
Manila Women's Forum

A Network of Women Professionals

December 2009

Demystifying the New World of Social Media

By Jill Gale de Villa

On Monday, November 16th Sarah Miller Novak gave us an enthusiastic talk on “Demystifying Social Media,” aka, how to handle the Internet’s new offerings—social connection channels such as Facebook, Twitter, and blogging to name a few.

Sarah began by noting that these tools are “not just for 14-year-old girls anymore,” and then went on to define a few of the key terms:

- Social media—the tools for publishing on the web (including audio, video, text, etc.);
- Social networks—the people, the groups, and the relationships and flows between them through computers, etc.; and
- Social networking site—the “platform,” i.e., websites such as those groups listed above.

Each social network has its own user community and purpose. To give you some background information on the big players, of the top five social networking sites used in the United States, Facebook retains a 60% share of visits with MySpace in second place at 30%. Facebook has been growing fast—moving up from 20%



Cheryl Engels (left) and Sarah Miller Novak (right)

just a year ago. Interestingly, Twitter has been growing even faster—but from a very small base, so it is still only approaching 2% of total visits. On average, people who use social

networking sites do so for 20–25 minutes a day. The biggest surprise is the recent demographic shift—more and more older people are now using
(Cont. on p.3)

December MWF Meeting ■ **When:** Monday, December 7, 2009, 6:30 p.m. **Where:** Pilar Martinez-Miranda’s home, 5400 Amorsolo corner Tamarind Road, Dasmariñas Village, Makati City. **What:** Caroline Cliff and Gina Tuazon of the Springboard Foundation will speak about their emergency response work following tropical storm Ondoy, including helping people living on rooftops in areas that are still flooded. Springboard’s mission is to raise funds to develop healthy, nurturing environments for children in the Philippines. About 13 children will sing us Christmas carols before the presentation. **Bring:** Something to share for the potluck dinner, and if you like, a small donation for the children who will sing (cash or gift) and money to buy Christmas gifts and cards sold by some of our charitable cause members! We will also donate MWF funds accumulated throughout the year. **January Meeting:** Monday, 2010 January 18.

Instead of their photo, lots of people use an avatar—a representation of themselves—in social networking websites. Here's my latest avatar, created at myavatareditor.com



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Selected and edited by
Beulah Pedregosa Taguiwalo

Social networking, profiling, and you

Social network services focus on building and reflecting social networks or social relationships among people who share common interests and/or activities.

A social network service essentially consists of a representation of each user (often a profile), his/her social—and increasingly, business—links, and a variety of additional services.

Most social network services are web based and provide various ways for users to interact, such as e-mail and instant messaging services.

Content suppliers and consumers

In contrast to a traditional business model where the suppliers and consumers are distinct agents, social networking services operate under an autonomous business model: its members serve dual roles as the suppliers and consumers of content.

ESNs and ISNs

Social networking services can be broken down into two broad categories:

* From various sources, for information purposes only. Readers are advised to exercise due diligence in getting the latest, complete and most accurate data.



ries: external social networking (ESN) and internal social networking (ISN). Both types can increase the feeling of community among people.

Usually designed to attract advertisers, an ESN is open/public and available to all web users. They can be large generic networking sites like MySpace, Facebook, Twitter and Bebo, or smaller specialised communities linked by a single common interest like ACountryLife.Com, Great Cooks Community, or TheSocialGolfer.

An ISN, on the other hand, is a closed/private community consisting of a group of people within a company, association, organization, or society. Or, it can be an “invite only” group created by a user in an ESN.

Profiles and targeted advertising

Because ESNs are usually designed to sell advertising on their site, they aim for large memberships that are offered for free. And, the deeper the information the sites have on each user, the better. This allows much better targeted advertising than what any other site can currently provide.

Thus, the users of ESN websites are not only the providers and consumers of content, they are also the captive audience and highly predisposed consumers of goods and services that are promoted by sharply focused—even personalized—advertising.

Privacy

In large social networking websites, there have been growing concerns about users giving out too much personal information, the threat of sexual predators, and data theft.

In addition, there are concerns about

placing too much personal information in the hands of large corporations or government bodies. Some believe that this allows a profile to be produced about an individual's behavior on which decisions, detrimental to an individual, may be made.

