Success Stories of Using Social Network in eLearning

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Abstract – It is generally agreed that both eLearning and Social Media are growing very fast. Therefore, it would be natural to use Social Media in eLearning. This paper presents Social Media Tools for eLearning, Social Media for Marketing of eLearning, Social Media in University-Level eLearning, Social Media in K12 eLearning, and Social Media in Corporate eLearning.

Keywords – eLearning, Social Media, Marketing of eLearning, University-level eLearning, K-12 eLearning, Corporate eLearning.

1. INTRODUCTION

Searching Google for “using Social Media in e-learning”, 164 million results were found. A few examples will be given here. One of the most interesting results is “100+ examples of use of Social Media for Learning” [3]. The list of 100+ includes many cases of using Social Media in eLearning, such as blogs, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Flickr, Ning, Slideshare, Social bookmarking, Google Docs, Wikispaces, and etc. Another result is “Social Media + Learning is more than Social Media” [6]. With millions of results from Google searches, only selected examples of literature review will be presented in this paper. They are only Social Media Tools for eLearning, Social Media for Marketing of eLearning, Social Media in University-Level eLearning, Social Media in K12 eLearning, and Social Media in Corporate eLearning.

2. SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS FOR ELEARNING

Searching “Social Media Tools for eLearning” in Google, 11.9 million entries were found.

From <Theelearningcoach.co>, “10 Social Media Tools for Learning” [19]. The tools are 1) Audacity which is an inexpensive option to Podcast, 2) Edublogs Campus which is a software to centralize and manage blogs within an institution, 3) Elgg which is a social networking engine and publishing platform for running your own social networking site on a server, 4) “Go To Meeting” and “Go To Webinar” which are an interactive webinar and live presentation, 5) Google Collaboration Tools for Education and Business which is Google Apps including: Google Docs, Google Video, Google Sites, Google Wave, and Google Conversations, 6) MindMeister which is a browser-based service for creating mind map, 7) TalkShoe which is a free web-based
service to create your own radio talk show, 8) VoiceThread which is a tool for having discussions around media, such as a presentation video or image, 9) Wikispaces which is a software for creating and editing interlinked web pages, and 10) Yammer which is a microblogging platform that provides a secure enterprise microblogging platform.

From “Revolutionizing E-Learning: Innovation through Social Networking Tools” [18], several examples were given. The one presented here is <Smarthistory, khanacademy…> [9]. Smarthistory is a free, not-for-profit, multimedia eBook which may be used as a substitute to traditional history book. It is made possible by generous grants from the Samuel H. Kress Foundation. It will continue to add new material and it is looking forward to broader collaborations with history professionals. As of February 2012, Smarthistory covers the history from 400 CE to 1907.

From <www.trivantis.com> “eLearning Industry Leader Hosts Social Media Contest” [21], social media contest for eLearning was presented. The contest ran for about 1 month, from 12 January 2012 to 15 February 2012. Twitter and FaceBook were used concerning eLearning projects to discuss, to post questions, to provide answers, and to share experiences.

From <waithash.com>, “How to Use Social Media as a Learning Tool” [23], Social Media allows users to make information available, help learners to connect, help learners to engage, help learners to collaborate, and help learners to share eLearning experience.

The tools are search engines, especially Google Scholar; Blogs, especially by professionals; Twitter; FaceBook; File-Sharing and Collaborations especially Dropbox.com, Google docs, and Wikis; Video sharing especially YouTube educational videos; LMS, such as Moodle, Sakai, Blackboard, etc, and Social Bookmarking, such as delicious.com.

3. SOCIAL MEDIA FOR MARKETING OF ELEARNING

In the paper on “ASEAN University-Level eLearning” [4], the first author stated that marketing is a very important factor for success or failure of eLearning programs. The purpose of eLearning marketing is to recruit students. University of Phoenix has been highly profitable because it was highly successful in recruiting students. UKeU (UK eUniversity) was disbanded because it got very small number of students comparing to the target. In the paper on “Recruiting Student for University-Level eLearning” [5], the authors discussed social network for recruitment of students.

