Use of Social Networking Sites by the Research Scholars: A Study of Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar.

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The innovation in the Web applications and Internet Technology has brought new avatar of two way communication which is usually referred as web 2.0. The web 2.0 based applications such as wiki, blogs, RSS, SNSs, IMs, etc brings new paradigm shift in the e-communication and learning by the people of all age groups and genders in real time round the clock. The present study is an attempt to determine the use and effectiveness of such applications in education and research by the research scholars. The study conducted through a structured questionnaire administrated among the research scholars pursuing their research at GND University Amritsar. The study finds that majority of the respondents were found to be aware and making use of such applications in their research affairs and it was revealed from the study that Facebook is the most popular SNS by all category of research scholars.

Keywords: Social Networking Sites, ICT, Social Software, Web 2.0 application.

0 INTRODUCTION

The recent developments in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) have changed the world information scenario. Earlier the Internet provided limited set of services such as searching, browsing, emailing, chatting, etc., but nowadays it has expanded to become an integral part of our daily lives. It is providing new services to the users of different areas. World Wide Web is one of the most useful and fabulous services of Internet. People take Web and Internet synonymous but actually the Web is different from Internet. It is a more remarkable

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service. The Web is a popular medium for publishing, sharing, communicating and disseminating the information. The Web was invented by Tim Berners Lee at CERN which was the first version of Web known as Web 1.0. It is providing the facilities of client-server model and hyper-linking of the information. Web 1.0 is a static web which provides non-interactive environment which is one way communication. It means it is used only to read the Web with the emergence of new technologies, Web has entered in the advance stage known as Web 2.0. The applications of Web 2.0 facilitate the users in providing interactive, information sharing, user oriented and collaborative environment on the Internet. The Web 1.0 allows the users only to view or read the information on the websites but Web 2.0 permits the users to view, edit and produce the content on website. It also assists the users to interact with content creator, sharing views with colleagues, friends, professionals, etc. It is collaborative.

Some experts accept that Web 2.0 is the new version of web but other consider it as the application of the Web. The term Web 2.0 was coined by Tim O’Reilly and Dale Dougherty O’Reilly. They defined it as an application that makes the most of the intrinsic advantages of that platform: delivering software as a continually updated service that gets better as more people use it, consuming and remixing data from multiple sources, including individual users, while providing their own data and services in a form that allows remixing by others, creating network effects through an "architecture of participation", and going beyond the page metaphor of Web1.0 to deliver rich user experiences. There are several tools of Web 2.0 like Blogs, Wikis, RSS (Really Simple Syndication), Instant Messaging, Social Networking, Podcasting, Tagging, Social Bookmarking Services, Mashups, and AJAX etc.

1 SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES (SNSs)

Social Networking means grouping of individuals into specific groups, like a small rural community. It is a relationship between people who belong to different religions as well as regions but with the same purposes. Social Networking is possible in schools, colleges, universities or in the workplace among the people of same group. Its popular channel is the Internet where it comes to online using websites. These websites are known as Social Networking sites. Therefore, it is an online community of users on the Internet. The socialization means reading the profile of other users, giving views on social issues or even contacting with them. These are web based services that allow the users to create own profile of

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interest and share with others like friends, colleagues, professionals, scattered relations etc. The online community on the websites share common things such as news, hobbies, religion, culture, etc. The Internet joins individuals and allows access to all around world on social networking sites. It is estimated that near about 300 social networking websites are available on the internet. The membership of these websites is open to all, anyone can become a member. The following chart shows the various types of SNSs.²

2 DEFINITIONS OF SOCIAL NETWORKS

Boyd and Ellison³ define Social networking sites as web-based services that allow individuals to (1) Construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) Articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) View and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. The nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site to site.

An Online Dictionary Xlsuite.com/dictionary⁴ stated that Social networks are new means of communication and sharing information between two or more individuals on an online community.

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Newman⁵ defined social network as a set of individuals who establish with each other links of some kind, such as acquaintanceship or friendship.

