Abstract

Students readily adopt new forms of social media as they come online. It is becoming increasingly important that they achieve a level of competency in the use and understanding of social media. And while students know how to use the various forms of social media, do they really “know” how to use them effectively? Today, more than any time in history, what you have to say and how you say it will follow you for the rest of your life. How can we educate our students about the impact of social media on business, society and self? How can we educate our students about the advantages and pitfalls of using social media? How can we show students how to harness social media for their own individual needs? And how can we use various forms of social media to make the learning process more engaging? In the movie Gladiator, the character Maximus Decimus Meridius says to his men before a battle, “What we do in life, echoes in eternity.” (Gladiator, 2000) The same can be said of our interactions via social media.

Figure 1: Social Media

Students can identify them - Businesses do list them - Educators should know them.
Young people readily adopt new forms of social media as they come online. First it was Email and AOL Instant Messaging, then My Space, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and Google Plus. Twitter is a phenomenon for social change, launching as a public company on November 7, 2013 through an IPO. Google, Yahoo and Microsoft are all vying for eyeballs and collecting personal information about their users. Today, more than any time in history what you have to say and how you say it will follow you for the rest of your life. In the movie Gladiator, Russell Crowe’s character says to his men before a battle, “What we do in life, echoes in eternity.” (Gladiator, 2000) The same can be said of our interactions via social media.

And while students know how to use the various forms of social media, do they really “know” how to use them effectively? Students need to be aware of appropriate uses of social media. Having an online expression of their selves is a natural extension of personality for today’s students. As professors, we must be familiar with and understand how to use these same online forums in order to guide and educate them in how to properly represent themselves online. We must show them the ways that social media impacts the business world and their world.

**Discussion**

First, let’s define social media. *Social media is defined as the online interactions that allow people and businesses to communicate and share ideas, personal information, and information about products and services.* (Pride, Hughes, Kapoor, 2014). Social media is a communication tool. This communication is exchanged between businesses, organizations, communities, and individuals and is created by those users in a variety of forms such as posts, blogs, chats, tweets, video and audio files and discussion forums.

There are several types of social media. There is social networking, bookmarking sites, social news, media sharing, blogging, forums. Many of these types of social media may overlap
in ways of usage. The applications that correlate to the icons on page 1 can be found in Appendix A. A detailed list of various types of social media can be found in Appendix B (On Blogging Well, 2010). Of the 15 most popular sites as of May 2015 Facebook is at the top with 900,000,000 monthly visitors followed by Twitter with 310,000,000, LinkedIn with 255,000,000, Pinterest with 250,000,000, Google+ with 120,000,000 and Tumblr with 110,000,000. (eBizMBA guide, 2015).

The following diagram (A) indicates the percentage of online adults who follow social media websites. There is clearly an increase between 2012 and 2014. Diagram (B) indicates the percentage of Facebook users. The largest percentage of Facebook users in this study are college age and college+. (Pew Research Center, 2015).

Table A: Percentage of online adults who use social media websites by year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social media sites, 2012-2014</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LinkedIn</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinterest</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table B: Percentage of online adults who use Facebook

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facebook users</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All internet users</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White, Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black, Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-29</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-49</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-64</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>56*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school grad or less</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College+ (n=685)</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>74*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than $30,000/yr</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30,000-$49,999</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000-$74,999</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$75,000+</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Note: Percentages marked with an asterisk (*) represent a significant change from 2013. Results are significant at the 95% confidence level using an independent t-test.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

What is communicated and how it is communication has become a fluid process. Social media is continually evolving. New applications are constantly being developed and new users are joining the ranks.
Social Media and Business

Not only do individuals use social media but business, both for profit and not-for-profit and government agencies use social media as well. Businesses use social media such as Facebook and Twitter, and even blogs, for promotional purposes, customer service and feedback. Businesses also use social media to provide updates about their product or to simply find out what people are saying about them. The news industry encourages viewers to go to their website to weigh in on a news story and while there, “like” their Facebook page. Talk shows have contests and the home viewers are enticed to go to the show’s webpage to enter and while there can view ads from the show’s sponsors.

Social media has an effect on particular brands and this too drives the economy. Kate Middleton, the Duchess of Cambridge, was wearing a blue polka-dot Jenny Packham dress in her first appearance after giving birth to Prince George. Women crashed the designer’s website in an attempt to buy the dress that was not for sale. Could it be proven that all the activity and discussions on Facebook and Twitter was partly responsible for spawning the “Kate Effect”? (eOnline.com, 2013).