A. H. Omer presented five Social Media marketing tips for eLearning [11]: 1) Use blogs to discuss cost effective training, authoring tools, instructional design strategies and theories. 2) Use LinkedIn to engage in discussions. 3) Use YouTube to demonstrate your products. 4) Offer free courses to induce students to take paid courses. 5) Use Twitter and FaceBook to inform potential customers.

L. Overton discussed how to make Social Media work in eLearning [13]: 1) Master the art of conversation, especially to engage potential students on what they are interested in. 2) Understand your audiences, especially by observing your staff and students’ reactions. 3) Find where the conversations are happening and go there. Popular social sites are FaceBook, Yahoo, LinkedIn, Skype, and Twitter. 4) Sharing great content is at the heart of engagement, especially contents that are useful and informative, to keep the potential students wanting more. 5) Master the tools that align to business strategy. If you do not know the tools well, you cannot use them effectively. It you do not know the tools well, you cannot use them effectively.

J. Ballas shared his insight on FaceBook marketing [1]: 1) Online to
exceed print advertising in 2012. By 2016, the projection is US$ 62 billion for online, and US$ 32 billion for printed. 2) Two key types of Facebook marketing which are free by posting your content on your business FaceBook page and run competitions and surveys, and paid to accelerate your presence online.

W. Oppelbauer presented his idea on Using Twitter in eLearning [12]; 1) Follow the Subject Matter Experts (SME). Let the students tweet questions to SME to answer. 2) Follow the Subject. Use a hash tag to keep the conversation going. 3) Build a community to let learners share there thoughts.

4. SOCIAL MEDIA IN UNIVERSITY-LEVEL ELEARNING

From P. Signorelli “Revolutionizing E-Learning” [18], examples of use of Social Media in eLearning are Wikipedia-style collaborations, Social Networking Tools such as Online Discussion Boards, Live Chats, Twitter, YouTube, and Communities.

From E. Hoffman “Social Media and Learning Environment” [7], Social Media changed authority from the teachers to the students. Teaching-elearning initiatives in higher education has been under-funded, poorly coordinated, and too rapidly moved to the new high-prestige trend. Hoffman stated that social networking provides novel affordances for computer supported collaborative learning.

From S. Minocha “A Study on the Effective Use of Social Software” [10], educational goals for using Social Media are: initiating new ways of learning, giving control to student, providing transferable skills, supporting peer-to-peer learning, enhancing reflective learning, creating a digital identity, and fostering social engagement.

Benefits from using Social Media in Higher Education include retention, socialization, collaborative learning, student engagement, sense of control and ownership, problem solving, sense of achievement, visibility of artifacts created, integrative of multimedia, adding novelty and excitement to the learning environment, overcoming isolation and geographic difference, and students’ positive perception of the teachers.

From <www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/new-university-of-phoenix-social-network-connects...> [14], on 24 September 2010, University of Phoenix announced “PhoenixConnect” which is its own Social Network for students, alumni and faculty. During the first week of announcement the adoption rate was 95%. As of 31 August 2010, Phoenix has 470,800 students. Some of the resources offered by PhoenixConnect include academic for professional networking, tools for collaboration and discussion, personalized profiles, directory of all active PhoenixConnect Communities, recent activity feed, and widget displaying people with similar interest.

From the University of Phoenix web [22], PhoenixConnect provides academic and professional conversations, answers to questions, updates activities stream, user profile, status updates, network and connect, joining or starting a group, keeping up with University news and announcements, and establishing privacy settings.