In nutshell, we can say SNSs are the new avatar of e-communication to the mass for two way communication and interactions of all rounds of information seamlessly.

3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main aim and purpose of the present study is to determine the use of social networking sites (SNSs) by the research scholars of GND University, Amritsar. The study has the following specific objectives:

• To identify the age group for using social networking sites;
• To find out the most popular social networking sites among the scholars;
• To find out the most used tools for accessing social networking sites;
• To know the purpose of use of social networking sites by scholars;
• To find out the nature of membership on social networking sites;
• To find out frequency of using social networking sites; and
• To know the problems being faced by scholars while using social networking sites.

4 LITERATURE REVIEW

The undertaken research is a quite new area in the domain of LIS, hence only few studies have been undertaken by the research scholars in this area. The studies which were found suitable were thoroughly reviewed along with their findings.

Bicen and Cavus (2010)⁶ evaluated the Internet usage of students in the department of computer education instructional technology and found which social networking sites are preferred by the students. The study revealed use and sharing of knowledge on Internet is made integral part of our lives. Result shows that Live Spaces and Facebook are common sites used by the students. Mahajan (2009)⁷ explored the usage, impact and problems related to social networking sites and their impact on the social and cultural values of India. It also describes top most social networking websites of India. It also discussed some bad and good factors of these sites. Kluemper and Rosen (2009)⁸ evaluated use of social networking...
website in employment selection through accessing the personal profile of candidates on the sites. This study was conducted at a large public university in the southern USA. Pempek, Yermolayeva and Calvert (2009) in their study found information about the use of social networking sites by college students. It also evaluated how much, why, and how they use these sites. Result shows that Face book is most popular website among young adults. Boyd and Ellison (2007) describe the comprehensive concept, definition and features of Social Networking Sites. They also presented the historical development of these sites and changes which had happened over the time. They discussed the recent scholarship on SNSs, highlighted key work and gave the suggestions for further research in concerned areas.

5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This research is only confined to the M.Phil. and Ph.D. scholars of Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar pursuing their research in different disciplines.

6 METHODOLOGY ADOPTED

This study is based on a survey conducted at Guru Nanak Dev University (GNDU), Amritsar among the research scholars through the instrument of a questionnaire. Total 60 questionnaires were distributed and 66% (40) were received back after filling by the scholars.

7 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The collected data through questionnaires has been thoroughly organized and tabulated by using simple statistical methods and their
interpretations have been given in the following successive charts/figures. The interpretations of the data have been undertaken in the light of framed objectives:

Chart 1 provides gender wise description of the respondents which shows that 28 nos i.e. 70% are male and 12 nos i.e. 30% female respondents, who were found using SNSs.

Chart 2 presents the data related to age of researchers. It shows that 36 nos i.e. 90% respondents fall between the age group of 20-30, who used...
most of these sites. Whereas 3 nos i.e. 7.50% respondents fell between the age of 30-40. People who fell in the age group of 40-50 was only 1 no. i.e. 2.50% respondent.

Chart 3 shows the commonly used SNSs among the researchers. It indicates that 31 nos i.e. 77.5% respondents were using Facebook, 24 nos i.e. 60% Orkut, 6 nos i.e. 15% Twitter, 8 nos i.e. 20% YouTube, 6 nos i.e. 15% Google Buzz, 2 nos i.e. 5% Hi5 and 1 no. i.e. 2.5% was found using Blogger.com, MySpace, Friendster and Bebo. Facebook is leading SNS among respondents, followed by Orkut.

Chart 4 reveals devices that are being used for accessing SNSs. It shows that 26 nos i.e. 65% researchers used PCs for accessing these sites, while 18 nos i.e. 45% Laptops and 5 nos i.e. 12.5% used mobiles as a tool for accessing SNSs.

