Chapter 8

WhatsApp Messenger: A Strategy to Minimize Risk and Increase Productivity in Varied Environments

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ABSTRACT

WhatsApp Messenger is a cross-platform mobile messaging application that allows mobile phone owners to exchange messages without having to pay for short message services (SMS). Shrewd entrepreneurs are employing this service to grow their businesses in global markets. WhatsApp can be applied to build capability in emerging economies where the usage of smartphones has doubled recently. The technology can be applied to collect data that can be interpreted to make organizational sense in the new digital world. In this chapter, the authors make a brief survey of WhatsApp to postulate its dynamism in penetrating global markets.

INTRODUCTION

In this discussion the smartphone and mobile phone are words used interchangeably to imply a device that employs telephony and other technologies to communicate with other individuals, organizations or groups. It is assumed the devices can have the WhatsApp messaging application as part of their features. WhatsApp Messenger (WhatsApp) demonstrated that with an active subscription of users exceeding 1 billion distributed in 180 countries, it had the leverage to effectively increase a network of social interactions. Smartphones have experienced exponential growth and this changes the way consumers use mobile communications particularly WhatsApp. The smartphones usage includes music player, camera, and web browsing and executing other applications. The applications enable users to communicate with each other by posting information videos or images, attaching documents on email mail, and taking videos and pictures, which can be sent instantaneously to group or individual chats.

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Many Uses of WhatsApp

Yeo, Irvine, Cong, Soe, and Jing (2012) suggested the phone traditionally was used for communicating via voice, but the smartphone has extended the functions to include photography, music appreciation, internet research, and watching movies. At Michigan State University in the USA, WhatsApp is deployed as a learning technology. Researchers distributed in remote places such as the Congo Basin conduct studies on primates by monitoring their movements, eating habits and other behaviors. They relay the data to a central repository where it can be organized and analyzed to appreciate behavior ranging from diet and pastime activities. Kahenya (2017) alluded to the fact that WhatsApp was employed to communicate with researchers in the rain forests of the Amazon or Congo Basin to enhance an appreciation of living primates.

The studies are important because learning about the gregariousness of other species similar to Homo sapiens enable an understanding of human beings. Yeo et al. (2012) propounded the smartphone had brought a wave of change which has impacted the customary business model of telecommunication companies. It brought new opportunities for platform owners to gear towards full integration.

An Overview of the History of WhatsApp

WhatsApp Messenger (WhatsApp) was founded by Jan Koum, a Ukrainian immigrant, and Brian Acton an American. WhatsApp has been the fastest growing social media used to improve social networks (Olson, 2014a). WhatsApp technology practices the same internet data plan employed on the smartphones making it easy for consumers to access electronic mail (email) and safely browse the web. WhatsApp–like technology can be applied in building databases such as public health or marketing discourses. Recent transactions between the owner and designers of WhatsApp technology indicate that it exchanged hands when Facebook paid about US$19 billion (Olson, 2014b).

The social media utility is a highly priced asset useful for organizations to consider opportunities in varied environments. That purchase has made WhatsApp one of the most expensive applications acquired by Facebook in January, 2014, and one of the most expensive acquisitions in history. By April, 2014, it had more than 900 million active users. Its usage continues to grow exponentially as smartphones sales surge upwardly. WhatsApp is available on most smart phones which are now affordable as the price of telephony falls around the world. All smartphones can send messages to each other at no cost and this is an advantage for users regardless of location.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Although smartphone applications are widely adopted around the world, empirical studies that examine the user acceptance on different application types are still scarce and as such the same can be said of WhatsApp literature. In Xiang, Soe, and Jing (2015), the use of WhatsApp technology and its popularity is argued not to be as great in Western countries as it is in advancing economies in India, Africa, Brazil, or Argentina. Throughout the discourse reference is made to mobile technology or simply mobile to imply smartphones, i-Pads, i-Phone or other mobile devices that enable communications among a people through the application of telephony or other technologies to happen successfully.
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