

POSSIBILITIES OF USING CERTAIN SOCIAL NETWORKS IN EDUCATION

Željko M. PAPIĆ¹, , Ph.D., Rada KARANAC², , Ph.D., Miloš PAPIĆ³,
Ph.D.

^{1,3}Faculty of Technical Sciences in Čačak,
University of Kragujevac

²Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development –
School Administration Čačak

mlsppc@gmail.com

Abstract. *Internet and other digital networks have created an exciting new world of information and communication for anyone with access to the network. They provide young people immeasurable opportunities for learning, communication, and development of their own view of the world. New technologies provide children and adolescents levels of access to information, culture, communication and entertainment that was impossible to imagine only 20 years ago. One of the most widespread and most interesting phenomenon of today are social networks on the Internet. Social networks are an interactive social media that provide users the ability to create personal web pages, themes, groups, photo galleries and to make online friends. The use of social media has changed not only the way of spending leisure time, communications and business, but also the ways of organizing learning and teaching process. The tendency of people to use the possibilities offered by social networks are increasingly being used in education, in order to adapt the learning process to the needs of students and to make it more interesting and attractive for them. It was noted that a number of pupils began creating groups on social networks, in order to connect and share information about the teaching contents and their obligations. This has led teachers to modernize themselves and start using social networks in order to make the material for learning more accessible to students and to encourage discussion among students.*

Keywords: *internet, social networks, teaching, learning, communication*

1. Introduction

The results of survey about usage of information and communication technologies in Serbia in 2016 (Republic Statistical Office of the Republic of

Serbia), show that 97.8% of households have a TV a 90.2% mobile phone. Laptop owns 39.2% of households, an increase of 0.2% compared to 2015. Significant increases are when it comes to owning a computer (65.8% in 2016).

Over 3.07 million individuals use a computer every day or almost every day, also 3 600 000 people used the Internet in the last three months, as compared to 2015 it shows the increase of 60 000 users. Even 90.3% of the Internet population from 16 to 24 have an account on social networks.

Internet and other digital networks have created an exciting new information and communication world for everyone with access to the network and enable young people immeasurable opportunities for learning, communication, and develop their own view of the world. On Earth there are 7,017,846,922 people, while almost 35% of the population use the Internet. Social network Facebook actively is being used by 1.11 billion, which means that Facebook country, would be the third largest country in the world, behind China and India, and everything points to the Internet and social networks governance, and the impossibility of avoiding the use and Internet exploitation.

In the Republic of Serbia in November 2012, Popadić and Kuzmanović (2013) carried out a research on a sample of 3786 primary and secondary schools in order to determine how many children use digital technology, where the risks are and how we can protect them from the risks of digital violence. According to this survey, over 90% of students use computers, and 60% of students have their own computer. 95% of older elementary pupils and high school students use the Internet. Internet is not only used by minority of 6.5% older pupils and 3% of high school students.

2. Social Networking

New technologies offer to the children and adolescents, different levels of access to information, culture, communication and entertainment that was impossible to imagine only 20 years ago (Resources and strategies in the prevention of digital violence against children, 2013).

Nowadays, one of the most widespread and most interesting phenomenon are social networks on the Internet. It is a free online service that allows users a variety of communication forms and the possibility of their own presentation, free video clips, photos, writing blogs, playing games and for various useful and less useful activities through these networks.

Social networking refers to building online communities who share common interests and activities or who are occupied by interests and activities of various individuals or communities. Online community is a term that is very common characteristic of various Web 2.0 pages, but has become almost synonymous with Web 2.0. Students/pupils other than the basic, everyday

communication, use social networks and talk about educational issues, discuss the tasks and educational activities. This means that students/pupils should be provided an environment that is highly interactive and appealing to them to become more motivated to learn.

Survey data, conducted by Popadić and Kuzmanović (2013) indicate that learners usually use internet daily for visiting social networks (69%), watching videos, movies (50%), playing games (49%) or conversations through chat option (41%).

3. Social Networks

Social networks having an enormous role in education, and are defined as tools that enable cooperation, knowledge sharing, interaction and communication between users in different locations that have common interests, needs or goals. A social network is a type of Internet service, which usually takes place in the form of platforms, window or Web page. Research in an academic environment has shown that social networks operate on many levels, from the family to the level of the nation, and play a critical role in determining the way of solving problems, how organizations work, and the degree to which an individual will succeed in achieving individual goals. Certainly the best-known Internet networks are Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, where the most popular is Facebook with the largest number of users, but LinkedIn has recently been struggling and becoming more and more popular.

