

Social networking sites: new "face" of communication

مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي: "الوجه" الجديد للتواصل

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Abstract:

The development of technical networks has been important in the development of social media on the Internet and mobile phones, making the world a global village with the social networks that make us talk about the Internet as if the geographical world doubled with a large invisible networks

The strong growth of information and communications technologies is a challenge, for both studies focusing on social communication and those dealing with the uses of these technologies. Sociology and its fields define the importance of social networks, whether from the productive or creative side in terms of publication, distribution and reception or in terms of production of new values

But sociologists have only recently become interested in them, because in fact, these new technologies require us to re-examine the social methodologies and analyzes that have so far relied on social communication in real life. In this article we will try to identify it closely.

Keywords: Social networking sites; Electronic identity; Web 2.0; Communication.

ملخص:

كان تطور الشبكات التقنية مهما في تطور مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي داخل الأنترنت والهاتف المحمول، ليصبح العالم قرية عالمية بفضل وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي التي تجعلنا نتحدث عن شبكة أنترنت كما لو كان العالم الجغرافي تضاعف مع شبكة كبيرة غير مرئية.

يعرف علم الاجتماع وميادينه أهمية الشبكات الاجتماعية سواء كان ذلك من الجانب الإنتاجي أو الإبداعي من ناحية نشره وتوزيعه واستقباله أو من حيث إنتاجه لقيم جديدة لكن علماء الاجتماع لم يجعلوها موضوع اهتمام إلا حديثا، سنحاول في هذا المقال التعرف عليها عن كثب.

الكلمات المفتاحية: مواقع الشبكات الاجتماعية. الهوية الالكترونية الويب 2.0؛ الاتصالات.

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1- Introduction

The emergence of the new generation of the Web (2.0) came with the user's participation in the web content, which opened a wide door to build content by expression and discussion, that these sites has become a new space inhabited by individuals from all countries of the world where it showed its effectiveness in social networking, including: Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, SnapChat..

Users interact with each other within the new social networks without censorship or control authority. They can also form the identity they want, which is called "digital identity" or "virtual identity" or "electronic identity", all of these are labels for self-production with the characteristics that the user wants for himself, with which he communicates with users in the network from anywhere in the world. He can also show his life to the public or the life he wants for himself, whether real or imaginary. With this electronic identity and with the absence of the control authority within, many users have the opportunity to express their views freely.

What are these new social networks?

Do social networking sites provide the individual with communication characteristics that he does not find in real world communication?

Social networking sites are increasingly used for services and technologies provided to the individual.

First, we will expose the concepts of the study. Secondly, we will analyze the electronic identity with its characteristics and discuss how the social media substituted the real world communication, and show the latest statistics of registrants around the world for each network site.

Finally, the conclusion of all what social networks provide to users.

2 - Concepts of the study

1- Web 2.0: is a set of applications that allow users to use browser-based software only. So these users can own their own database on the site as well as the ability to control it (...) , Allowing users to express themselves, their interests, and their culture (...) Providing users with interactive systems that allow them to participate in social interaction(Wikipedia:2013)
The technology is what determines the emergence of new interaction on the Internet through advanced applications and programs that allow the user to be the founder of the site that he browses. and that's by adding contents and the ability to control them.

2- Virtual social networking sites: Nicole Ellison and Danah Boyd define social networking as:

Services within the network that allow individuals to build a file that they display to all other users or only to the users of their choice.. this file or account carries a list of users chosen by the owner to see the contents of their file and their relationships, and also know about their relationships and what they offer (Cardon Dominique:2011 p :141) It also enables the possibility of communication in all its forms (visual / audible / written) by creating individual accounts for each user and his / her own authorities to secure his / her information and to communicate with others. The owner of the electronic account can also include many friends to his electronic list among the users of the site and beyond the geographical, temporal and ideological boundaries, without any condition. It also allows the exchange of information of all kinds between the users of the site.

Virtual social networking sites are a version of social networks in a real society within a virtual space. We can replicate all our everyday actions and interactions with others in a virtual space (Rissoan Romain:2011 P28) .

Networking is a way of enhancing, converging, establishing relationships between people and enabling them to interact with each other within a virtual space.¹

Social networking sites or social networks are Web 2.0 services that provide many services to users: creating the identity that the user wants for himself and communicating with other users through it. The content of this communication consists of messages, links, friendship, as well as pictures, videos, articles and information published by the user on his page, the space granted by these sites, allowing him to identify himself and his hobbies and talents and display to others inside, and enables the list of his relationships to like and comment and interact with them.

