

Use and Impact of Social Networking Sites among the Students and Research Scholars of Assam Agricultural University, Jorhat, Assam: A Survey

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Abstract

The 21st century is widely known as the networking age which is an age of internet where almost everything is available on World Wide Web(WWW). The advances in the WWW have tremendously changed the way how people access information and communicate with one another. Social networking tools have become popular among the students for resource sharing. End number of users are connecting globally through Social Networking Sites (SNSs) as a medium for communicating, entertainment, news and updates, information etc which serve as a platform to be used by users to retrieve their respective objective. The study primarily focuses on finding out the opportunities provided by SNSs as well as the benefits received by the students and research scholars of Assam Agricultural University, Jorhat, Assam.

Keywords: Social Networking Sites, Information and Communication Technology, Research Scholars

INTRODUCTION:

Internet protocol was putted in 1983, since then several social networking sites(SNS) have come up which provide cheapest and better mode of communication through which a person can stay connected and these SNS are independent applications which are available on various gadgets with active internet connections. Some of the examples of SNS are Facebook, Whatsapp, WeChat, Instagram, Twitter, Qzone etc which facilitates better communication with people. Social Networking Sites are a real time platform which have the ability that connect users across the globe without geographical barriers where user with common interest creates a profile that connect

with other profile and are benefited with the different services provided by networking sites. SNSs are basically those websites which provide social community for people interested in a particular subject or area. It is a tool of self expression or self presentation.

Social Networking Sites customarily support the public display of web whereas they may offer privacy restrictions or forward closed telecommunications. They confess members and a group to control who can access their profiles as well as determining standard of access. The level of privacy control policy varies from service to service, but typically settings allow us to:

- a) Keep information private i.e it will allow to access only if you grant permission
- b) Restrict the visibility of your information to people of your contact list and particular groups of service member.
- c) Make your information public i.e everyone can access your information if he/she is not a member of your account.

A Social Networking Site is gaining popularity among the people because we can easily use and access social networking websites anywhere any time. SNS are changing the ways in which community of people use and engage with the internet. The revolution of ICT has tremendously changed the education system in the developed and developing countries. A social networking site plays an important role in helping the researchers to classify and communicate with the associate and share the ideas, this application is serving as an open access to scientific knowledge and research. It represents a changeover in the way scholars communicate, access and circulate information.

The objectives of the study are:

- I. To identify the use and awareness of social networking sites among the students and research scholars of Assam Agricultural University.
- II. To find out the purpose of using social networking sites among the students and research scholars of Assam Agricultural University.

III. To find out the most popular social networking sites among the students and research scholars taken for the present study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Deb Roy Sudipta, et al (2015) explained the impact of social networking sites and social medias on education and life of undergraduate level of students on Karimganj town. The positive and negative impact of social networks on education was investigated in this study. The findings of the study winded up that the negative impact was strongly recommended and identified among the students of using social networking sites.

Haneefa and Sumitha (2011) conducted a study with the purpose to investigate the perception and use of social networking sites by the students of Calicut University, Kerala. The study shows that a majority of the students were aware and make use of social networking sites. The results reveal that 75.4 percent of the students used social networking sites for friendly communication, 36.6 percent for academic communication, 29.1 percent for discussing social issues, (11.2 percent) for promoting their work and 8.9 percent to publish their writings.

Margam Madhusudhan (2012) in his paper explored how research scholars of University of Delhi integrated Social Networking Sites (SNSs) into their daily communication for research work. A structured questionnaire was designed and personally distributed 160 respondents. Most used SNSs for “lurking” while few used such sites for promoting one’s research. Additionally, most respondents preferred the SNS Facebook and ResearchGate for academic purposes. Collaborative and peer-to-peer learning were common benefits from SNSs while some expressed concern regarding cyber-bullying and privacy. Finally, a majority of respondents said using SNSs may be a waste of time.

