Mobile Social Media

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Abstract: The emergence of mobile connectivity is revolutionizing the way people live, work, interact, and socialize. Mobile social media is the heart of this social revolution. It is becoming a global phenomenon as it enables IP-connectivity for people on the move. Popular social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and MySpace have made mobile apps for their users to have instant access from anywhere at any time. This paper provides a brief introduction into mobile social media, their benefits, and challenges.

Key words: social media, social network, mobile social media, mobile social networking

I. INTRODUCTION

Mobile devices have disrupted and reinvented traditional media markets and distribution. In most parts of the world, it is difficult to do without mobile devices. Social networking started in the online space, but it has rapidly spread to mobile platforms. Today more than 80 percent of social media time is spent on mobile devices. Users are accessing social media from mobile devices compared to desktop computers. IP-connectivity is fundamentally crucial for users who are going from one location to another [1].

Mobile social media (MSM) has emerged as the combination of social networking and mobile technologies. It is mediated by mobile devices such as smartphones, tablets, or laptop computers. It refers to social media applications such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, MySpace, and Twitter that are delivered via mobile devices. For example, Facebook Mobile and MySpace Mobile are the mobile extensions of Facebook and MySpace respectively. MSM enables individuals to converse and connect with one another through their smartphones and other mobile devices. It provides a powerful tool for collaboration. It allows the creation and exchange of user-generated content (UGC). UGC-based applications are becoming popular among mobile users [2]. A collaborative project enables joint creation of content and is the most democratic manifestation of UGC.

II. FEATURES OF MSM

MSM may be regarded as software, applications, or services accessed through mobile devices that allow people to connect and share information. Services provided by MSM may be social network sites like Facebook, blogs like Twitter, or video sharing like YouTube [3].

Just like any standard communication device, MSM needs two entities [4]: the sender who wants to share information and the receiver who listens to the communication. The effects of MSM are usage-specific. For individuals, mobile devices are used primarily to communicate with friends. For organizations, MSM allows marketing messages to be distributed and can support new product launches.

Three types of usage on MSM have been identified: communicative use, friending, and self-disclosure. Communicative use focuses on people contacting acquaintances, friending is accepting friend request on MSM, and self-disclosure refers to people revealing themselves via MSM [5].

III. POPULAR SOCIAL MEDIA

By nature, social media is egalitarian and available to everyone with Internet connection. The seven most popular social media platforms are described here [6].

- **Facebook**: This is the most popular social media in the US and the rest of the world. It was launched on February 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg (ex-Harvard student). Facebook has been the leader of social networks; it continues to dominate all other networks in user engagement and is far ahead of them. It can sensitize individuals (consumers) about many products and services. A company can use Facebook to communicate their core values to a wide range of customers.

- **Twitter**: Twitter was launched on July 2006 to provide a microblogging service. It allows individuals and companies to post short messages, share content, and have conversations with other Twitter users. Many Twitter
posts (or "tweets") focus on the minutiae of everyday life. Twitter is well known as the most popular microblogging site.

- **LinkedIn**: This is a networking website designed for the business community. It was created in 2002 by Reid Hoffman. It allows people to create professional profiles, post resumes, and communicate with other professionals. LinkedIn is now the world's largest social network for professionals. It can be used as a tool for career management and job **hunting**. Serious professionals and businesses should not ignore this quintessential professional network.

- **YouTube**: YouTube has established itself as social media. It was launched in May 2005. It allows individuals to watch and share videos. YouTube may serve as home to aspiring filmmakers who might not have industry connections. It is most popular online video community in the world. Searching on YouTube is second only to Google. YouTube can be both a blessing and a curse for some companies.

- **MySpace**: MySpace was established in 2003 by Specific Media and Justin Timberlake. Its main appeal is the ability to connect with brands and individuals. Its usage has declined over the years.

- **Instagram**: This is an image-sharing social network. Users can just snap or upload their photo/video and can post them instantly. It is a social network that is currently only available through a free iPhone app. It is an image-based social media platform. It allows users to send and share videos and photos. Users can find and follow individuals and brands. It has become popular among young social media users, aged between 12 and 24 years.

- **WeChat**: This is a Chinese social medium known as Weixin in Chinese. It was launched in 2011 by Tencent, the Chinese largest Internet Company. It offers instant messaging service for smartphones and allows exchange of videos among mobile phone users. Individuals, governments, and organizations freely apply for WeChat accounts [7].

Other social media include WhatsApp, LINE, Tumblr, Reddit, Pinterest, Flickr, Forum, Yelp, Snapchat, Bebo, Wikipedia, Second Life, Foursquare, Goodreads, Google+, and Vine Camera.

### IV. BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES

Mobile social media can benefit users and organizations. Cost saving is possible since MSM allows group messaging and can help in attracting new customers for businesses. Sharing of videos/images is possible through mobile applications.

MSM advertising is critical for marketing. MSM strategies create brand awareness, drive sales, launch new products, and help companies gain market share [8]. People who benefit from MSM include college students, journalists, tourists, smart grid customers, seekers of health information, seniors (individuals 50 years and older), and politicians. MSM provides greater access to information. It also provides emotional support and reinforcement of digital identity, especially for youths.

However, MSM does not come without a price. MSM tools are changing and developing so fast that curriculum development cannot keep up. It has been shown that there is a negative correlation between social media (smartphone interaction) and academic performance of students. MSM can lead to addiction which can hurt students’ behaviour. Addiction can also lower the productivity of employees because they tend to spend more time checking messages from their cell phones.

Although the use of MSM applications are for worldwide consumption, it is difficult to develop applications that satisfy individuals with different cultural backgrounds [9].

The security of MSM is a major concern. Mobile devices are more vulnerable to attack than computers. Although people use MSM services at any time anywhere, mobile virus and malware are increasing. MSM has become a target for attack because of the security risks associated with it [10]. Privacy issue may compel users to close offpublic access to their MSM use. Security and privacy concerns are both ethical and legal challenges that several advertisers and marketers face.

### V. CONCLUSION

The use of social media has become ubiquitous. Mobile devices such as smartphones have made it easier to access social media. Mobile social media are basically social media in the mobile era. They enable users to post on social media services anywhere anytime. They enable users to share personal information with acquaintances and the public in general. They are enabling a new wave of social collaboration such as blogs, content communities, and social networking sites. It can be used as a catalyst for pedagogical change.
REFERENCES


AUTHORS

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