Caroline Kennedy, the US Ambassador to Japan, and other prominent figures have been pressuring President Obama to incorporate into the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement language that bans the hunting of dolphins. Demonstrations have taken place throughout the United States. This issue has gained widespread coverage through tweeting and Facebook. The outcome would have a significant impact on the local economy of many towns in Japan. (Crossbowcommunications.com)
Social Media and Society

A business’s image can also be scathed by social media. For instance, social media has spawned a heightened increase in activity against animal cruelty. The protests against the dolphin hunts in Japan are worldwide. Since the release of The Cove in 2009, international pressure calling on Japan to cease the hunts has increased. Widespread social media coverage includes several prominent Facebook pages, including Ric O'Barry's Dolphin project and the Sea Shepherd (of Whale Wars fame) along with activist groups in Japan and around the world. Through social media posts and live streams of the actual dolphin drives, the Dolphin Project and Sea Shepherd Cove Guardians have brought this issue to a worldwide audience.

I have long been an admirer of Diana Taylor, Animal Advocate and Founder – Dogs for Dolphins. We discussed the impact of social media on SeaWorld and Lolita the Orca.

**SeaWorld:** SeaWorld has been under fire since the release of the documentary 'Blackfish', which exposed the effects of life in captivity on highly intelligent marine mammals by focusing on Tilikum – the largest killer whale in captivity and who is responsible for the deaths of three people.

In the first quarter of 2015, SeaWorld launched a media campaign in an attempt to improve its image. The campaign includes television ads, as well as a social media component called #AskSeaWorld, which invites people to ask the company questions about the whales.

The #AskSeaWorld campaign was declared a failure, as SeaWorld refused to answer many hard-hitting questions about things like mother-calf separation, the regular administration of anti-psychotic drugs, inbreeding, aggression and the effects that living in a concrete tank has on an orca's echolocation. The list of unanswered questions has grown to more than 1,000 as featured on #AnswerTheQ. Advocates continue to hold regular protests at SeaWorld facilities
around the country, all organized on social media. (Taylor, D., Personal Communication, May 2015).

**Lolita the Orca:** We also discussed her interview on Atlanta's WRFG radio with Second Opinion host Melody Paris. (Taylor, D. & WRFG Radio, 2015) The topic was Lolita the Orca. Lolita was captured in the wild and sold to the Miami Seaquarium, where she's been held in the smallest tank in North America for the past 44 years. There are three main issues with Lolita's confinement, which also violate the Animal Welfare Act: her tank doesn't meet minimum size requirements, she has no shade or protection from the elements, and she has not been housed with a species of her kind since Hugo died more than 30 years ago.

On January 17, 2015 more than 1,500 protestors from around the world descended on the Miami Seaquarium to peacefully protest for the "World's Loneliest Orca" to be released to a sea pen in her native waters, where her mother and extended family still live. The march – the largest ever for a captive marine mammal – was augmented by sister marches around the world, including events in London, Seattle, Las Vegas and San Diego.

As a result of the march and weekly protests, dozens of patrons turn away at the gates of the Miami Seaquarium, resulting in lost revenue. Via social media, protests at all Palace Entertainment facilities around the country were launched, impacting revenues of all their facilities, including the Miami Seaquarium. (Taylor, D., Personal Communication, 2015)

Politicians use social media as a medium to convey their messages and to secure campaign funding. There are weekly addresses from the White House covering topics such as the White House Press Briefings to the activities of First Lady Michelle Obama. ([Whitehouse.gov](https://www.whitehouse.gov)). Stories and tweets jammed the information technology highway during the George Washington Bridge lane closures, now referred to as “Bridgegate”.
Social Media and Self

In fall 2013, the Business Management Department met with members of our Business Advisory Committee for our yearly meeting. The members of the committee discussed the impact of social media in their businesses from marketing, to analytics, to scanning for prospective employees. There was much discussion as to what these community business leaders would like to see in our students’ skill set. Students must know which types of social media are relevant for the business. Data analysis of social media and informatics are skills that will make the student more marketable.

Students are often unaware that how they present themselves on social media has an impact on them both personally and professionally. They are creating a personal footprint that is not easily erased. On March 24, 2015 the Brookdale Community College Student Life and Activities and Career Services co-hosted an event on digital privacy. The guest speaker was Cullen Hoback, Director of Hyrax Films. He is known for his 2013 documentary “Terms and Conditions May Apply”. This documentary, narrated by Cullen Hoback and featuring Mark Zuckerberg, exposes what corporations and governments learn about people through Internet and cell phone usage, and what can be done about it ... if anything.” (Terms and Conditions May Apply, 2013).