Maidul Islam, et al (2015) studied on the usage pattern of facebook among the students of Library and Information Science, Dhaka University. Questionnaire method was used to collect samples. A total of 139 samples were collected. The study found that a large number of students created facebook account after they entered the university and also indicates that use of facebook is a supplementary tool in university educations.

Samir N. Hamade (2013) in his paper assessed the perception and use of social networking sites among university students in the state of Kuwait and study their positive and negative impacts. The paper aims to understand the practice, implication and importance of social networking in a Muslim country. The results showed a heavy

use of Twitter and Facebook among university students who were viewing their sites more frequently than posting. The most positive impacts were better relation with family, relatives, and friends and more involvement in social, political and cultural activities. Neglecting study/work and the time consumed are the two major drawbacks.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE STUDY

The data of the present study “Use and Impact of Social Networking Sites among the students and research scholars of Assam Agricultural University, Jorhat, Assam: A survey” was obtained using questionnaire tool. The research questionnaire was distributed to the university student of undergraduate (50 questionnaires), post-Graduate (50 questionnaires) and to the research scholars (50 questionnaires). In this study a total of 121 responses was received. Of these, 21 were from research scholars and 50 were from post-graduate and another 50 were from undergraduate students of Assam Agricultural University.

Gender Differentiation on the Usage of SNS

Table 1 shows the gender wise differentiation on the usage of SNS. The tables shows that the number of male respondent in total is 52(42.97%) where 24 are from undergraduate, 19 from post-graduate and 9 from the research scholar. The number of female respondent was 69 (57.03%) in total where 26 were from undergraduate, 31 from post-graduate and 12 were research scholar. According to the data majority of the respondent were female as compared to the male respondent.

Table 1- Gender Wise Distribution

Category	Male	Female
Undergraduate	24	26
Postgraduate	19	31
Research Scholars	09	12
Total	52	69
Percentage	42.97%	57.03%

Use and Awareness of Social Networking Sites (SNS)

The table 2 reveals that number of respondent (121) were aware of SNS and are using it in their day-to-day life for communication, entertainment, collaboration purposes etc. The popularity of SNS among the users is tremendously increasing.

Table 2 - Use and Awareness of SNSs

Category	UG	PG	Research Scholars	Total	Percentage
Yes	50	50	21	121	100%
No	-	-	-	-	-

Frequency of Visiting of SNS

Table 3 reveals that among 121 respondents, a total of 101 number of respondent of 40 UG, 43 PG and 18 research scholars visited SNSs daily. About 10 respondent from 7 UG and 3 from research scholars were using SNS once a week. It is observed from the study that respondent using SNS twice a week are 8 in total and those visiting occasionally are 2 in total.

Table 3- Frequency of visit

Category	UG	PG	Research Scholars	Total	Percentage
Daily	40	43	18	101	83.47%
Once a week	7	-	3	10	8.26%
Twice a week	1	7	-	8	6.61%
Occasionally	2	-	-	2	1.65%

Purpose for use of SNS

There may be several reasons to use social networking sites. Academic students depend on social networking sites to build connection, disseminating information, collaborating in research etc. The responses of the respondent behind using SNS are given in table 4.

The result shows that majority of respondent (104) which is 44 from UG, 43 from PG and 17 from research scholars are using SNS mainly to get in touch with their friend and families which are followed by to keep themselves update with 94 respondents consisting of 45 from PG, 29 from UG and 20 from research scholars. Whereas (70) respondent are using it for instant messaging. The total number of respondent using SNS to follow other researcher's activities and to get in touch with other researchers is 67 and 65. A total of 60 respondent used SNS to search for a job. The respondent with a total number of 12 used SNS with no specific aim.

