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Facing-Off in the Sport Management Classroom: Using Facebook as an educational tool

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Facing-Off in the Sport Management Classroom: Using Facebook as an educational tool

Summary

Facebook has become firmly integrated into our communications infrastructure, and its hold only appears to be gaining in strength. Researchers in education are examining the implications of social media in the classroom setting. Perez (2009) found that students were logging into Facebook five days a week, upwards of four times per day. EDUCAUSE (2011) reported that 90 percent of undergraduate students have adopted Facebook and 58 percent have incorporated Facebook consumption into their daily routines. Over one quarter of the students surveyed reported spending six to 10 hours on social networking services each week; on the high end of the scale, a staggering eight hours of Facebook consumption per day was reported (Perez, 2009). These statistics coincide with reports that suggest course management systems and the use of e-mail are losing popularity among students (Joosten, 2009). Schroeder and Greenbowe (2009) found that the number of student posts were almost 400 percent greater on Facebook when compared to the popular course management software, WebCT. This same study rated Facebook postings to be superior in quality to those on WebCT; it further found that discussions were often continued throughout the entire semester, whereas those in WebCT tended to end more abruptly.

This paper addresses how educators might take advantage of Facebook as an educational tool. The following workshop outline will discuss strategies for implementing Facebook into a course and provide insight into the educational benefits inherent in this technology, while taking care to address potential challenges.

Keywords

Facebook, higher education, digital education strategy, classroom communication

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SUMMARY

Facebook has become firmly integrated into our communications infrastructure, and its hold only appears to be gaining in strength. Researchers in education are examining the implications of social media in the classroom setting. Perez (2009) found that students were logging into Facebook five days a week, upwards of four times per day. EDUCAUSE (2011) reported that 90 percent of undergraduate students have adopted Facebook and 58 percent have incorporated Facebook consumption into their daily routines. Over one quarter of the students surveyed reported spending six to 10 hours on social networking services each week; on the high end of the scale, a staggering eight hours of Facebook consumption per day was reported (Perez, 2009). These statistics coincide with reports that suggest course management systems and the use of e-mail are losing popularity among students (Joosten, 2009). Schroeder and Greenbowe (2009) found that the number of student posts were almost 400 percent greater on Facebook when compared to the popular course management software, WebCT. This same study rated Facebook postings to be superior in quality to those on WebCT; it further found that discussions were often continued throughout the entire semester, whereas those in WebCT tended to end more abruptly.

This paper addresses how educators might take advantage of Facebook as an educational tool. The following workshop outline will discuss strategies for implementing Facebook into a course and provide insight into the educational benefits inherent in this technology, while taking care to address potential challenges.

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Many higher education professionals may be able to relate to the frustrating new presence in university classrooms. It is known as Facebook, and now regularly accompanies students to lectures through the convenience of personal laptops and mobile technology. The goal of this workshop is to harness the popularity of Facebook and effectively use it to an educational advantage.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- successfully navigate Facebook and be proficient in three classroom implementation strategies;
- utilize various Facebook features such as the wall, messaging, events, and the newsfeed;
- develop creative strategy for implementing Facebook to enhance student learning; and
- set appropriate Facebook guidelines and expectations in an educational setting.

REFERENCE SUMMARIES

Joosten, T. (2012). *Social media for educators: Strategies and best practices*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Joosten (2012) offers a helpful resource for integrating various types of social media into an educational setting. The author stresses the opportunities inherent in social media to enhance learning through interactivity and a deeper level of student engagement. Joosten also provides insight into a variety of social media modalities and offers specific case study examples. Social media is championed as a resource that can increase classroom communication. Strategies specific to Facebook are offered to enrich and empower student learning. Digital content delivery is explained in detail with helpful commentary related to picture and video sharing, team projects, providing student feedback and establishing formal social media guidelines appropriate to the educational setting. The benefits and potential challenges of this platform are also presented such that instructors are able to assess the appropriateness of Facebook implementation into their own courses.