3. Digital electronic identity: is the image that we can take from a person, group, organization or entity of digital information around them on the Internet.

The electronic identity is what represents the user in the virtual space. The latest technologies are available on social networking sites contribute to self-presentation of personal data to users on the Internet. These data include: age, gender, educational level, tastes, opinions, attitudes, Values, activities and user relationships, even his sexual orientation.

The user puts all of this data on the network, it may be true as it may be false and does not represent who really is, but represents the identity that he wants to communicate with other users and what he wants to appear as. With this electronic identity, which is a form of anonymity.

4. Virtual communities: social gatherings that arise on cyberspace when a group of users is formed around long public debates and interests with enough common sense to form a personal network in cyberspace (Howard Rheingold: 1999 P 32).

Virtual communities are a group of people communicating with each other across computers online, focusing on many topics including health, religion, education, culture, society, sports, pets, children, professional issues, games and more. They are communities made up of groups of people who are in regular contact with each other.

3- Electronic Identity: Communicating in a virtual space:

Individual identity has been a key focus of research in social sciences and has become the focus of TIC studies because it has taken digital form in virtual space. Perhaps the most important scientific questions posed by research, are the forms of self-presentation to the public with this digital identity and how much it corresponds to the real individual identity.

The evolution of the Internet has been accompanied by the development of self-production and presentation techniques on the Web and the formation of a digital identity in which users interact with others within a virtual space. The labels of this identity varied between an electronic identity, a virtual identity and a digital identity.

This identity includes:

Personal data:

(official) includes name, age, gender, educational level, occupation, family status. It also includes the user's religion, his tastes, opinions, attitudes, values, various activities, relationships and his sexual orientation..It is the data he enters himself on the internet.

Informal data:

The user effects on the network are divided into:

- The effects of sailing on the network: sites he visits, forums and blogs he reads and its comments. These effects represent user actions within the network.

Written effects:

It is all that is expressed and published, they represent the effects of what the user thinks and everything that is published on the network including comments, photos and articles ..

Digital identity is all that represents the individual within the virtual space including official data which he puts himself (personal, professional) as well as any activity he performs on the Internet space, Which is the effects that he leaves, whether intentionally or unintentionally, as: expressing himself in networks, participating in a forum by expressing an opinion, evaluating a product on a commercial site or purchasing it, registering a membership in a virtual community on Facebook, publications of all kinds On Flickr, Instagram, or Pinterest sites, videos on Youtube or DailyEmotion, articles on news sites or Facebook, tweets on Twitter, etc.)

Once you type a person's name or nickname on a search engine all these data will show, even if they have been published for years (if the site is not closed). Virtual space is a space that stores everything. All these data and information that constitute the digital identity of the individual represent his personality, his environment, his habits, and enable him to be known by others.

4- Social networking: alternatives to real world communication:

Web 2.0 sites where the user moves from the recipient (Web 1.0) to the social actor who engages in the production of the site's content by writing, commenting, publishing articles, images.

These sites provide space for each user to share with other registered users in the network: messages, links, friendship, photos and videos, articles posted on his page, and others can "like", comment, and interact with each other about it. It allows as well private and public companies to conduct large-scale marketing and facilitate their finding customers, suppliers and partners.

Social networking sites are the most popular digital means, these virtual spaces are inhabited by electronic identities of individuals or organizations that build social networks or relationships based on common links and interests to communicate and interact.

The use of these sites is easy and totally free.

The term social network appeared before the digital appearance. The French sociologist Emmanuel Lazerga defined it as "a set of special relations based on cooperation, co-ordination, support, advice, control and influence among a specific group of social actors (Balague C, Fayon D: 2010 P8) The researcher believes that the social network is not only relationships between individuals but a network of individuals with their own culture and values. Social networks evolved with the emergence of digital and its evolution into Web 2.0, social networks moved from real space to virtual space and took advantage of the speed of communication that characterized the Internet as well as interactivity and content production. Thus, these sites

become a new space that includes a large number of individuals from different countries of the world because they have shown their effectiveness in communication, and on this basis, they are now a state of continuous spread and multiplicity. This tendency to create virtual spaces for communication is the result of the narrowness of the society 's capacity, with its narrow geographical borders, and even "culturally". Social reality is more narrow and "diminishing" and, therefore, more "resigned" to users with their individual and collective identities, which makes the cyber space, wider and more free within the "collective identity" that share the same feelings and the same identities, therefore they tend to it because it has more space than social reality.

