Preface

In today’s business world and society, social media continue to play a vital role in the transformation of communication into an interactive dialogue. The success of social media has encouraged the integration of these aspects in higher education teaching practices.

Besides commercial and entertainment applications, the social-media services and technologies have entered nowadays in educational areas as well. In recent years, social media have become scholar media, new means by which scholars communicate, collaborate, and teach. There are a lot of research studies that reveal the importance of using social networks, wikis, and virtual communities in teaching and learning.

“Social Media in Higher Education: Teaching in Web 2.0” provides research on the pedagogical challenges faced in recent years in order to improve the understanding of social media in the educational systems. It highlights the role of the social media at different levels:

- Learning centered on student
- Teaching courses and seminars/labs
- Research activity of the academic staff
- Academic management
- Collaboration between students and the academic organizations
- Teams and work groups
- Information systems
- Individuals as actors in the postmodern educational process.

The book “Social Media and the New Academic Environment: Pedagogical Challenges” addresses all those who want to know, to continue and enrich the research on the implications of social media in higher education. Based on the idea that social media radically transform the environment in which university students and professors interact, in the teaching-learning process, but also in the field of scientific research, this book aims at presenting the latest achievements, studies, national practices related to social media use in higher education.

This book provides researchers, teachers, BA and MA students and doctoral candidates, as well as software developers, with working tools and analyses of the impact of the different social media tools upon the nowadays educational environment. Using Web 2.0 technologies, higher education faces unprecedented challenges for teachers and learners.

Are we witnessing today a new academic paradigm? Can we talk about University 2.0? Can Facebook be regarded and used as an effective and efficient educational tool? If yes, in what way(s)? Do social media have real implications in the educational field, or are they just a set of tools meant to entertain the participants? Are there any clear cases of successful use of Twitter in nowadays education? If yes, then what are the results? These are just some of the questions that the authors will answer.
This book is a collection of papers written by a group of researchers, from various parts of the world, belonging to various cultures and educational environments. The general conclusion is that social media can have an impact upon the educational academic environment, and this phenomenon is worthy of further research.

The book is structured into four sections. The first two sections, *Teaching 2.0* and *Student 2.0*, approach pedagogical challenges of social media in higher education. Chapter 1, authored by Domenico Consoli, University of Urbino, Italy deals with the concept of University 2.0. In this chapter, Consoli analyzes different models of e-learning and he designs a University 2.0 framework that supports, by advanced Web 2.0 tools, the teaching and the research in the university. In the second chapter, Theodosios Tsiakis (Thessaloniki, Greece) provides an overview of the current use and benefits of Web 2.0 in the support of teaching or pedagogical process. Also, this chapter offers a systematic way of understanding and conceptualizing online social media as a teaching tool and it suggests the framework in which social media tools can be applied and used in the Marketing Information System course.

Chapter 3, written by Mădălina Manolache and Monica Pătruț (Bacău, Romania) deals with the use of new web-based technologies in strategies of teaching gender studies. Nowadays the Internet users are obliged to perform communicative acts in a more transparent manner than in the Web 1.0 age, and the content itself allows for a higher degree of self-awareness. This is also the case of the learning media. Also, technology is not the only construct with a pervasive character. Gender mainstreaming also claims a front place, either as an explaining factor for policy failures, economic deficits or social fractures. It is the purpose within this chapter to outline the use of new web-based technologies in the new pedagogical environment, with an emphasis on Web 2.0, teaching strategies in the case of gender studies.

Swati Jaywant Rao Bute (New Delhi, India) presents in Chapter 4 the issues of integrating social media and traditional media within the academic environment. This chapter highlights some major points related to changing academic environment with the use of technology in classes, students vs. teachers’ perspectives on learning and teaching, academics and use of media – Traditional vs. New media in classes and integrating traditional and social media within the academic environment.

In Chapter 5, “Using Facebook in Teaching,” Ioana Boghian (Romania) claims that Facebook responds well to the particularities and requirements of the student-centered approach to teaching and learning, because Facebook promotes the personality, individuality, self-expression, self-assertion, and communication of the student.

Chapter 6 (Ilya Levin and Andrei Kojukhov, School of Education, Tel Aviv University, Israel) uses a historicist approach in order to present the trends of educational processes and learning environments in post-industrial society. The authors analyze the historical forms of acquiring knowledge and the historical forms of educational processes. The contemporary educational process is greatly affected by two innovative phenomena: social media and personal identity online (PIO). The authors consider socialization and personalization as two unique entities having opposite characteristics of the post-industrial educational process. They introduce the concept of “Personal Ubiquitous Educational Environment” and present the preliminary results of research on a teachers’ training course conducted on the basis of such an environment.

Chapter 7 is written by Marie-Luise Groß from the University of Vienna. Social software offers a lot of possibilities to employees and managers to be successful knowledge workers in increasingly virtual organizations and to ensure continuous learning. In this chapter, the Personal Knowledge Management model is used to discuss influential factors of successful knowledge work and personal development and to outline what students need to learn to be prepared for Enterprise 2.0.
Chapter 8 (Anca Velicu and Valentina Marinescu, researchers from Bucharest) presents the results of EU Kids Online II project about the children’s and adolescent’s uses of the social network sites. The results showed both the main differences and similarities regarding this issue both at the European and at the country (i.e. Romania) level.

In Chapter 9 (authored by Sandra Hofhues, Hamburg University of Applied Sciences, Germany and Anna Heudorfer, University of Augsburg, Germany) it is assumed that students have only limited interest in reading and writing academic texts. After a brief introduction to the problem, the impact of academic reading and writing skills will be shown. Furthermore, the authors want to emphasize how these literacies can support students’ development, pedagogically speaking, by using action-based projects. The examples from the University of Augsburg demonstrate the positive effects of students’ participation in publishing projects on the development of media literacies, especially in the areas of text comprehension and writing.