This is an excellent handbook for instructors who wish to incorporate social media into their course design. Covering a wide range of social media activities, this resource provides current educational best practices for those with a technologically savvy background as well as step-by-step instruction for those who might require a more introductory foundation. Joosten's Facebook best practices will be highlighted in the seminar and used to spur further brainstorming and discussion.

Lampe, C., Wohn, D.Y., Vitak, J., Ellison, N., & Wash, R. (2011). Student use of Facebook for organizing collaborative classroom activities. *Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning*, 6, 329-347.

Lampe, Wohn, Vitak, Ellison & Wash (2011) examine how undergraduate students use Facebook to engage in classroom-related collaborative activities. The authors argue that Facebook has become a classroom backchannel that informally allows students to "learn through the process of collaborative sense-making" (p. 331).

This article explores both the propensity to use Facebook for learning collaboration, as well as the social and psychological predictors of Facebook collaboration through the discussion of two separate studies. In the first study, a random sample of 1,996 students were invited to participate in an online survey that explored measures of Facebook intensity (FBI), satisfaction of life, and self-esteem, in addition to classroom-specific behaviors related to Facebook use. The survey garnered a 19% response rate with 97% of the participants reporting Facebook usage. Facebook intensity was found to be a significant predictor of students' propensity to use Facebook for classroom collaboration.

In the second study presented, the dimensions of Facebook collaboration were further explored. A convenience sample was collected from 265 students who were asked to participate in an online survey. The survey instrument asked students to rate the likelihood that they would use Facebook

for a variety of educational tasks while employing a self-efficacy measure to assess student confidence in each task. The study found that the expectations of students ranged regarding what constituted normative use of Facebook. Students who reported collaborating through Facebook were more likely to utilize the tool to seek information about their classes and achieve their educational goals through both positive and negative collaborations.

Based on the findings of these studies, Lampe et al. conclude that Facebook is a widely used communication tool that is being used by students for classroom organization and collaborative support. This study highlights the potential for instructor-sanctioned learning through Facebook while wisely acknowledging that Facebook use is in its infancy in education and therefore some student practices may not be instructor-sanctioned. This research provides interesting insight into the student-teacher relationship on Facebook; it also provides assistance in the development of an understanding of Facebook dynamics. The insights provided in this study will be used to introduce Facebook as a collaborative learning tool and set the context for this seminar.

Munoz, C.L., & Towner, T. (2011). Back to the "wall": Facebook in the college classroom. *First Monday, 16(12)*.

This article examines the role of social networking in higher education and focuses on the integration of Facebook as a communication tool. To set the stage for their work, the authors highlight the efforts of Madge, Meek, Wellens, and Hooley (2009) who found that students are making use of Facebook to informally discuss academic work with classmates. They also build on previous research of their own which investigated student use of Facebook to engage in academic related peer communication (Towner & Munoz, 2011). Ophus & Abbitt, 2009 are cited for their finding that 77 percent of students have reported using Facebook to communicate with students in their courses. Based upon these previous findings, Munoz and Towner suggest that Facebook offers unique learning opportunities, specifically "facilitating communication, fostering a learning community, and promoting twenty-first century literacies" (p.4).

The role of instructors is underscored in the successful implementation of Facebook as an educational tool. The article does an excellent job of addressing some of the pitfalls inherent in this technology including: the erosion of professional boundaries, privacy and safety concerns, administrative issues, and incomplete adoption rates. Details regarding the appropriate level of course integration are also discussed at length. This article is recommended reading for any instructor contemplating the incorporation of Facebook into their course curriculum. This study will be highlighted throughout the seminar to spur discussion relative to best practices and the creation of appropriate guidelines.

CONTENT, ORGANIZATION, AND PRESENTATION STRATEGIES

Prior to the seminar, participants will be asked to create a Facebook account if they do not already have one. They will also be encouraged to bring a laptop or smart phone to the workshop in order to maximize their learning experience. While this particular workshop will be facilitated utilizing a sport management lens, it might be easily transferred into any number of disciplines.