The beginning of social networks, was in the late 1990s. It was initially in the form of online gatherings. The first Classmates.com site was launched in 1995 to connect the classmates, then the sites of SixDegrees.com, theglob.com, Tripod in 1996 and 1997, focusing on direct links between people by connecting their interactions with them through chat rooms. These sites then featured user profiles and a private messaging service for a group of friends to share personal information and ideas about various locations.

Although these sites provide services similar to those found in existing social networks, those sites have not been able to generate profits for their owners and have been closed. Then came a set of social networks that could not achieve much success between 1999 and 2001.

By the beginning of 2002, the popularity of virtual social networks peaked and became global with the emergence of three sites, the first of which was Friendster in 2003 and then Bebo and then by the beginning of 2005 ,where the site of the famous American MySpace had a number of views more than google became one of the largest social networks in the world Along with his rival Facebook which also began to spread in parallel with Myspace until 2007, Facebook made it possible to create applications for developers, which increased the number of Facebook users significantly.

According to the latest statistics in October 2018 for the number of registrants around the world, the order was as follows:

Facebook – 2,234 billion

YouTube – 1,900 billion

WhatsApp – 1,500 billion

Messenger – 1,300 billion

WeChat – 1,058 billion

Instagram – 1 milliard

QQ – 803 million

Qzone – 548 million

TikTok – 500 million

Sina Weibo – 431 million

Twitter – 335 million

Reddit – 330 million

LinkedIn – 303 million

Baidu Tieba – 300 million

Skype – 300 million

Snapchat – 291 million

Viber – 260 million

Pinterest – 250 million

LINE – 203 million

Telegram – 200 million (Blog Modérateur: 2019).

Social networking services are services that are established and programmed by major companies. They are called social, because they collect users, whether they are friends or not, to share their activities and interests. Make friends that allow them to share: private, public or instant messages, e-mail, Articles, sketches and files... in the private spaces granted by the network to each user and it's called “account”. These networks operate on two principles:

- Friends of my friends are my friends.
- Users who share the same interests are my friends.

The most important social networks can be mentioned:

Facebook -: a social network with a variety of services including discussion, chat, play, direct and indirect communication (we will detail later).

Twitter: a site that gives the user space in the form of a small code to write what he wants without exceeding 140 characters. At the same time, it is a social network that allow blogs and exchange opinions with others. It started in 2006 as a service via SMS that the user exchanges details of his life with others through it, the site was then developed and used for other purposes as an exchange of views and discussion on current topics.

Gradually, Twitter has become a social network with a huge number of registrars, especially important figures such as politicians and celebrities, providing them with information and news and opening up discussion areas. <https://twitter.com>

Friendster -: Social Network that was founded in 2002 with the first social networking website. Designed for electronic games first, then to connect users and different virtual communities. Used in Asia. <http://www.friendster.com>

Google+ : Social network created by Google, enables users to create a personal page, connect with others, easily connect friends, create separate knowledge groups, share websites, photos, etc. <https://plus.google.com/discover> .

Since Facebook is the most used social network in the world, we chose to analyze its characteristics in this article.

Facebook is a virtual social network that aims to bring people together, whether they know each other or not.

The site started in 2004 and was a closed social network for Harvard students. The network expanded to include all American universities. In 2006, the network became available to all. Facebook allows users to enter their personal information to create a virtual identity with which they interact with other users.

The site is available for use by anyone with a valid e-mail, and allows users to select one or more networks to belong to, such as a high school or geographic area (Tiddan A, Pempek, Yevdokia, Sandra L: 2009 P 230) Each user maintains a "profile" which is a Web page that contains basic information such as Year graduation and specialization, as well as personal information. Users can tell others about what they are doing by changing the "current status" message that appears at the top of the profile

The subscription to the site is free and possible for every user with an email who first enters his / her personal information: name, gender, age, institution of study, year of graduation, state and country, etc. He then receives his own page informing other users of his current status and concerns ..

In this regard, we will discuss facebook and mention the characteristics of this social network and mention the following:

Facebook gives the user the right to control who can see his personal information from other users, whether they are from his circle of his friends or not. He has the right to choose who sees the content of his page. As well as the right to accept or reject any friendship request. The Facebook site respects the privacy of its users by choosing who to authenticate and who enters their pages.

