people to view profiles without logging on; therefore teenagers and young children can access it easily.”

Danny Brown entertains us by saying some cool facts of Social Networking sites:

“In Facebook, More than 25 billion pieces of content (web links, news stories, blog posts, notes, photo albums, etc.) is shared each month. People spend over 500 billion minutes per month on Facebook. Regarding Twitter; there are currently 110 million users of Twitter’s services. Members of LinkedIn come from more than 200 countries from every continent. LinkedIn is available in six native languages – English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish. 90% of Internet users know at least one social network.

SocialNetworking.com stresses the influence of virtual life:

“One of the biggest complaints against social media is that it shrinks people’s sense of relationship. It fosters the idea that relationships can be developed and ended easily. It creates a false sense of satisfaction and security among people. The effects can be seen in many people – especially young people – today. Studies show that a significant number of social networking website users spend more time with their online friends than they do with their offline friends. Many people admit that they interact with people they would not otherwise interact with. Many people feel a voyeuristic pleasure in sharing their personal information with their online contacts. They feel an urge or need to update their status on social networking sites on a regular basis.

In some cases, people think of online relationships as a substitute for real life relationships. They are addicted to social media and have a virtually non-existent social life. They spend a lot of time online. Time that could be used to go out and form real relationships. Time that could be used to
cultivate healthy habits. Time that could be spent with their loved ones. This is one of the main reasons why experts warn people against spending too much time on social networking websites.”

Neil Rubenking emphasizes on the fake and scam issues prevailing in Social Networking sites:

“Social networking site Pinterest’s popularity continues to soar, among both image-happy users and money-grubbing scoundrels. Pinterest fans are being spammed with survey scams and tricked into downloading fake Android apps. Pinterest is the latest social media darling as users post and share photos and videos of things that catch their interest with their friends. The site is also plagued with weight loss and free gift card scams. There are also multiple fake apps on Google Play claiming to be the official Pinterest app for Android. (Pinterest has thus far released only an iPhone app.) These fake apps display ads on the mobile device's notification bar and may have access to the user's browser history and bookmarks, as well as the user's location.”

Tarun and Mitali details about the impact of sites in professional life:

“Recently there was a very high profile case about privacy issues related to Facebook. The Department of Justice in Maryland has asked for passwords from a number of prospective employees to their social networking profiles. Based on the profiles the recruitments were done by the Department. Facebook acted swiftly and quickly came with an advisory that advised users that sharing their passwords was a breach of the terms of service laid down by Facebook. Facebook even went to the extent when its Chief Privacy Officer- Eric Egan said that they will sue any organization making such demands. The state legislators also acted swiftly and made the act of asking for passwords to site such as Facebook and Twitter a legal crime. Several other jurisdictions followed suit. It is quite apparent that Facebook as an organization and the Government on its part are taking all possible measures to protect your privacy on social networking sites. As we have reiterated on this website on a number of occasions how important it is to maintain your social profile to increase your chances in professional world. Even though you might think that your profile and whatever you say there is private to you and your friends it is rarely the case. Hence caution is the word here.”

Eszter Hargittai illuminates “usage patterns that would otherwise be masked. She finds that adoption of particular services correlates with individuals' race and parental education level.”

Bahney, A. talks about the threat to children:

“The new wave of concern has led some parents to curtail their children's Internet use, and it has increased many young people's awareness of the potential for online stalking. But some Internet safety experts say that a fear of networking sites has grown disproportionately to actual demonstrated threats, and that there is an unjustified paranoia about the sites.”

Benzie, R. gives an example of a situation where a government has banned the use of sites:

“The province has quietly banned bureaucrats, political staffers and most MPPs from accessing the popular Facebook website from government computers. To the surprise of thousands of Ontario government employees as well as Liberal aides, MPPs, and cabinet ministers, the 21 million-member social networking tool is now off limits. When workers tried to log on to their accounts yesterday, they were greeted with the same "access denied" message that pops up on their screens should someone attempt to download pornography on an Ontario government computer. "The Internet website that you have requested has been deemed unacceptable for use for government business purposes," the warning reads.”
Understanding from the Literature Review
Below are the understandings from the literature review:

1) We define social network sites as web-based services that allow individuals to: Construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, Articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and View and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system.