Duration (min)	Topic	Details	Presentation Strategies
10	<i>Introduction</i>	Participants will be given a brief introduction to Facebook and provided with context as to its relevance and use in the world of sport.	Introductory comments will include the most recent Facebook statistics to demonstrate its popularity, a discussion of current social media trends in sport, and a brief outline of how Facebook might be effectively used in the sport management classroom.
15	<i>Facebook Tutorial</i>	The instructor will demonstrate 3 different strategies for integrating Facebook into the classroom: setting up a professional profile; developing a group; and constructing a page. Participants will be invited to follow along on their own laptop or mobile device while the instructor demonstrates each strategy in a web browser.	<p>The instructor will briefly introduce the 3 Facebook integration strategies and then facilitate the interaction of the participants while they construct and navigate each strategy. Key terminology will also be highlighted. Examples of established profiles, groups, and pages will then be provided such that participants are able to attain a better sense of the strategies that might be most appropriate in their own courses. This tutorial will provide an opportunity for participants to get a first-hand look at some of the creative ways in which Facebook can enhance classroom learning.</p> <p>The instructor should have examples bookmarked on their screen to ease in the transition from page creation to Facebook exemplars.</p> <p>Participants will be provided with a handout that outlines each strategy and includes the definitions of Facebook terminology.</p>

10	<i>Assess Strengths/Weaknesses of Facebook</i>	As a large group, participants will be asked to brainstorm the perceived strengths and weakness of each of the 3 Facebook integration strategies.	The purpose of this activity is to allow participants to evaluate their stance on Facebook and ponder its use as an educational tool. This will involve an open discussion of the opportunities and challenges Facebook provides. The instructor will chart both the pros and cons of each Facebook implementation strategy and then challenge participants to suggest strategies to overcome the potential pitfalls by asking follow-up questions. For example, what happens if a student does not have a Facebook page or regular access to the Internet? Best practices might be discussed with regard to whether or not Facebook should be used as a supplemental tool to class discussion or exist as a mandatory participation requirement.
15	<i>Best Practices</i>	Participants will be divided into smaller groups of 5-6 individuals. Each group will be assigned one of the 3 integration strategies and be asked to explore various tactics that might be useful in the sport management classroom context.	This brainstorming session will encourage participants to view Facebook as an educational tool and envision how it might be used in their own sport management classrooms. Each group will be asked to develop a specific course scenario and suggest various ways their Facebook strategy might be implemented to best serve the course. The instructor will urge participants to be creative and address topics such as: student/teacher communication, multi-media integration, group assignments, and group sharing.
10	<i>Sharing of Best Practices</i>	Each group will share the tactics they have developed with the larger group, thus creating a list of best practices for each integration strategy.	

15	<i>Facebook Guidelines</i>	The instructor will give a brief introduction regarding the challenge of establishing appropriate codes of conduct on Facebook. Participants will be asked to return to their smaller groups and brainstorm guidelines they might establish to ensure appropriate online etiquette and the contribution of quality learning through Facebook.	Challenges of the informality of Facebook will be highlighted and ideas of online professionalism will be introduced. The impact of digital footprints on future employment prospects should be addressed at this time as well. Participants will be provided with poster paper in which they will be asked to develop professional conduct standards that will be expected of their students on Facebook.
10	<i>Sharing of Facebook Guidelines</i>	Each group will again share the ideas they developed with respect to conduct guidelines.	A reference handout will be distributed detailing appropriate and professional Facebook guidelines.
5	<i>Conclusion</i>	Instructor will provide a summary of the session and offer further resources to assist in the successful integration of Facebook in an educational setting.	Upon the completion of the workshop, the instructor will compile a list of the Facebook Best Practices developed during the workshop to be emailed to each participant.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Facebook terminology handout