Mr. Hoback stressed that students must be continually aware of how they represent themselves on social media sites either by self-portrayal or by association with others. He pulled Facebook accounts for two of the attendees and showed them what he could see. Although the audience had a good laugh, and the “victims” were a bit embarrassed, Mr. Hoback’s point was well taken. Social media is totally public information. Students were advised that in order to maintain some control of their accounts there are some basic steps they could take. Examples
were to keep up with the privacy settings and change them if necessary, create a fake profile so you can see what others may see, don’t “friend” someone you don’t know and, finally, ask yourself “would I be comfortable if this were shown in a room full of people?”

It is surprising to what extent people are being tracked online. Mr. Hoback stated there are at least 1500 pieces of data on the average person. (Personal Communication, March 24, 2015). Future employers can purchase digital profiles of prospective employees. Finally, there were two statements made by Mr. Hoback that reinforces the issue of privacy in social media.

“What is private today may be public tomorrow.”

“If the product is free, you’re the product.” (Personal communication, March 24, 2015)

Professionals use LinkedIn as the recognized online resource for posting their resumes and making contacts in their field. Regardless of what social media platform is popular, in vogue or relevant the one thing they all have in common is they are inherently public. Employers regularly do background checks on prospective job candidates that includes a review of what has been posted online. Having an online presence can be used as a strategic advantage in making connections, learning about your profession and searching for job opportunities.

On April 2, 2015 my colleague Paul Rinaldi and I conducted a LinkedIn workshop for students at Brookdale Community College. Professor Rinaldi, an adjunct instructor of Business Management and a Small Business Development Consultant for Monmouth & Ocean Counties, facilitated the workshop. He stressed to the students the importance of having a professional online presence on LinkedIn. Having a complete profile, optimizing your site with relevant keywords, understanding how to build relationships and maintaining momentum by keeping your LinkedIn site current are critical. The students were surprised that their sites could also be
viewed anonymously! (Rinaldi, P., Personal Communication, April 2, 2015) That was an eye-opener and reinforced the lack of privacy concerns that are prevalent today.

In her book, Quick Takes: How to Win a Job in Today’s Market, Mona Vaccarella, President of Gaming Hospitality Experts LLC, and Vice President of HR Consulting and Placement Services shared her advice for job seekers on being “E-approachable”. If you are a millennial or a tech savvy GenX’er the following advice is offered:

- Think formal, not casual. Use spell check and follow proper English rules.
- No abbreviations or icons 😊. Be professional. U r not talking 2 ur bf.
- Don’t forget to talk. A Millennial can carry on an entire conversation without actually speaking.
- Dress for success. Don’t pass up an opportunity to impress. (Pauls, Vaccarella, Crivellone, 2009)

I wanted to get an idea of my current students’ personal thoughts on social media. In the spring 2015 term my teaching schedule consisted of six courses not including internship students. Four of the six courses were Introduction to Business, two face-to-face and two online. This is primarily a lecture course with some technology enhancements. Some components are delivered through the Canvas course management system. Canvas is utilized to facilitate discussions outside of class, provide supplements to the lectures, to submit assignments, gain access to a variety of study aids, and to monitor grades and attendance.

I conducted a survey in two of my face-to-face Introduction to Business classes concerning the students’ use of social media in relation to classroom instruction. I asked four questions to determine if the students felt they would be more engaged in the classroom if some aspect of social media was incorporated into the curriculum. The method was very informal. The
survey was administered verbally and the responses were written and collected by me. Students were told to answer anonymously, although some chose to self-identify. I received 30 responses (see Appendix C for the questions and a complete list of responses.)

To my surprise the results were somewhat mixed. First, the choice to use Facebook is not surprising. According to the study by Pew Research Center, (Diagram B, page 4) Facebook commands the largest percentage of online users. The 30 responses yielded the following results. Over fifty percent (53.3%) would like to see Facebook or some type of social media or technology incorporated into the curriculum. Many suggested this be in conjunction with group work. Others felt that group work only was sufficient and some felt the class was fine as presented. I was surprised at the number who wanted group work, with or without technology. I surmise that this would be most acceptable if the group convened during class time as opposed to be required to meet outside of class time! I shared these results with Byron Shafer, a consultant and Business Analyst and my husband. He shared this observation: "I thought the one comment by a student who was afraid of looking stupid in a written post online is telling. The same student would probably have no hesitation posting comments on other Social Media, but when it is an Official college site, they think about it differently. Perhaps that is a good thing." (Shafer, Personal Communication, May 2015).