Table 4 - Purpose of using SNS

Category	UG	PG	Research Scholars	Total	Percentage
Get in touch with other researchers	21	29	15	65	53.71%
Get in touch with families and friends	43	44	17	104	85.95%
Disseminate research output	5	26	7	38	31.40%
Follow other researchers activities	21	36	10	67	55.37%
Disseminate curriculum vitae	9	11	4	24	18.83%
No specific aim, signed up because other researchers from the department/faculty are there	6	4	2	12	9.91%
Find collaborators for research projects	8	12	1	21	17.35%
Disseminate teaching materials	18	28	2	48	39.66%
To participate in discussion forums	18	13	6	37	30.57%
Search for a job	11	39	10	60	49.58%
To keep updated	29	45	20	94	77.68%
Instant messaging	18	38	14	70	57.85%
To play games and entertainment	12	17	1	30	24.79%
Others	-	2	1	3	2.47%

Which SNS sites they use frequently?

There are various SNS which people are using for various purposes like instant message, photo and video sharing, social bookmarking etc. Table 5 represents several different sites used by the respondent. Among all the SNS, Whatsapp is the most

widely used by the entire respondent and the least used SNS is Classmates which was used by a total of 3 respondents. Where else there are no respondent who use Tumblr, Reddit, De.lici.ous. But the other SNS such as Facebook is the second most popular SNS used by the respondent. Youtube is used by 107 respondents. The study reveals that maximum of the users were very much acquainted with the various SNS such as Instagram, Google+, Twitter, Skype,Wiki, Blogs, LinkedIn, Hike, TikTok, Pinterest. The respondent were least using the following SNS such as Flickr, MySpace, Snapchat.

Table 5 - Popular Social Networking Sites

Category	UG	PG	Research Scholars	Total	Percentage
Facebook	48	48	20	116	95.86%
Twitter	10	18	10	38	31.40%
Whatsapp	50	50	21	121	100%
Skype	2	14	6	22	18.18%
Instagram	46	43	14	103	85.12%
Youtube	41	47	19	107	88.42%
Blogs	4	13	7	24	19.83%
Wiki	9	22	6	37	30.57%
Google+	36	39	15	90	74.38%
LinkedIn	2	8	9	19	15.70%
MySpace	7	1	-	8	6.61%
Hike	9	6	3	18	14.87%
Snapchat	3	4	-	7	5.78%
Tumblr	-	-	-	-	-
Flickr	2	1	1	4	3.30%
TikTok	15	10	-	25	20.66%
Ask fm	-	-	-	-	-
Pinterest	12	13	2	27	22.31%
Reddit	-	-	-	-	-
Delicious	-	-	-	-	-
Classmates	2	1	-	3	2.47%

Positive and Negative Impact of SNS

Few decades ago, it was pretty tough to connect with people, but due to Information and Communication Technology revolution, social networks sprang up and have given rise of electronic devices which has change the whole idea of communication. SNS has lots of good point where we can express our views, thought, feeling, posting

our work favorite song, pictures, daily news feed, activities etc. Following are some of the positive impact of SNS:

i. **Connectivity:-** It is the major boon to the society where people can connect with each other to learn and share our thought. SNS allow us to communicate easily and effectively. It has the power to open up the world to us, which make it a smaller place then it has ever been before. It removes the geographical barriers and provides us a facility to stay in touch with people across the globe.

ii. **Education:-** SNS works as tools for students as well as teachers which allow us to share information, resources and discuss academic work and help in widening our knowledge. Today internet provide opportunities for education that can be accessed from anywhere across the world. Some of the benefits that a student gets by using SNS are improve communication skills, develop technological skills, promote creativity, develop team work and collaboration, increase awareness and social connection. The benefits that a teacher gets by using SNS are collaboration with the staff, provide access to resources, exchange and share information, communication with parents more easily and effectively.

iii. **Help:-** It allows us to share our issues among the society regarding any help and guidance or advice from the community of people we are connected with and help us in finding common ground in an open society where we can express ourselves.

iv. **Promotion:-** SNS is uses as a weapon by the business professionals, business organizations in promotion of product, brand and used for attracting new customers where they can easily distribute the information regarding their product or brand to a large number of group of people.

v. **Awareness:-** SNS have made communication much easier and faster as compare to early stage. It is the cheapest mode of communication where we can stay inn touch with our friends and families. These sites have brought us together no matter where we are from, which culture we belong to.

vi. **Help government agencies fight against crime:-** SNS is increasingly playing an important role in investigation. Now a days for investigation the investigator officers create a fake online identities to befriend suspects and view their private as well as

professional life. These government authorities also request private data directly from social networks main branch.