Control of data

The control of data in social networking websites is also an issue. Some fear that information that was altered or removed by the user may in fact be retained and/or passed to third parties. This danger was highlighted when a controversial social networking site harvested e-mail addresses from users' e-mail accounts for use in a spamming operation.

In medical and scientific research, asking subjects for information about their behavior is normally strictly scrutinized by institutional review boards to ensure that adolescents and their parents have informed consent.

It is not clear whether the same rules apply to researchers who collect data from social networking sites. These sites often contain a great deal of data that is hard to obtain via traditional means. Even though the data is public accessible, republishing it in a research paper might be considered an invasion of privacy.

Minors

The problem is even more critical with minors. Every day teenagers go to social networking sites and reveal their most inner thoughts for the whole world to see. Information such as street addresses, phone numbers and, Instant Messaging names are disclosed to an unknown population in cyberspace.

Impersonation and identity theft

What's more, the creation of a social networking account is a fairly easy process to do which can lead to impersonation or identity theft.

Preferred forum

Despite the above dangers, however, social networking sites have become the preferred forum for social interactions—from posturing and role playing to simply sounding off.

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these sites, with significant growth in the 55+ age group.

The Platforms

Sarah focused on three platforms during her talk—Facebook, Wordpress Blogging and Twitter. Sarah recommended that you review the available platforms to assess how well they suit your purposes and choose 2–3 platforms to focus on. Then, to keep things under control, set yourself daily or weekly time limits for using them.

Facebook - With over 300 million users and growing, Facebook is the giant of social media. Many of the attendees had used it to some degree, so Sarah built on that and reviewed features that would help us become “better users.” One especially useful tip is to make “Status Feed” your default view so you only see your friends’ status updates and not all of the other notifications you receive with the “News Feed” view.

She also noted etiquette and requisites, including thinking twice before posting things to the public that may be better sent to only a few close friends. If you do post something to the public and you receive a

negative comment, Sarah recommended that you always respond. This helps you maintain a good reputation and can prevent larger problems from being created, especially if you use Facebook or Blogging for your business. Finally, she spent a bit of time on privacy settings, showing tentative users how they could structure their page to reveal the amount of information they are comfortable with.

Wordpress Blogging - Sarah showed us her personal and business blogs and the differences between the two types. She uses Word Press for both, but her personal blog uses a free version and her business blog uses a fee-based version which gives her access to more features. She noted the benefits and downsides of using the free Word Press software to inform our decisions before starting our own blog.

Benefits include:

- blog set-up is free;
- you don’t need a domain name;
- it’s great for personal use;
- easy to get started.

Downsides are:

- it’s not great for business;

- there are few choices of widgets and themes for customizing;
- it’s not search-engine friendly.

As we were learning about blogs, Sarah also defined the following key terms to help us understand how they are used:

- **Blog**—web log; a publicly accessible journal; to be updated daily or frequently;
 - **Blogsphere**—all blogs;
 - **Widget**—the part of a graphical user interface that allows the user to interface with the application and operating system;
 - **Dashboard**—the administration area on your blog software that allows you to post, check traffic, upload files, manage comments, etc.;
 - **Hyperlink**—navigational aid (URL) for going to another site;
 - **Avatar**—graphical image or likeness that replaces a photo of the author of the content on a blog;
 - **RSS**—Real Simple Syndication: this allows you to subscribe to content on blogs and other social media and have it delivered to you through a feed;
 - **Feed aggregator/feed reader/RSS aggregator**—aggregator of content, subscribed to by the user, so that
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Profiling

Profiling involves the collection of large quantities of data, using algorithms and other mathematical techniques to discover patterns or correlations in the data, and creating profiles to identify or represent people. However, the notion of profiling practices is not just about the construction of profiles. It also concerns the application of group profiles to individuals for purposes such as credit scoring, price discrimination or identifying security risks.

Risks and issues

Profiling technologies have raised a host of ethical, legal and other issues including privacy, equality, due process, security and liability. Numerous authors have warned against the affordances of a new technological infrastructure that could emerge on the basis of semi-autonomous profiling technologies .

Privacy

One of the principal issues raised is privacy. Profiling technologies make possible a far-reaching monitoring of an individual’s behaviour and preferences. Profiles may reveal personal or private information about individuals that they themselves might not even be aware of.