Conclusion

In summary, it is critical that we teach students the impact of social media on:

1. Business and economic markets - Insight
   a. Advertising
   b. Marketing
   c. Professional networking, job search, screening, vetting

2. Society and culture - Impact
   a. Political messages
   b. Propaganda
c. Community affairs
d. Polls, media, and popularity
e. Trends and forums

3. “Self” - Imprint
   a. Resume
   b. Search patterns, postings, photos, friends
   c. Accomplishments
   d. Resource management
   e. Health
   f. Education
   g. Career
   h. Interests

While social media has become the norm, it is important that our students move beyond the typical ways they understand and use social media. *Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants* state “Our students have changed radically. Today’s students are no longer the people our educational system was designed to teach.” (Prensky, 2001). We, as educators, must move beyond the typical ways we deliver this information. In *Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants Part II*, Prensky states research by social psychologists shows that people who grow up in different cultures do not just think about things differently, that actually think differently. (Prensky, 2001). Educators would be wise to find ways to incorporate social media, or other forms of technology, into their curriculum whether it be the use of Facebook, Twitter, or even the flipped classroom.

My colleague, John Masiello, Brookdale Community College Professor of Economics stated, “As educators one of our primary roles is communication. For the bulk of our students, social media is the preferred and primary form of communication. Are we listening?” (John Masiello, Personal Communication, May 2015)

If the goal of the college is to prepare students to be successful in the business world, regardless of their chosen profession, then effective use and understanding of Social Media is absolutely required!
References


Video Website: http://www.imdb.com/title/tt2084953/?ref_=ttco_co_tt

This is a list of the icons from left to right, top to bottom.

Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, LinkedIn, Google Plus (Google+),
Pinterest, Flickr, Share This, RSS Feed, Tumblr
Skype, Dribble, StumbleUpon, Vimeo, DeviantArt
Evernote, Digg, Forrst (now called Tavern), Blogger, Instagram (old icon)

Appendix B

The following are 23 Types of Social Media sites from On Blogging Well with brief descriptions and examples.

Blogs — A blog is a type of social media. The most popular free blogging platforms are

WordPress.com, TypePad, and Blogger.
Social Networking Sites — Focuses on building relationships among people with similar interests and activities. Examples: Facebook, MySpace

Social News — Users submit and vote on news stories. Examples: Digg, PopURLs

Social Measuring — Measure the quality of submitted content. Examples: Technorati, BlogPulse

Microblogging — Differs from traditional blogging because the content is delivered in short bursts of information. Example: Twitter

Social Bookmarking — Allows users to share, organize, search bookmarks of web resources. Examples: Del.ici.ous, Diigo (formerly Furl)

Social Q&A — Users can submit or answer questions. Examples: Answers.com, Yahoo! Answers

Video Sharing — Users can upload and comment on videos. Examples: YouTube, Vimeo

Photo Sharing — Users can upload and comment on photos. Some photo-sharing sites offer a user license agreement that allows bloggers and website owners to use images. Examples: Flickr, PhotoBucket

Social Search — Some search engines have evolved beyond providing search results into to a social media communities where users can create profiles and interact through email groups. Examples: Google, Yahoo!

Professional Networks — This type of social media site is a virtual Rolodex, enabling business professionals to recommend one another, share information about industry-related events, post resumes, and other features. Examples: LinkedIn, Plaxo

Niche Communities — Niche networking has grown beyond the message boards of old into full-fledged communities.

Social Email — Newly released Google Buzz has transformed Gmail into a stream of consciousness for email contacts.

Comment Communities — Blog comments have hopped aboard the social media bandwagon through sites such as Disqus.

Regional Social Media Sites — This type of social media site is growing in popularity as the world wide web seeks to become more personal. Contributing to news sites, such as Examiner.com, is a great way to position yourself as an authority within both your community and your niche.