2) While SNSs have implemented a wide variety of technical features, their backbone consists of visible profiles that display an articulated list of Friends who are also users of the system. Profiles are unique pages where one can type oneself into being. After joining an SNS, an individual is asked to fill out forms containing a series of questions. The profile is generated using the answers to these questions, which typically include descriptors such as age, location, interests, and an "about me" section. Most sites also encourage users to upload a profile photo. Some sites allow users to enhance their profiles by adding multimedia content or modifying their profile’s look and feel. Others, such as Facebook, allow users to add modules ("Applications") that enhance their profile.

3) Many of us actively use sites like Twitter and Facebook to promote our businesses. And those of us looking to connect with more business-related contacts may turn to sites like LinkedIn to develop relationships with people we have worked with or may want to work with. With the growing use of social networking by business professionals, there is a growing number of social networking sites focused on business users and meeting their needs.

4) Facebook's growth as an Internet social-networking site as well as its very existence has met criticism on a range of issues, including online privacy, child safety, hate speech and the inability to terminate accounts without first manually deleting the content. In 2008, many companies removed their advertising from the site because it was being displayed on the pages of controversial individuals and groups. The content of user pages, groups, blogs, and forums has been criticized for promoting controversial and inflammatory topics, such as politics and religion. There have been several issues with censorship, both on and off the site.

5) There are dangers associated with social networking including data theft and viruses, which are on the rise. The most prevalent danger though often involves online predators or individuals who claim to be someone that they are not. Although danger does exist with networking online, it also exists in the real world, too. Just like you're advised when meeting strangers at clubs and bars, school, or work -- you are also advised to proceed with caution online. By being aware of your cyber-surroundings and who you are talking to, you should be able to safely enjoy social networking online. It will take many phone conversations to get to know someone, but you really won't be able to make a clear judgment until you can meet each other in person.

6) Most of the documented suicides caused by cyber bullying or internet harassment involved teenagers. This is one of the social issues that we all have to deal with unless we want to avoid the internet entirely. There are some things that people share intentionally, and they only have themselves to blame when it falls in the wrong hands. Other things could be distributed without your permission. Practically every cell phone doubles as a video recorder and a photo shooter. People have the ability to upload videos directly from their phones to Facebook or other websites. At one time, only the celebrities had to worry about reporters and paparazzi. Today, ordinary college students are sometimes the subjects of unflattering photos and videos that are posted online. If they know who posted it, they can ask that it be removed. But what if the other person doesn't comply? The ability to choose and make your own decision about what is shown to the world is gone.
7) Have you heard of the term Internet Addiction Disorder? What about Facebook Addiction, Internet Junkie, Net Junkie, or Net head? Any of these labels sound familiar? What about "online-a-holic?" These labels are used to categorize and identify an individual’s obsessive dependence with the Internet, known as Internet Addiction Disorder, or IAD. Five well-known traits behind Internet Addiction Disorder are: Excessive computer use typically associated with loss of spatial time perception; Neglect of basic human drives, proper nutrition, personal hygiene and relationships; Feelings of isolation, withdrawal, depression and extreme agitation, high-anxiety if the computer is unavailable or breaks down; Low tolerance levels, including an unjustifiable need for bigger, better, faster computer equipment, the latest and greatest software; and Low accomplishment level.

8) One of the biggest complaints against social media is that it shrinks people’s sense of relationship. It fosters the idea that relationships can be developed and ended easily. It creates a false sense of satisfaction and security among people. The effects can be seen in many people – especially young people – today.

9) The only problem is that it is very easy to confuse online intimacy for real intimacy. A lot of people find the social media experience so interesting that they forget that they can actually go out, talk to real people, and develop real relationships. They become so obsessed with their online social life that they simply do not feel the need to form real-world relationships.

10) Recent research has highlighted the adolescent health issues represented by unwanted sexual solicitation and Internet harassment. Unwanted sexual solicitation occurs when youth are asked to engage in sexual talk or sexual behavior or to provide personal sexual information when they do not want to.