From <www.capellacommons.com> [2], as of 30 June 2011, Capella University has more than 38,000 students from 50 states of the US and 59 other countries. Capella Commons is the Social Networking portal from Capella University students, faculty and staff to share: blogs, podcasts, photos, and others. capella also has facebook pages: capella official facebook page, capella’s military and veterans facebook page, capella’s mental health facebook page, capella’s Higher Education FaceBook page, capella’s doctoral degree programs faceBook page.
5. SOCIAL MEDIA IN K12 ELEARNING

From thejournal.com. “5 K-12 E-Learning Trends” [20], B. McCrea stated that social networking such as FaceBooking and Twittering became popular in classrooms. K-12 sector should use social networking to its advantage. A Program Director at Walden University recommended that faceBook, twitter, delicious, and diigo. Using Diigo, teachers can set up electronic reading lists and post assignments; students can access on their own time and read the posting without having to wait for email.

From K. Waters. “Google+ May Open Social Networking for Some K-12 Schools” [24]. The author commented that special care must be used to safeguard K-12 students’ personal information in using Social Network. Because of privacy concern, K-12 schools have blocked student access to FaceBook, Twitter, and Flicker. With better privacy safeguard, many K-12 schools have allowed Google+. As of August 2011, Google+ has more than 25 million users. To control users’ privacy, Google+ provides a feature called “circle” for users to divide their contacts into groups and which group can access which information.

From C. Kaufman. “Top 10 e-learning trends in Kindergarten to grade 12” [8], the author stated that eLearning has become a part of K-12 standard curriculum, and social networking provides new level of interaction, communication collaboration.

The K-12 generation is familiar with social networking forums. When properly supervised, Twitter and FaceBook have a place in K-12 classrooms. At the Science Leadership Academy in Philadelphia, K-12 students use social networking to send message to each other, share documents and blogs, upload their work onto school network, and make their work available thru podcast.

6. SOCIAL MEDIA IN CORPORATE ELEARNING

From S. Rogers. “Corporate eLearning Coming to a Boardroom Near You” [15], the author stated that corporate eLearning is the way of the future, are bringing people together even when they are thousands of miles apart, cutting costs, and reducing the environment impact of business travel. Social Media is definitely a part of corporate eLearning. Technology for corporate eLearning are social networking, multi-authored blogs, social networking games, instant messaging, and video conferencing.

From B. Schlenker. “Corporate eLearning Strategies and Development” [16], the author stated that Social Media is no longer a trend but the main stream of communicating; Social Media is not a skill but a practice; knowledge of how to use Social Media is gained by being embedded in it; corporate eLearning developers should (If not already done) get a Twitter account, join LinkedIn group, join FaceBook group, etc. For Learning Development Practitioners if your corporate does not have Social Media solution in place, do not think about it in your design. If your corporate has Social Media solution in place, get people to connect, participate, and engage. Training Managers should engage with their IT department, begin conversations on how to leverage Social Media functionality. If the IT department is already familiar with Social Media, find out who’s using it, how and when in order to use Social Media in eLearning effectively.

From A. Shea. “Corporate Learning and Social Media ROI: Show Me the Money” [17], the author stated that what you get from Social Media depends on what you put into it; ROI on Social Media on Corporate eLearning may be difficult to determine; and in Social Media, there are many indices to use such as number of Tweets, number of FaceBook likes, number of Visit to blogs, number of Comments, and etc.
HP showed how an Integrated Social Media Center for sales force corporate eLearning training saved US$ 7,500 per learner compared to traditional training. Chrysler cut delivery time of training to dealer from 2 weeks to a single day. Cisco created an integrated Social Media platform with videos, podcasts, learning modules, games, discussion forums, communities, mentoring connections, individual profiles, site-wide search, wikis, blogs, tagging, social bookmarking, polls, and RSS feeds. Cisco was honoured for its Social Media in Corporate eLearning with Brandon Hall Group Gold Award.

7. CONCLUDING REMARKS
Social Media have been successfully used in eLearning. All parties concerned must follow information on the use of Social Media in eLearning. Those who have not used Social Media in eLearning must try to do so. Those who have used Social Media in eLearning must find more ways to use it more effectively for the benefits of all concerned.

REFERENCES


