

Preface

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 transforms 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, discoveries, national practices related to social media use in the academic environment.

This work provides researchers, teachers, students, Master’s, and Doctoral candidates, as well as developers of technological solutions in social media, with working tools and analyses of the impact of social networks, microblogging, and other instruments upon the modern academic environment. Using Web 2.0 technologies, higher education enjoys unprecedented pedagogical challenges. The way students communicate with each other or with their teachers, how they learn, and the way in which contents are provided to learners are undergoing significant transformations due to the Web 2.0.

Are we witnessing today a new pedagogical paradigm? Can we talk about Pedagogy 2.0 or is it all just an embellishment of the traditional educational paradigms? 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 social media in higher education? If yes, then what are the results? These are just some of the questions that contemporary researchers try to answer. These researchers approach the educational aspects of social media from various perspectives, depending on their experience, as well as their training and field of expertise. This work is a collection of papers written by a group of senior and young 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 in four sections. The first section approaches pedagogical challenges of social media in academia. Chapter 1, authored by Charlotte Holland and Miriam Judge from Dublin City University, Ireland, deals with Future Learning Spaces, specifically with The Potential and Practice of Learning 2.0 in Higher Education. How Social Design Influences Student Retention and Self-Motivation in Online Learning Environments is the topic of Chapter 2, written by the American Professors Derek Baird and Mercedes Fisher.

Chapter 3 (L. Șoitu & L. Păuleț-Crainiceanu) addresses the topic of Facebook use in education, with focus on the learning issues concerning the student-faculty relations and communication on this Social Network. In Chapter 4, the focus falls on integrating mobile learning, digital storytelling and social media into vocational learning practices. A case study during which participating students used mobile phones and videos with a mobile social video application (MoViE) to design and produce representative digital stories based on local tourism attractions is also presented. The study belongs to the Finnish researchers Miikka Eriksson and Hanna Vuojärvi from the University of Lapland, and Pauliina Tuomi, from Tampere University of Technology.

The second section of the book is entitled *Social Media as a Means for Current Education*. The purpose of the study from Chapter 5 (L Holcomb & M. Krüger-Ross) was to examine the impact social media have on the development of communities, of practice and social development in distance education courses. This study evaluated the effectiveness of the integration of social media tools including Ning in Education (an educational social networking tool), Twitter, and WordPress into three distance education courses in instructional technology.

Chapter 6, authored by the editors of this book (Bogdan Pătruț, Monica-Paulina Pătruț, and Camelia-Mihaela Cmeciu), is entitled *Framing Non-Formal Education through CSR 2.0*. This chapter has a two-fold aim: to highlight two paradigmatic shifts (CSR 1.0 → CSR 2.0 & formal education → non-formal education); to provide an analysis of the Web 2.0 practices and items and of the verbal and visual framing devices used in a CSR 2.0 campaign on non-formal financial education. Chapter 7 approaches Social Media Audit and Analytics. It presents exercises for marketing and public relations courses, based on the experience of Ana Adi from Bournemouth University, UK.

The third section of the book is called *National Practices of Social Media in Higher Education*. Chapter 8 presents a case study on the functions of Social Media in Higher Education, providing an interesting case study (Alternative University) written by the young researcher Violeta Maria Șerbu.

The focus of Chapter 9 (M. Deac and I. Hosu) is upon the *Users' Perspective on Academic Blogging*. It includes a case-study on a Romanian group of students. Chapter 10 is the work of researchers María-Jesús Díaz-González and Natalia Quintas Froufe from the University of A-Coruña, Spain, Almudena González del Valle Brena (Bureau Veritas Business School, Spain) and Francesc Pumarola, expert in Internet issues. Chapter 10 is entitled *Uses and Implementation of Social Media at University* and consists of a case study of the Schools of Communication in Spain. The success of social media presence at Schools of Communication must follow an initial plan and a further control and supervision of the plan. The relationship of social media with the university community depends greatly upon the specific community manager's profile and commitment.