Podcasting Communities — Podcasting communities are social networks that help connect podcasters, advertisers, and listeners. Example: Blubrry.com
Blog Networks — Similar to niche communities, blog networks are usually a large collection of blogs. Sometimes they cover a broad arena of topics, others are small and more tightly focused. Examples: Gawker, b5Media, 9Rules

Blogging Communities — Broader than niche communities and not exclusive like blog networks, blogging communities encourage bloggers to share and interact with one another as well as create regular blog posts. Examples: BlogHer, LiveJournal

Presentation-sharing Sites — Sharing presentations online is becoming a very popular way to set yourself apart from the crowd in your field. Examples: SlideShare

Content-driven Communities — Also known as “Wikis.” This type of social media is popping up everywhere. The largest and most well known, of course, is Wikipedia.

Product-based Communities — Many sites that started as a means of buying and selling products online have incorporated the community aspect into their sites. The biggest sites in this type of social media are Ebay and Amazon.com.

Review & Recommendation Sites — Review almost anything in an online community-based setting. Examples: TripAdvisor, Lonely Planet, Where I’ve Been

Social Media Sites that Defy Definition — There are several social media sites that march to the beat of their own drum. Example: Squidoo

Appendix C

The following questions were asked of the students. There students were advised to answer anonymously although some chose to self-identify.

1. Would you like to see some aspect of social media incorporated into the teaching methodology?

2. Would the incorporation of social media increase your level of engagement in the class?

3. What type of social media would you like to see included into the course?

4. Provide any comments on the current teaching style and other suggestions you may have that would increase your level of engagement.

The following are the exact responses received from 30 students in two sections of Introduction to Business.
• I liked the way the class was constructed. Trying to incorporate social media, to me, is not necessary. I believe having in class projects using phones is the best way.

• Make a Facebook group that everyone in the class can interact with each other.

• Use social media, i.e. Facebook, to form more accessible forums and study groups than Canvas has available.

• Use more visual aids like a PowerPoint. Maybe class activities to get people involved.

• Use social media to share information with the students because students more actively use and check social media then the Brookdale-provided utilities.

• PowerPoint presentations – class teaches certain part of chapter/use videos and have the students ask questions to the class.

• It’s hard for me to write on Canvas because it makes me nervous to look stupid. I’d rather say it out loud in class and look dumb that way because people could chime in and add their questions or concern in a more comfortable and relaxed environment.

• Group activities helped me meet more people in the class which helped me feel more comfortable asking questions.

• One thing to look up every class on phone or laptop how social media impacts businesses. Assign a product; see how it is promoted through social media. Thank you for a great class. I really enjoyed all of our discussions.

• Group projects would be fun, especially with something like a Facebook group as a communication tool from home.

• Work in trending topics on Twitter. Look under #Discover. Trending topics #Discover.

• Less personal project, more group projects & discussions.

• I enjoyed the class the way it was. I chose the classroom setting vs. online because I enjoy the personal interaction. The only thing that I can think of to add to the class and get students interacting more is to group students by their interests and have them come up with a business and have assignments throughout the class pertaining to the chapter/unit.

• Group activities
  o Assign group chapters to outline & present. “I don’t read home”
  o Games in beginning semester 4 interaction & acquainting
  o Review class B4 test include jeopardy

• How companies represent themselves on social media.
• I would love to have more examples of Social Media used in the business world and how businesses use social media. I loved the movie learning history in business and how and why certain businesses were created. May use the Internet (smart board) to take a trip. I loved how you teach!

• Current events, business articles, more group projects.

• Have competitions with stocks and such; make a Facebook group so even when class is over and the semester ends people can still talk. Trip to businesses in NYC.

• Organize debates on current events that relate to ideas in that unit before every exam. Winning team gets extra credit? (They can work together outside of class using social media.)

• Sit in a big giant circle on the first day of class and play games.

• Field trip at the end of the semester. You can plan together and everyone can engage.

• You’re seriously the best professor ever and I loved being in your class.

• Show resources on how to research company.

• Incorporate company media and analysis of marketing plans.

• Instead of doing a single person project with your own company make it a group project.
  o Gets the student working in groups and using technology to get the project done.
  o Split the work up between the group and they can even present the project to the class.
  o Involves group work, technology, and even more interest in the project.

• If you can use the overhead more it would add to the class. Perhaps play videos that correlate with the topics we are covering.

• Have the class work together in groups and have them teach the class about a chapter or a certain part and make them teach it by using a real life situation so that the class understands the material better.

• Use social media to the students/teachers advantage.

• Bring in computers or smart devices to class and after lecture put together group projects to center on the lesson taught.

• Have us say what we think a certain term means in our own words and correct us if we are wrong, because the definitions on the test are not the same from the book.