

LEARNING AND COMMUNICATION THROUGH WORLD WIDE WEB: CASE STUDY OF BUSINESS STUDENTS OF KARACHI

*Dr. Farah Lalani
Rafia Mallah*

ABSTRACT

The World Wide Web has become an integrated part of almost every business in the world today. It is shaping the very aspect of processes in today's fast-moving era. Wikis, blogs, social networks have made online communication easier, cheaper and effective in this modern tech-savvy world. Not only the businesses but also the business students have started to adopt this for their learning and communication, as it provides the ease in writing and publishing online. This paper highlights the increasing usage of World Wide Web and different social networking technologies as a means of learning and communication for business students in particular.

INTRODUCTION

Business studies differ to great extent from those of medical or engineering studies as business studies are more applicative and not so technical. There are parts of business studies that are technical, but it is mostly about the concepts. It is not only about the theories that students learn in the classroom but it is about applying the concepts in different pragmatic situations that vary. For the very reason, business students seek new sources of learning for innovative ideas for their projects. Learning with blogs and wikis and similar sources brings new dimensions and modes of information for a business student. They get benefited with different forms of these applications for better learning. There are number of sources in the form of these applications that provide matter that is useful for a business student in better understanding the scope of the business studies and it is relation to practical situations, where things are different in entirety from those that are presented in a book in shape of theory. For such purpose, different applications that are filled with mass of information and learning opportunities may be used to seek help from. The use of blogs help

them post and extract articles, newsletters, international case-studies and other such informative papers for their business related subjects, while wikis help them in seeking encyclopedic information, which is used for longer time period. It has become a fact that business students have started to learn to work in a collaborative way through Web.

SIGNIFICANCE OF WEB FOR BUSINESS STUDENTS

The increasing scope and usage of online-sharing services has been due to other reasons as well. Students find no or very few technical barriers in uploading their content online. This makes the sharing easy and doesn't require lot of time. It used to be not so hassle free for an individual to convey his or her thoughts to the world, even after the invention of internet (http://books.google.com.pk/books?id=5J0srmGnK3YC&pg=PA261&lp_g=PA261&dq=effective+communication+via+web+2.0&source=bl&ots=rt7yoPOJe9&sig=IVZoGL3iGLBNqUJeuSP58HyR_GM&hl=en&sa=X&ei=i7ZUOmOFIu8AShtYHIAQ&ved=0CC8Q6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=effective%20communication%20via%20web%202.0&f=false). Not just in conveying the thoughts or knowledge to others, but it used to be not so easy to find so many sources of information. This gap is filled by these applications. The quickness and user-friendliness of these Web applications has also sidelined the prevailing email system. For business students, it is far more convenient to publish information to and obtain the same from a place that is easily accessible rather than to email it to everyone. Websites of social groups and networks enjoy huge number of hits every day. These groups help students upload their assignments, projects, presentations etc. as well as they are able to seek help from the teachers on the same group. (http://books.google.com.pk/books?id=221Ds8Hf80C&pg=PA113&lp_g=PA113&dq=effective+communication+via+web+2.0&source=bl&ots=JVAp5bunzv&sig=2zXyuSZ4Rsm32AAPVoXBokoW3zU&hl=en&sa=X&ei=i7Z-UOmOFI-u8AShtYHIAQ&ved=0CEUQ6AEwBA#v=onepage&q=effective%20communication%20via%20web%202.0&f=false).

These applications maintain privacy of content as well as provide the scope of publishing it on a wider scale for more people to view the matter. Due to the reason that the information gets visible to audience on a wider scale, not just one's friends but other people

can also share their views about it. That is where the online form of diversity comes into play where different minds work together to make the content better and refine it for usage in future on a better scale. Sharon Hoskinson (2008), Director, McGuire Center for Entrepreneurship says, 'We wanted to infuse and embed these technologies, not as add-ons, but as integrated parts of the course.'

Feedback has always been an integral part of communication. The communication process cannot be completed without providing feedback (http://books.google.com.pk/books?id=QvTQV_txvb0C&printsec=frontcover&dq=effective+communication&source=bl&ots=tIKKQaY1d&sig=LIqMU2QFbr0pNmd6rZUM6oG1GnI&hl=en&sa=X&ei=MrZUNjKFZSw8ASarIC4Bg&ved=0CC0Q6AEwAA#).