Chapter 11 (Sónia Pedro Sebastião) presents a Portuguese illustration on web use in public relations education. The main purposes of the research are: to understand how university students see public relations as a subject and to ascertain their attitude toward the importance of using web-based communication tools in the assessment of public relations disciplines. Chapter 12 is a study conducted in Malaysia on social media usage among university students. The aim of this research, conducted by Doctor Norsiah Abdul Hamid and her collaborators, is to determine the relationships between social media and personality traits particularly in identifying the profile of social media adoption among students in Malaysia, including duration, frequency of use, purpose, and person/s that introduced the social media, and determining the relationships between social media and personality traits.

The title of chapter 13 is *Social Media and other Web 2.0 Technologies as Communication Channels in a Cross-Cultural, Web-Based Professional Communication Project*. This chapter is a report of the results of social media use in one such project, which brought together students from the United States and Ukraine. Pavel Zemliansky from the University of Central Florida and Olena Goroshko from The National Technical University: Kharkiv Polytechnic Institute, Ukraine, are the authors of this interesting chapter.

Professors Luciana Duranti and Elizabeth Shaffer (University of British Columbia, Canada) are the authors of Chapter 14, that aims at answering the question *Are There Any to Manage the Learning Records:? If so, How?* The authors draw on a case study that explores the identification, arrangement, description and preservation of students' records produced in an eLearning environment in Singapore and is used as a starting point to highlight and discuss the implications that the use of social media in education can have for the management and preservation of educational institutions' records as evidence of their activity and of students' learning, to fulfill legal and accountability requirements.

The last section, *The Impact of Social Media Technologies on the Academic Environment* includes the last 5 chapters. Chapter 15, *The Influence of Twitter on the Academic Environment* focuses on microblogging as a phenomenon of our daily lives. Martin Ebner, from Graz University of Technology, gives a short overview and some challenging insights into the various ways of using microblogging.

Chapter 16 (Gabriela Grosseck, Carmen Holotescu, and Bogdan Pătruț) introduces the phenomenon of microblogging and presents the most relevant options for educators. The chapter has a descriptive character, and is structured into two large parts that provide a general-to-specific approach of both theoretical and practical aspects related to the microblogging phenomenon and the impact of microblogs in the educational space.

Chapter 17 reports selected findings from a small-scale, exploratory study, aiming to provide a ‘snapshot’ of actual modes of uptaking new digital tools for research purposes. The study consists in an interview project, carried out in a large Italian university and constituted by semi-structured interviews to 14 senior, young and doctoral researchers, working in the fields of Humanities, Social Sciences, Medicine and Physics. The chapter is written by Antonella Esposito, University of Milan.

Chapter 18 (R. Vasilescu et al.) deals with the topic of *Digital Literacy for Effective Communication in the New Academic Environment: The Educational Blogs*. In Chapter 19, the researchers Ernest Redondo, Isidro Navarro, Albert Sánchez, and David Fonseca, from Barcelona, discuss the impact of using social media resources and new emerging technologies in teaching and learning processes. It focuses on Spanish architecture-education framework, by analyzing three case studies, conducted by students finishing architecture and building degrees. Students’ interaction with these resources is assessed, as well as their derived academic results, and the degree of satisfaction from students and teachers using these resources and technologies.

Chapter 20, written by Professor Theresa Renee White (California State University, Northridge) focuses on Digital Social Media Detox (DSMD). This study explores personal and public implications of intense social media dependency. Twenty-five college students took part in a ten-hour detoxification intervention to experience a day of face-to-face interaction without access to social media. Qualitative triangulation research strategies were used in this empirical study to correlate participants’ self-reported experiences with direct observation by trained moderators. The primary concerns of the study were to discover if digital social-media use inhibits college students’ social and intellectual development, potentially limiting their participation in a public, postmodern culture. Their social-media dependency is shown to be inhibiting, but with revocable negative effects, suggesting a continuum of pathological use that educators can help mitigate in the new academic environment of the millennial generation.

We are convinced of the usefulness of this book and we look forward to any kind of feedback from readers.

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