Blog AdriaTalk.com has made research on the use of social networks in Serbia. The most widely used social network in Serbia is Facebook with 1.2 million unique visitors per month. MySpace has seen a considerable drop in popularity among fans of online socializing in Serbia, but it is still at a high second place with 290 thousand monthly visitors. It is followed by Flickr, a popular location for photo sharing and storage, that in Serbia has 180 thousand visitors per month. Social network Hi5 monthly records of over 140 thousand visits from Serbia. Survey results show that 92% of interviewees involved in a social network, have a profile on a social network (Popadić and Kuzmanović, 2013). By far, the most students use the Internet for visiting social networks, then to watch videos, series and movies and surf the Internet.

Concerning the transparency level, we can distinguish networks of open and closed type. The open social networks, as the name suggests, are dynamic and open set of members gathered around a common theme or issue, supporting the expansion of their own resources in terms of number of communicators.

Unlike them, the closed social network type, deal with specific subjects limited by their own membership, usually by reference. Therefore, for

example, to get an access to an university network, approval is required- an administrator's permission.

The use of social networks in education can have a number of advantages, which relate to: the independence of time and location, the individualisation of learning, providing prompt feedback, the possibility of returning to the old facilities, the possibility of introducing more multimedia elements, load other applications such as virtual laboratories or animations, options of encouraging a voluntary student research, easily monitoring the progress of students, encouraging, both teachers and students, to achieve, evaluate and use knowledge or similar. Different schools/ faculties use social networks on different manner. Some of them use it to communicate with parents and pupils/students, or to improve learning process (Papić and Aleksić, 2012).

3.1. Facebook

Facebook is a social network for informal personal presentation, connecting with friends, sharing photos and other publications. It was established in 2004 by Marc Zuckerberg, and its original purpose was to connect Harvard students. It soon gained great popularity among all American Universities, secondary schools, and today operates as a global social network with over a billion active users per day. Facebook is free for all users.

Benefits of Facebook are:

- Free access and unlimited connectivity options with others;
- Creating a user profile, not only to acquire new friends, but they interact with those whom they lost contact with;
- Exchange of information, ideas, and opportunities in the private and professional world;

The disadvantages are reflected in following:

- The dangers of abuse, identity theft,
- Reduced possibility of privacy, because the company Facebook retains our personal data, and can be passed on to agencies and organizations that some of them may be interested in.

Given the fact that it represents one of the most popular social network in the world, educational institutions have begun to use it for the purposes of education. Realizing that most of the students spend their free time on the Internet, they decided to modernize and bring closer learning material in an interesting fashion. Numerous of applications are created, profiles, fan pages, groups, through which the students can communicate with each other or to their teachers, to share ideas, opinions, experiences, etc.

Papić et al (2016) have come to the result that 96% of students (117 respondents) are members of a group whose members are their counterparts on the same course where they exchange information and learning material.

One example of a Facebook-learning is Edmodo, which is a "learning network" that connects teachers, students and schools. Edmodo also represents an efficient way to organize the process of training of teachers, but also to modernize the teaching process and links pupils/students outside the classroom. Usage mode is very similar to the method of use of Facebook, except that an additional option allows the creation of tasks, tests, surveys, calendars, blogs that are especially useful for the educational processes. This similarity with the aforementioned social network is applied to facilitate the use of all parties involved within the process, the ones who knows how to use Facebook, that is enormous majority of teachers and pupils/students, will know how to use and Edmodo as well.

3.2. Twitter

Twitter is, after Facebook, the most representative social network in the world. In 2016 it was announced that Twitter has over 300 million users, which makes it a very popular social network that shows constant growth in the number of users. Twitter is a free of charge social networking and micro-blog tool that allows its users to read other people's and send their own micro-text entries, known as tweets. Twitter provides a stunning and still underutilised opportunities for all users, especially those who work in education. It is an excellent foundation for lifelong learning and an inexhaustible source of material that we can enrich the daily work in the classroom, modernize it, or improve it. Pupils / students and teachers are able to ask questions and send their answers, which means that in a real-time two-way communication can be established. Twitter has proven to be an excellent tool for professional development and collaboration with pupils / students. There are many options for teaching and learning that can be used in educational purposes. One of the aspects that is undervalued, however very useful as an option for creating the list, which can be useful to teachers in higher education in order to help students to develop their own professional skills and abilities.