The third Section, *Tools and Technological Issues in Web 2.0*, presents some technological and philosophical issues of Web 2.0, and also examples of using social media “tools” (like Facebook or Twitter) in education.

Chapter 10 (Katherine Landau Wright, Texas A&M University, United States) uses pedagogical frameworks such as Balanced Literacy, Gradual Release of Responsibility, and Lev Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development to support the implementation of cloud software in public schools.

Chapter 11 (authored by Dorin Bocu & Răzvan Bocu, Transilvania University of Brasov, Romania), and Bogdan Pătruț, “Vasile Alecsandri” University of Bacău, Romania) presents the role of the web technologies in connection with the communication’s streamlining and diversification between the actors of a learning system. In this chapter, the authors systematically relate to the question: “What are the main ideas that should be considered when elaborating software systems for the communication’s streamlining and diversification among the actors of a learning system?” The broader perspective within which these ideas are debated is represented by the context that is created through the inception of social media and Web 2.0. There are some considerations that highlight the impact of the phenomenon “social media” on the information systems of the near future.

Chapter 12 (Narelle Lemon, RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia) deals with aims to establish what qualitative researchers have found in regards to Twitter as an explicit social networking platform for educational purposes in higher education. Twitter is seen as learning centered on the teacher for the student in teaching courses and workshops in higher education thus learning with and through social media.

Chapter 13 is authored by Maree Gruppetta (University of Newcastle, Australia) and Terry Mason (University of Western Sydney, Australia). The chapter discusses the positive and negative aspects of using Facebook as a crucial communication tool between Aboriginal academics and their Aboriginal students will be discussed. This chapter reports on continuing developments in the use of Facebook as the most effective communication tool between Australian Aboriginal academics and their Australian Aboriginal tertiary students within the Bachelor of Education Course at the University of Western Sydney in Australia. Most of Australia is sparsely populated, arid and very poorly serviced compared to the few large and coastal population centres. This poses immense challenge in maintaining a strong relationship between academics and students.
The fourth section deals with some special educational and ethical issues in the Web 2.0 Age. The focus of Chapter 14 is the use of subversive technologies in education. Matthew J. Kruger-Ross, from Simon Fraser University, Canada, and Tricia M. Farwell, from Middle Tennessee State University, USA, critically examine and question common assumptions underpinning educators’ use and incorporation of technology in the classroom. Drawing upon transformative learning theory, the authors argue that incorporating technology in education cannot and should not be done without first questioning assumptions regarding power, teaching and assessment. Technology is transforming education in expected ways, but can also transform education in unexpected, unexplored ways.

Chapter 15 (David Mathew, researcher from United Kingdom), focusing on online anxiety, is a provocative one. The author argues that as educators moving into a Web 2.0 world, we are likely to experience anxiety, which is an important part of the educational process (as it is for our learners). Anxiety has implications for the design of Web 2.0 educational materials. Web 2.0 is about learning from the learner, and this chapter asks: What role does the educator play in his own developmental learning of the tools of the trade? How does this inform his preparations for the learners’ experiences? The chapter also argues that every learner who becomes enabled and empowered by a contiguous existence in an online milieu might evolve into a learner who develops anti-social tendencies in the very same environment.

Twenty years ago, who would have thought that children as young as twelve would own a cell phone, or people would check their e-mails and Facebook several times in a given day? Despite the positive changes, the advances in information and communication technologies also introduced problems that are unique to information age, like the cyberbullying, that affects school age children. Many studies reported significant number of children late elementary through high school experiencing cyberbullying—the use of electronic means to harass others—through cell phones and the Internet. The authors of Chapter 16 discuss the nature of cyberbullying and why it became a problem among youth. This chapter is authored by Osman Tolga Arıcak, Taşkın Tanrıkulu, and Hüseyin Kınay (Fatih University, Turkey) and Sinem Siyahhan (Arizona State University, USA).

In Chapter 17, Ana Adi and Christina Gasser Scotte (Bournemouth and Lancaster Universities, UK) offer three case studies of social media training delivery in universities and researcher centres in the UK & USA, Bahrain, and Scotland. These case studies cover the use of emerging technologies in higher education research, teaching and policy, and associated first- and second-order barriers to their implementation. Results and impact of the training sessions, including questions asked and feedback provided by participants are also discussed. The chapter emphasizes the increasing interest in training in emerging technologies for educators and affiliated university staff, but also highlights the challenges faced when promoting tools and platforms not supported by either the IT infrastructure of the universities or the policies in place.

Mobility and networking are two important emerging issues that affect educational practices nowadays. The aim of Chapter 18 (Mar Camacho, Universitat Rovira i Virgili, Spain) is to provide a revision through the most relevant theoretical frameworks in the field of Mobile Learning. An overview is offered of the most outstanding features concerning the pedagogical challenges that it may suppose for Higher Education stakeholders, and poses some questions on the challenges that educational institutions have to face, especially concerning the blurring between formal and informal learning.
Chapter 19, “Media and Communication Research facing Social Media,” is authored by Georgeta Drulă, from the University of Bucharest, Romania. This chapter addresses issues related to social media research in media and communication studies. The conclusions of this chapter show that social media research in media and communication studies, theories and methods must be transformed or must be applied more appropriately to social media.

For a more comprehensive image about the changes brought by social media in education, we recommend to read this book together with our previously edited book (co-edited by Camelia Cmeciu), “Social Media and the New Academic Environment: Pedagogical Challenges,” also published by IGI Global.

Monica Pătruț
“Vasile Alecsandri” University of Bacău, Romania

Bogdan Pătruț
“Vasile Alecsandri” University of Bacău, Romania

September, 16, 2012