3. METHODOLOGY

The sampling method used is Probability sampling - Stratified sampling. The population is college-educated from this the sample is randomly selected that is 161 persons in Tamilnadu which covers students and employees

- Methods of data collection: Primary data collection was in terms of questionnaire from our employees of different dept and students from Senior College.
  - Percentage analysis and chi-square test

4. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Null Hypothesis: People and the SNS affecting the personal life are independent.
Alternate: People and the SNS affecting the personal life are dependent.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>DF</th>
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</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Significance Level</td>
<td>0.05</td>
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<tr>
<td>Table Value</td>
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</tbody>
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5. CONCLUSION

As the Calculated value is greater than Table value, the Null hypothesis is rejected. Hence People and the SNS affecting the personal life are dependent.
5.1 Summary of Findings
The findings of the study are listed below:

1. Based on the demographic data, we find the relation between the same and personal and professional life.
2. The study has been chosen with the right people who are indulged in using Social Networking sites on a daily basis; combined along with their routine life.
3. In our survey, more men who are single are addicted towards Social Networking sites that are mostly between the age group 20-30.
4. People tend to use more that 1 SNS and they spend approx. more than 20 hours per week.
5. Though people are aware of the not trustworthy safety settings, people feel their memberships towards the SNS are very important, where they even take the risk of losing their responsibility.
6. People and the SNS affecting the personal life are dependent.
7. People and the SNS affecting the professional life are dependent.

5.2 Suggestions & Recommendations

- People have to well balance with their entertainment sectors and their most important personal and professional life.
- For the sake of the entertainment, no person should lose their task and responsibility at any cost.
- All the offices should completely ban the usage of SNS in their owned workstations and also in the mobile phone they use.
- People should be taken for counseling where they should be taught that touch relationships is more effective and faithful than these virtual relationships.

5.3 Conclusions
Considering the people and their dependency on their personal and professional life, we come to conclusion that People and the SNS affecting the personal life are dependent and People and the SNS affecting the professional life are dependent.

5.4 Directions for Future Research
Although the situation is rapidly changing everyday where new technology arises among people, scholars still have a limited understanding of who is and who is not using these sites, why, and for what purposes. Such questions will require large-scale quantitative and qualitative research. Richer, ethnographic research on populations more difficult to access (including non-users) would further aid scholars' ability to understand the long-term implications of these tools. We hope that the work described here and included in this collection will help build a foundation for future investigations of these and other important issues surrounding social network sites.

6. REFERENCES

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3) http://www.whatisocialnetworking.com/
5) http://www.familysafecomputers.org/social.htm
6) http://dannybrown.me/2010/07/03/cool-facts-about-social-media/
Appendix 1 – Survey Questionnaire

Survey regarding to understanding of the influence of the Social Networking sites in the personal and professional lives of the people

Dear Sir/Madam,

This survey is for my final semester MBA project. The intention of this survey is to know the effect/impact of Social Networking sites on our personal and professional lives. The survey will measure the impact how the people have got affected.

The targeted audiences are the employees of McKinsey & Co., and college students.

The survey is divided into three parts namely,

- Demographic data
- Personal impact related questions
- Professional impact related questions

Please share your experience by responding to the below questionnaire for my study. I am thankful for your valuable time and appreciate your response.

Regards,
Porci F.V.
Demographic data

1. Gender  
   a) Male  
   b) Female
2. What’s your age group?  
   a) <20  
   b) 20-25  
   c) 25-30  
   d) >30
3. Marital status  
   a) Single  
   b) Married

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Personal related

4. How many social networking sites do you use actively?  
   a) 1  
   b) >1
5. How many hours do you use SNS per day?  
   a) < 1  
   b) 1-3  
   c) 3-5  
   d) >5
6. Are the friends connected to you through SNS are …?  
   a) Only known people  
   b) Strangers  
   c) Both
7. Do you feel these networking sites have created any negative impact on your personal life?  
   a) Yes  
   b) No
8. Have you ever had any negative/bad experience from these networking sites?  
   a) Yes  
   b) No
9. Do you think social network sites help you to feel comfortable in your sexuality?  
   a) Yes  
   b) No
10. Do you trust the safety settings given in the SNS?  
    a) Yes  
    b) No
11. Do you think the SNS disturbs your normal life?  
    a) Yes  
    b) No
12. Have you ever been late handling a task because you spent time on a social networking site  
    instead of doing your daily work?  
    a) Yes  
    b) No
13. How important do you feel is your membership(s) on social networking website(s)?  
    a) Not important  
    b) Important  
    c) Very important

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Professional related

14. Are you permitted to use SNS in your office?  
    a) Yes  
    b) No
15. Do you access SNS through your cell phone?  
    a) Yes  
    b) No
16. How often do you typically visit a social networking website in your office hours per day?  
    a) Rarely  
    b) Frequently  
    c) I am logged in for the whole day
17. How often has spending time on a social networking website interfered with your ability to  
    work or complete task in time?  
    a) Never  
    b) Rarely  
    c) Frequently  
    d) Mostly

Thanks for your support and valuable time