Appendix B: “Netiquette”: A Guide to Online Professionalism

APPENDIX A

Facebook Terminology Handout

Feature	Definition	Educational Use
<i>Messaging</i>	"Messaging" is akin to internal Facebook e-mail.	This feature allows you to communicate with students privately.
<i>Chat</i>	"Chat" is similar to instant messaging.	This feature allows you to communicate privately with a student in real time. Instructors might choose to hold virtual office hours using the "Chat" feature.
<i>Wall</i>	The "Wall" is a public writing space. It is the most visible communication feature.	This space can be used to post relevant articles, videos, websites, photos, announcements, and upcoming events or due dates. Students are able to respond to the comments in this space by "liking" a posting. Students can contact you directly on the "Wall" and questions can be asked and answered publically. Students can also use this feature to answer questions and interact with their peers.
<i>Events</i>	The "Events" function allows the organization of social gatherings or parties. Event reminders are visible on the "Wall" and "News Feed."	This feature can be used to remind students about exam dates, meetings, campus speakers, and study sessions.
<i>Notes</i>	"Notes" is a blogging tool.	This feature allows instructors and students to write comments and respond to reading materials, current events, assignments, class activities and study guides. Instructors are able to "tag" students in the "Note" to solicit comments. Instructors with external blogs can use the RSS feed to automatically import their blogs to be posted as Facebook "Notes."

News Feed	The "News Feed" reports what is happening in your social circles on Facebook; anything that is posted on your "Wall" becomes visible on each student's "News Feed." With the majority of students checking their Facebook "News Feed" multiple times each day, this is an efficient way to keep students up to date with their courses.	This function can be used to make course-related announcements and remind students about posted "Events."
Facebook Group	A "Facebook Group" can be created specifically for a course which includes a unique profile page and group description, membership list, "Wall" and toolbar that allow for the sharing of posts, links, photos, videos, events, and documents. These features are similar to the profile page and function in the same way. Instructors can communicate using the "Wall" or make use of a "Group Chat" option, which allows discourse with any group member currently online. In order to be included as a member of a "Facebook Group," students must first be added as one of your "Facebook friends".	The "Group" exists as an organizational platform and provides a central location for course material. "Groups" offer instructors the use of a "Group Chat" feature and provide a "Docs" tab, which allows for group document collaboration.
Facebook Page	A "Fan Page" can be created specific to a course. Similar to the "Group," the "Page" includes a discussion board, "Wall," video, photo, and web link posting as well as a related event creation. Students do not have to be your "Friend" to be added to a "Page."	"Fan Pages" exist as a more public space to organize course material. The "Page" provides a discussion board feature in which students can post their own topics or respond to those developed by the instructor. The discussion board generates a threaded trail to which students can refer. Pages do not offer the "Group Chat" or "Docs" features that exist in "Groups."
Facebook Profile Page	The "Profile Page" allows an instructor to share information about themselves with students. Details might include a photo, professional contact information, and/or your favourite music/books/hobbies. This information can be altered or removed at any time.	A Profile Page can be used to communicate with students or post materials for class. A notification is sent via e-mail when students post or respond with information to the "Wall." Material posted to the "Wall" of a Profile Page is visible to anyone with the ability to view your profile.

Adapted from Munoz & Towner (2011)

APPENDIX B

“Netiquette”: A Guide to Online Professionalism

<i>E-mail</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address emails with a professional salutation and close • Be concise • Make use of a simple layout • Double check that ALL questions have been answered when responding to an e-mail • Avoid caps lock (this communicates that you are yelling) • Edit your e-mail for spelling and grammar • Do not forward chain letters • Be sure to include your contact info • Respond in a timely fashion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be considerate of the number and size of attachments you send • Compress attachments when possible • Don't "Reply All" to a BCC • Don't overuse "Reply All" • Be sensitive to others' privacy, use BCC when sending large group emails • Be cognizant and considerate of private information • Provide an explanation with any forwards sent
<i>Message Boards</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid caps lock • Avoid spelling/grammar errors • Read existing threads before you begin a new one • Private matters = Private message • Introduce yourself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be aware of forum guidelines • Post in appropriate categories • Be thoughtful about your comments • Clarify stance before arguing • Contribute regularly
<i>Facebook</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't over post • Don't SPAM affiliate offers • Avoid caps lock • Don't "poke" people • Reply to comments from others • Proofread to avoid spelling/grammar errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep private matters in private messages • Be thoughtful with the material you choose to post. Contribute value. • Conduct yourself in a courteous and respectful manner at all times.

Adapted from Welke (2012)

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