Discriminatory

Profiling technologies are by their very nature discriminatory tools. They allow unparalleled kinds of social sorting and segmentation which could have unfair effects. The people that are profiled may have to pay higher prices, they could miss out on important offers or opportunities, and they may run increased risks because catering to their needs is less profitable.

In most cases they will not be aware of this, since profiling practices are mostly invisible and the profiles themselves protected by intellectual property or trade secrets. This poses a threat to the equality of

and solidarity of citizens. On a larger scale it might cause the segmentation of society.

Invisible

Another problem underlying discrimination and potential violations of privacy is that the process of profiling is often invisible to those who are being profiled. Thus, it becomes hard, if not impossible, to contest the application of a particular group profile. Consequently, the principle of due process is disturbed. If a person has no access to information on the basis of which benefits are withheld from her, or certain risks are attributed to her, she cannot contest the way she is being treated .

Unauthorized use

Profiles can also be used against people when they end up in the hands of people who are not entitled to access or use them. An important issue related to these breaches of security is Identity Theft. ■

(Adapted from Wikipedia)

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specific content or search results arrives in their “reader”—among the popular (and free) tools are GreatNews, Feed Demon, and Google Reader; and

- Tagging—keyword descriptions (called tags) used to identify images or text within a site to facilitate identification by search engines.

Twitter – We rounded out the evening by touching on Twitter, one of the fastest growing social media platforms. We learned that a Tweet can be no longer than 140 characters. It goes out to all of your followers, who are the people who have signed up to receive your tweets. Retweeting (indicated by RT: followed by the message) is a way to pass on information to your followers that you think is useful. Using the @ sign before another person’s Twitter Username is a way to get someone’s attention. Additionally, the # sign (hashtag) is used followed by a keyword such as “#travel” to allow users to search for all tweets about a certain topic (like travel).

Twitter makes use of many companion tools. Six of Sarah’s favorites are:

- Hootsuite for managing when Tweets go out and reviewing the Tweets you follow.
- Monitter and socialomph for tracking keywords and topics
- Twitpic for uploading photos to share via Twitter
- TwitterCounter for monitoring how many followers you have
- Twitbuttons for creating adorable buttons that you can use to direct people to follow you.

It was a night FULL of new information. If you were unable to attend, a glossary of Social Media Terms and a Powerpoint presentation are currently available as files in the Yahoo Forum.

To connect with Sarah for assistance and advice or just out of curiosity: Connect with me @

Personal blog: www.minnesotagal.wordpress.com

Business blog:

www.inspireoverseasliving.com

Website:

www.envisionlifecoaching.net

Twitter:

www.twitter.com/coachsarahnovak

Facebook:

www.facebook.com/minnesotagal

Facebook fan page:

www.facebook.com/envisionlifecoaching

Linked In:

www.linkedin.com/in/coachsarahnovak

Social Networking: Like Air

Forrester Research’s Vice President and Principal Analyst Charlene Li famously described social networking as being “like air.”

Jenny Levine at the Shifted Librarian wrote: “... it is becoming clearer that we [as LIS professionals] need to pay attention to virtual worlds because they are going to be a part of our collective, professional future.

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“Networking is an essential part of building wealth.”
(Armstrong Williams)
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Manila Women’s Forum

Manila Women’s Forum (MWF) is a cross-cultural network for women. It provides opportunities to build friendships, talk to women of various cultures, and share information about resources. Our meetings are intended to provide intellectual stimulation and lead to personal and professional development. All women are welcome to join.

The current officers are: **Amy Alexander**, Message Board. **Julia Holz**, Treasurer, Membership and Programs. **Cecilia Leung**, Programs. **Lisa Lumbao**, Chair. **Junie Navarro**, Message Board. **Lisa Stuart**, Message Board Moderator. **Beulah P. Taguiwalo**, Newsletter, Website. **Shari Virjee**, Programs, Message Board.

Cost of membership is P300 per year. Members receive a copy of the current mailing list in addition to the newsletter, which is also sent to non-members. A contribution is collected at each monthly meeting: P20 for members, and P40 for non-members. For more information about MWF, please contact Lisa Lumbao at Tel. 813-0168, or at lumbao@mozcom.com.

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