Chart 9 represents the data related to purpose of use of SNSs by the researchers. It indicates that 23 nos i.e. 57.5% researchers used to find relevant information, 11 nos i.e. 27.5% to get opinions, 15 nos i.e. 37.5% for entertainment, 8 nos i.e. 20% to share experience, 27 nos i.e. 67.5% to communicate with family and friends, 12 nos i.e. 30% felt it is convenient than other mediums, 13 nos i.e. 32.5% share videos and pictures, 10 nos i.e. 25% used these sites for making new friends, 12 nos i.e. 30% keep up-to-date with social events, while 6 nos i.e. 15% opined that these are easy

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Chart 4 shows the friendship nature of researchers on SNSs. In which 10 nos i.e. 25% found colleagues, 5 nos i.e. 12.5% strangers, 8 nos i.e. 20% family, 29 nos i.e. 72.5% personal friend, 6 nos i.e. 15% represent an acquaintance.

Chart 5 shows that 10 nos i.e. 25% researchers often logon to these sites, 5 nos i.e. 12.5% do logon several times in a day; 16 nos i.e. 40% do logon once in few days, while 2 nos i.e. 5% do logon once a week and 7 nos i.e. 17.5% do logon occasionally.

Chart 9 shows the friendship status of the researchers. It shows that 11
nos i.e. 27% researchers have less than 10 friends on SNSs, 18 nos i.e. 45% have 10-49 friends, 3 nos i.e. 7.5% have 50-99 friends, 6 nos i.e. 15% have 100-200 friends and only 2 nos i.e. 5% have more than 200 friends on SNSs. It emphasized that SNSs can be a good platform for information sharing.

Chart 10 shows that researchers have less difficulty while using these sites. It shows that 1 no i.e. 2.5% feels it is very difficult to use these sites while 1 no i.e. 2.5% found them moderately difficult, 12 nos i.e. 30% average, on the other hand 8 nos i.e. 20% felt it is moderately easy and finally 17 nos i.e. 42.5% found them most easy to use SNSs.
Chart 6 indicates the duration period, for which the respondents use SNSs. It shows that 4 nos i.e. 10% researchers were using the SNSs from period of less than a month, similarly 3 nos i.e. 7.5% researchers were using from 1-6 months, 1 no i.e. 2.5% was using from 6 month to a year, Likewise 14 nos i.e. 35% were using from 1-2 years, 10 nos i.e. 25% were using from 2-3 years and 8 nos i.e. 20% researchers were using for long time i.e. above 3 years.

Chart 8 shows obstacles which were faced by the researchers while

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accessing SNSs. It shows that 3 nos i.e. 7.5% researchers were not interested in joining these sites, while 7 nos i.e. 17.5% have joined these once but don’t enjoy doing it therefore they left. On the other hand 1 no i.e. 2.5% researchers felt that these sites are against their religion, while 7 nos i.e. 17.5% were denied access by university and 14 nos i.e. 35% thinks it's time consuming.

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MAJOR FINDINGS

The following are the major findings of the study:

1. The study finds that the majority of the scholars i.e. 70% are between the age group of 20-30 years;
2. The Face book is the most popular SNS used by all categories of respondents followed by Orkut;
3. Majority of the scholars i.e. 65% use PCs for accessing SNSs, followed by Laptop;
4. The main purpose of using SNSs is interacting with family and friends followed by to find useful information;
5. The friendship nature of scholars on SNSs is mostly personal friends;
6. 40% researchers' login SNSs once in few days, followed by 25% regularly;
7. The study finds that 45% researchers have on an average 10-49 friends/colleagues on SNSs;
8. The study found that use of SNSs is very easy and user friendly;
9. 35% scholars are using SNSs from 1-2 years. It indicates that using SNSs is not a new phenomenon among researchers;
10. It is observed that most of the scholars are aware of SNSs;
11. An important finding of the study is that use of SNSs is time consuming.

8 CONCLUSION

The popular concept of Social Networking Sites (SNSs) is associated with the broader context of Web2.0, which is a recent phenomenon among scholars. These are providing various ways to interact with each other. Several features of the SNSs such as profile surfing, posting of messages, photos, videos, making friends, join communities etc. are the medium by which scholars keep updates and share professional and personal information. It is an area of common interest of libraries. The benefits of SNSs can be utilized for implementing new services in libraries and informing their clientele about recent happenings.
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