5-Facebook's characteristics

As cited above, facebook is the most used social network in the world, this is why we want to clarify its characteristics and see closely the reasons that make it popular among users.

5-1-The *permanence*:

The information that the user places on his page, the content he shares with others, his mutual comments, and all his interactions on the web do not disappear unless he removes them himself.

This is what distinguishes interaction in virtual social networks from the interaction within real society, the individual can return to the words exchanged with others whenever he wants to, While interaction in everyday's life is instantaneous and unregistered.

5-2-*Classification*:

Facebook's search technology helps users find users who share the same interests and concerns with him, based on the data each user enters on his or her personal page. In this technique virtual communities are formed on the web and groups are homogeneous in terms of their interests, thus forming groups around specific issues such as politics, sex or religion. In this gathering we believe that users can develop a specific culture, and their homogeneous interaction helps them to complete their identities.

5-3-*Copy option*:

With the "Share" button, the user can copy what is published on the interface as it is from any other user's account or from any public page. This technique facilitates the transfer of images, articles, videos, ideas from one space to another without changing its features and thus the transmission of information is not limited in scope.

Invisible Audience: What distinguishes the virtual interaction from real interaction is that when the latter occurs between individuals it is easy to know the listener, but when it occurs on the public default pages and groups, users (the parties to the interaction) can not recognize the identities of those who see the content of their interaction, Any user in the world can register on

the network at any time to access these pages / groups and read the mutual interaction and content posted on it because it remains published unless the user has deleted it. This last feature has: the permanence property, since the content of the interaction remains published. And copy option because any user can copy and share what others have seen on an interaction platform.

The expression of young people on a virtual social network such as Facebook is a “set free” from restrictions, and this liberalization is achieved in three layers:

- Young users are liberated through the mechanisms of virtual society, in this space young people are freed from the authority of adults as a controlling authority about the contents they deal with.
- In order to be more free, the user uses a pseudonym than his real identity through which the user can express and interact without embarrassment about everything inside without being known to his true identity.
- The ability to control who reads the content of his personal page helps the user to express freely away from any authority or entity interfering in the content published.

Despite the high effectiveness of virtual society, its size remains unlimited as it is subject to unfair global distribution. The access to the internet and to computers is still not easy and expensive in some countries. For example, most young people in the United States use Internet services to make income and educational variables more effective.

The services provided by Facebook network are:

- The creation of an account, through which the user can enter its space. The user begins to enter his or her personal information: name, surname, e-mail address, date of birth, gender as basic data, secondary data such as country, occupation, specialization, year of graduation, schools studied, religion, political orientation and interests. Comments & Reviews, Pictures, Videos and Articles.

Through this page, the user connects network relationships with other users, whether he knows them in real life or no, by sending a friendship request and the receiver has the right to accept or reject. The network is expanding the circle of friendships, knowing that this friendship can be canceled at any time if one of them wanted to.

- Public page service: The site gives members the possibility to create a public page, which builds on the subject of the content on which it publishes content related to this subject, each network registrar can view and comment and “like” and interact with others on the content. And the user who created this interaction controls it and delete any comment they does not like and exclude any user. The public page on Facebook allows its originator to provide: a brand, a talent, a product for network users, and its creation takes place in a few minutes.

- Group Creation Service: Allows users with common interests to meet to interact within a particular group.

- Events: The site allows the user to invite users to an occasion on which the date and place of the event are mentioned. It may be suitable for a wedding, ceremony or gathering for any purpose.

- Direct Dialing: Allows the user to chat with his or her friends directly, whether through text chat or video chat. The process of communication among members does not require permanent attendance, since any member may leave another member a text message or a picture, and the other can reply in the same manner without meeting simultaneously.

4- Conclusion

The technologies and characteristics of these network, the diversity, the ease of communication and the multi-use, make it easy to expand and use them to the fullest and in record time.

In addition to the fact that this space is absent in the control authorities, making the violation of laws and non-respect easy, Which gives users an incentive to practice "deviant" behaviors.

On social networks such as Facebook, the user shows that he is "the best" and rules the other through a positive evaluation of himself. Social networks are a refuge that provides the user with all the necessary gratifications that the community has not provided, or rather, which deprives the user of their social abuse. The use here represents a flight from the real society's narrowness towards a more welcoming and uncontrollable source of control.

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