Internet Usage Attitude of College Students

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Abstract
The college experience is not only about learning in the classroom, it is also about encountering new social situations and gaining new social skills. College students use the Internet nearly as much for social communication as they do for their education. But just as they use the Internet to supplement the formal parts of their education, they go online to enhance their social lives. Internet has become the appendage of our day-to-day life in recent times. Life cannot be imagined today without its functioning all over the world. In fact, it has caught the public in its expanding web and has begun to alter some people’s sense of community, ways of work and play, and even how they deal with government. Television and radio stations, news-papers, financial institutions, and many businesses are beginning to present information on the World Wide Web and are inviting comment from readers. Internet use is a staple of college students’ educational experience. They use the Internet to communicate with professors and classmates, to do research, and to access library materials. For most college students the Internet is a functional tool, one that has greatly changed the way they interact with others and with information as they go about their studies. The goal of this paper was to learn about the Internet’s impact on college students’ daily lives, and to determine the impact of that use on their academic and social routines.

Key Words: Internet Usage, College Students, Social Communication, Educational Experience, Internet’s Impact, Technology Expectation, Sophisticated Technical Skills, Educational System

1 Introduction
Students in higher education today have spent their entire lives surrounded by computers, video games, cell phones and other social, digital, communication technology devices. In the early days of technology, students were often not able to keep up with the rapid advances of
technology. Today, however, students come to colleges and universities already having developed advanced computer and technological skills. Technology and the way it is used by students and higher education institutions has developed and changed rapidly over the past several years. The college students of today are composed of several generations, each with various levels of technological skills. These generations have different backgrounds, experiences and expectations of technology and of higher education. These young people are said to have been immersed in technology all their lives, instilling them with sophisticated technical skills and learning preferences for which traditional education is unprepared. Grand claims are being made about the nature of this generational change and about the urgent necessity for educational reform in response; however, the actual situation is far from clear. Technology served as a liberating tool for the Boomers, a diversifying tool for the Gen Xers, and a unifying tool for today’s teens or the Millennials. Today’s college students have technological proficiencies far greater than previous generations dating back 20-25 years. Ownership of technology tools has become a generational status symbol. Millennials are as familiar with computers as Baby Boomers were with television. However, the Millennials are using technology to do group projects and communicate among networks of friends. Equipped with Instant Messaging (IM) and ‘buddy lists,’ Millennials stay in almost uninterrupted contact with each other, far beyond anything the Boomers or Gen Xers ever experienced with the technologies of their own childhood or teen years. Much has been written about the technological savvy of the Millennials and their entrance into college. Assumptions have been made regarding the need for technology training for this generation including whether or not additional training is necessary. The communication or social technology of this generation far exceeds the abilities of earlier generations, including many faculty, however, the specialized, office based or technical technology skills seem to be lacking to the extent that it could impact the vocational success rate of college graduates if not addressed.

2 Significance in Academics

The Internet is an inseparable part of today's educational system. The academic increasingly depends on the Internet for educational purposes. A majority of academic and research institutions provide Internet service to students, teachers, and researchers (Kaur, 2008). College students are a unique population of Internet users. Students were the first group in USA who used the Internet for communication, recreation, and file sharing. College students and their teachers find the Internet convenient and useful for educational activities (Jones, 2002). Behavioural studies of the Internet indicate that it makes life easy, creates links between different communities and cultures, is a good way to connect people and find educational resources (Aydin, 2007; D'Esposito& Gardner, 1999).

But it is also a reality that computers are still scarce in India in light of the aim of having one up-to-date, fully networked computer for every four or five students. Through strategic
targeting of educational projects the government is contributing to a national focus on science, technology, culture and heritage and is helping to bring together a wide range of educators and other stakeholders to collaborate in making telecommunications part of daily reality in every classroom for all students. It is quite common to hear teachers say, “It’s the way of future”. Some teachers have had pen-pal programs. Many teachers draw on newspapers in social studies and in developing student’s abilities to select and report on interesting current events. Some newspapers offer support for teachers in this use and make available space for student publication. For decades, teachers have drawn on radio and television broadcasts produced for classroom use. Now teachers are turning to the internet for similar resources and activities.

Over the past decade, a small but growing minority of teachers and classes have used the internet and other digital telecommunications networks for a wide range of purposes such as informal dialogue (Keypads), cross-cultural studies, discussion and debate on social issues, consulting with professional scientists and authors, finding information on particulars topics, collaborating on research, organizing and participating in quizzes and scavenger hunts, publishing online newspapers that include creative writing and art, designing and conducting surveys and opinion polls, publishing documents of national importance, following expeditions, engaging in cross-grade tutoring, and participating in role playing simulations.

3 Attitude of college students towards internet usage

Today’s generation students are known to be tech savvy, in that they make use of various types of ICTs. Internet, also known as network of network of networks is a very effective and popular tool use by students for education as well as variety of other purposes including entertainment. Internet provides an interactive environment for sharing as well as seeing of information on a wide, diverse and variety of subjects. It delivers information in form of text, images, graphics, animation and audio video capsules. Internet a versatile medium to meet the information of the students as a result, it has become very popular among the students community.

Attitude towards technology also differed between men and women, and these differences did not change overtime, since the longitudinal data showed similar patterns. In general their research suggests that differences continue to exist between male and female college students in how they experience internet technology and that prediction that the internet will soon be gender neutral are perhaps premature. (Sherman et al 2000) In many of these activities and projects, the internet is a treasure house of information and a medium of highly purposeful and creative communication and publishing in the following way:

- Internet has got tremendous other generalized uses like internet provides up to date
information on variety of classroom related topics.

- The content of textbooks, library and teachers knowledge is enhanced by this new medium.
- Students learn to make use of internet as an aid to retrieve information from multiple sources.
- Students learn to make use of internet as an aid to communicate and collaborate with people across the world.
- Students learn to develop web materials, specials as a component of project based learning.
- Use of computer in drill for reinforcement of learning in this, the learner is given as a lot of examples on the concept and principles learnt earlier. The theme lies there to develop proficiency and fluency through. All the wrong responses are diagnosed and corrected. The computer continues the drill mastery is achieved by the learner.
- Use of instruction through computer in new learning. In this, student using a computer terminal may read a few statements or see a demonstration on the screen of the computer. A student answers to a multiple choice item. After responding, the computer screen may show a smiling face if answer given was correct. If incorrect, the students may try again to respond correctly if a second wrong response was given the correct answer is provided on the screen. The successful learner in each response given is ready to progress to next sequential item, after seeing the correct response on the screen. Read, response and check concept of new learning.

Along with the advantages it has got various disadvantages like:

- A computer with the aid of internet has been used to spread many anti-social activities.
- Computers along with internet have a host been misused for forgery and fraudulence. In some causes of fraudulence, we have witnessed cases of monetary/ bank account hacking through internet.
- Besides being the ocean of information internet also provides access to pornographic sites that are harmful.
- Excessive use of internet may lead to unnecessary consumption of our valuable time leading to internet addiction.

4 Conclusion

After analyzing all the given facts it is concluded that in spite of its all disadvantages its constructivist perspective merged the education cycle by effecting the technological instruction. By this way, it requires importance role of technology in education. There are many components
of internet that facilitate the easy, stable and meaningful learning of students. There is a concrete rule of computers and included internet in society and schools. With well-known advantages of high technology, students can catch the consciousness of importance about technology and main issue is how they develop attitudes towards it (Grabe, et al, 2001). It is a questionable how effectively and what are the attitudes of students toward internet as a positive role in education.

5 References