3.3. Google+

In June 2011 the company Google launched its social network - Google +. Initially it functioned as new users can be only connected by invitation of an existing user. However, due to the huge interest this practice was soon changed and Google + has become open to all interested users. From the start, it has been recorded an amazing increase of number of users on a monthly basis. So, for a year and a half of existence, in December 2012 has already gained 500 million users, which means that from mid-2012 until the end of the same year the number of users has doubled. Google+ has over 6.7 million users and over 230 million views. It is relatively similar to Facebook

and offers similar features, however it introduced some new features to the world of social networks. Circles help to organize people according to a fact how you relate them in real life. Hangouts allow up to 10 people to join video conferencing for free. Hangouts along with Extras let you share documents, while with the help of a Stream- it is possible to chat with people in your circles and share information with them. The function is used to search Google Plus posts, people and the web. Profile is the way for a person presents to all numerous Google products. Messenger can be used for group chat via mobile phone, while Google+ Pages allows you to create a website for the organization. For example, by help of these options, video lessons can be easily shared that can help someone who missed a lecture (video chat), files can be easily shared via Google Drive-a, or similar. because all of Google's products are mutually linked.

3.4. YouTube

Designed and launched at the beginning 2005 by Chad Hurley, Steve Chen and Jawed Karim, former employees of the company PayPal, and by the end of 2006, bought by Google for \$ 1.65 billion. With time, many other services are created that copy YouTube concept, but none of them ever became at least nearly as popular. On this enormous online video platform every minute is published up to 300 hours of video materials of all kinds, from music and entertainment to news, advice, television shows, personal experiences. There is hardly to type a word, and have as number of results zero. If someone wants to learn to play the guitar, or to do proper make-up or hook up computers, it is enough to type in on YouTube, and will find exact instructions for this.

Using YouTube is so widespread that it is considered not only an integral part of our free time, our business development opportunities, but also a full ally in the process of learning, whether it is formal or informal form of education.

YouTube has a special section of its website primarily oriented to education and content that will be in line with education in the widest meaning of the word. On page <http://www.youtube.com/education> visitors can find video clips from known and less known, universities around the world. It is possible to find video clips of lectures from all Universities. On YouTube EDU section, video contents of higher education institutions are provided, the presentations can be already found the site, that are related to education and learning.

As good sources of educational content, the Edutopia and Teaching Channel must mentioned. Also, as a very useful source of content for educators who are interested in developing the idea of project-based learning (PBL - Project

Based Learning) video material can be used, available on the BIE (Buck Institute for Education).

3.5. LinkedIn

This social network was launched in 2003. With over 300 million users LinkedIn is, in terms of frequency, the fourth social network. Even though, relatively large number of those, due to lack of casual correspondence, sharing of different contents and other characteristics, who doesn't consider LinkedIn as a social network, there is no dilemma that it certainly is. Primarily as a business social network. The world's largest social network that brings together job seekers and companies looking for employees. One of the main reasons for joining the social network LinkedIn is to manage the one's own career. By creating a profile on the LinkedIn network, set up an online resource with all the accomplishments and education.

There are two types of profiles, such as a personal profile which the user himself fills and profiles of companies that are constructed by themselves in order to search for future employees. At the profile it can be specified last working position and the current working position, education, as well as additional contact information. It is also possible to join different groups and pages, where companies can find information for possible future employment.

In addition, LinkedIn has launched a new type of service that focuses on education (www.linkedin.com/edu). The central idea is to create pages for various universities, which should attract prospective students, current students and employers and so they all connect through the LinkedIn network. The advantages of this are: participation in discussions, research of worldwide universities, access to information on the prominent graduates, the possibility of expanding opportunities, as well as building its own network.

3.6. Instagram

Instagram was created in 2010 and is a service for photo sharing and social networking. With assistance of Instagram students can follow publications of others and give feedback and edit photos so that it can be cut or modified with the help of a special program for image processing [11]. Within Instagram short video clips can be published. Teachers may ask pupils/students that images display symmetry, to upload photos related to the different scientific areas that are being processed, favorite books, authors, etc. In this way, the teacher can monitor the interests of pupils/students and encourage motivation during learning, and students' mutual cooperation and communication.

4. Conclusion

Usage of social networks has changed not only the way of free time fulfilment, communication and business, but also in ways of learning and teaching process. Increasingly are used possibilities offered by social networks in education, in order to adapt learning processes to the needs of pupils/students and make it more interesting and appealing. Pupils/students by themselves have begun to set up a group on social networks in order to connect and share information about the contents of learning and their obligations. This is sufficient reason which led the teachers to begin with the increasing use of social networks, in order make more accessible facilities for learning to the pupils / students, encourage discussion among pupil /students and make it more accessible to a variety of content, useful examples and video materials to help them to review the material in a new and interesting fashion.

We shouldn't be surprised if in ten years time, even 70% of future generations willing to be taught in virtual schools, where the lecturing will take place on the Web (Papić and Aleksić, 2012).

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