There are few people in 21st century who think about the negative impact of SNSs. But before switching to SNS account or involving in any kind of activity related to SNS one should carefully read the term and condition that has been provided. Simply SNS account holder should be aware of the privacy setting and should go through the terms and condition of the websites. Following are some of the negative impact of SNS:

i. **Cyberbullying:-** This is one of the major problems of SNS. Now a days, teenagers are becoming victims over a past few decades. It has become easy for anyone to bully on the internet by creating fake profiles of anybody and misuse their personal details and have the possibilities of being untraced.

ii. **Hacking:-** In internet data can be easily hacked and shared by the hackers which make a huge loss to the business, government and even to personal life. Identity theft is another issue that can give financial problem to anyone by hacking their personal account details. It is one of the major disadvantages of SNS and every users of SNS are been requested to keep their personal account and data safe to avoid such an accident.

iii. **Scams and Scandal:-** Recently major scam was exposed relating to data theft by Cambridge analytica who stole data from large number of Facebook users fro which the owner of Facebook Mark Zuckerberg apologized for a huge data privacy scandal.

iv. **Reputation:-** SNS easily ruins someone's reputation just by creating fake photos, fake news and fake profile across the sites. They may cause a huge loss and bad reputation of an individual, business and government as well.

v. **Addiction:-** SNS is providing materialistic culture in the society, people are forgetting genuine human feeling, emotions, values, believe and culture which is the bane for the society. It has been that almost every age group people are extensively

involving themselves in SNS, mostly the teenagers which can cut them from being part of the society and may disturb their personal lives.

vi. **Health and Death issues:-** According to research, excess usage of SNS can cause mental as well as physical stresses such as unnecessary comments on photos or post you have shared, constantly messaging checking someone's status etc can cause mental disturbances. Most of the people share unnecessary stunts, challenging videos people go crazy while watching those videos and they try to attempt that sort of dangerous activities which may sometime lead to major injury and can cause death.

vii. **Cheating and Relationship issues:-** Its becoming common that people are been cheated over social sites by showing fake feeling, by creating fake profiles and posting unwanted post, following people with whom you want to hook up, by sending pictures, exchanging contact information can cause serious relationship issues.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

We are living in a networking era, where social sites are the cheapest mode of communication through which people can stay connected. Social networking sites disseminate information quickly to a large number of users with maximum benefits and minimum costs. The web is one of the popular for sharing, communicating and disseminating of information. This study set out to investigate how academic users are emerging with social networking sites.

As per the study conducted, it was found that certain SNSs are very common and used by the students and research scholars community of AAU and are very much aware of SNSs and using it effectively in their everyday life for their academic as well as for other activities. Librarians today use SNS for creating personal blog where they share their personal achievements and stay connected with their userd and promote their library activities. Libraries of academic institutions should exploit new technology services of SNSs in a more effective way to meet the information seeking behaviour of library patrons and integrate the services of SNS into the design of future library services on a cost effective manner. The primary aim of this research was to explore the students and research scholars usage and awareness of SNSs and examine the relationship between their beliefs and attitude towards SNSs use in education and

their academic performances. The findings suggest that social media tools can be very useful for being used as educational tool. Accessibility to discussion forum should be provided by an academic library for the same interested users. The users need to create a balance between the use of SNS and studies. They need to learn time management and to allocate, to each task a specific time frame. This would increase their academic performance.

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