Same applies to the business students as well. Business students are often asked to launch a new product or start a new business venture. They have some raw ideas in their mind, which need to be refined. Web has given this process a new direction. Students can now put their ideas online on a forum and can get to know what others think about it. There may be some loopholes in the concept that can be corrected by some reader, who is a stranger to you. It also helps business students to take advantage of others' expertise (Burns 2007). This in a way encourages sharing of knowledge and also at times triggers such discussions that change the direction of one's life. The students are then supposed to discuss the queries on the online forum provided to them. There is a common forum for all the students internationally. This also gives an opportunity to get hold of the concepts that are prevalent in other societies. This new concept of virtual education for students around the globe has been introduced by Web students can take tutorials and exams on net, and can even do certain certification online. It has made business students more updated, more knowledgeable, more confident and more interactive, which is considered to be the top quality that a business student should possess (http://books.google.com.pk/books?id=89d6y1wPqC4C&pg=PA164&lp_g=PA164&dq=effective+communication+via+web+2.0&source=bl&ots=277c_2oNA&sig=3r2Sfalym2m4llkp1C1Bj4SLeFk&hl=en&sa=X&ei=i7ZUOmOFIu8AShtYHIAQ&ved=0CEEQ6AEwAw#v=onepage&q=effective%20communication%20via%20web%202.0&f=false).

All business students, after completing their studies, want to enter the professional world. Internships serve as the only

experience that the fresh graduates have. Internships give the students an insight of how things actually work and how should they go about it. As business students begin the search for jobs and internships, these Web applications serve them there as well. Internships and job openings are posted on a number of job portals that are available over the internet. One can monitor them and apply for as many jobs and internships as they want at once. This saves time for students and provides endless possibilities to the applicants to enter the work life. The employers are constantly increasing their reliance on these online job portals for shortlisting the potential employees and recruiting them. The paper based process of job seeking has now transformed into totally web based application process. Social networking websites, blogs, forums etc. also contribute for the business students in establishing and maintaining relations with potential employers. It helps students to get the job but also helps them in their projects (http://books.google.com.pk/books?id=ykIpkgAACAAJ&dq=jobs+and+web+2.0&source=bl&ots=xhuslh7sLE&sig=LT9pUr6_3-xUjOBEcyYISFkvmwE&hl=en&sa=X&ei=oLdUPWXA6ml0AXS2oD4BQ&ved=0CEAQ6AEwAg).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A sample of 50 business students was randomly selected from all the business institutes in Karachi, who have been a part of both the methods of learning. They were asked to rate on a scale of five Likert scale, as how has Web affected their leaning in the following areas:

- Increased accessibility
- Facilitated in finding job
- Easier communication and idea sharing
- Increased knowledge
- Wider scope of application

Also a focal group discussion on the effect of Web on learning and communication of business students was held with 10 faculty members.

FINDINGS

Questionnaire: Below is the average of scores that the participants have given to each criterion.

Parameter	Score
Increased the reach	4
Facilitated in finding job	3
Easier Communication and Idea Sharing	4
Increased knowledge	3
Wider scope of Application	3

Summary of Focus Group: Few years ago it was considered close to impossible to communicate with people living in other cities, let alone other countries. But, the world today has become a global village due to the current technological breakthroughs. There are no boundaries whatsoever. A person living thousands of miles away is now just a click away. These facilities provided to us through social networking websites, personal blogs, groups are a major step forward in shaping the world of communication and crossing all boundaries.

Business students have also been very positively affected through these social networking websites like Facebook, Orkut, and Twitter etc. Business students now have the opportunity to not only be fully aware of what is going on in the business arena in the world but they are also able to communicate with other students all over the world. They have an opportunity to discuss current business practices and happenings with business gurus and professionals through social networking websites. This helps in boosting their current knowledge about their area of study. And also provides opportunity to widen their horizons and be able to see a broader and complete picture of the business world. It also opens new international arenas for business students which improves their prospects in the future. Moreover, business students are able to gain international exposure and utilize this comprehensive knowledge in their respective areas of interest and their practical lives.

CONCLUSION

The online world has changed a lot since it came into existence, and will keep on changing with time. Every change is a wonder in itself. Every innovation produces the better version of what previously existed. Web is not a major breakthrough but a result of incremental progress. Its effect on business students cannot be ignored as it has provided students learning opportunities, which helps them getting more out of life. It gives them the quicker and a wider platform to express their thoughts and also provides them with feedback to make their performance better. Moreover, it also helps them to be able to grab opportunities available locally or internationally.

REFERENCES

- Burns, T. (2007). 'Teaching Business in a Web 2.0 World', *BizEd*, January/February 2008, viewed 27 December 2009, pp. 28–35, <http://www.aacsb.edu/publications/Archives/JanFeb08/28-35_Teaching%20Biz_bized.pdf>
- Sharon Hoskinson (2008). 'The business value of Web 2.0 technology', 2007, viewed 27 December 2009, pp.1–8, <ftp://ftp.software.ibm.com/software/lotus/pub/lotusweb/web20/10709800_Web_2.0_brochure.pdf>
-