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Management education using social media

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Abstract

The millennial generation of students are digital natives coming to higher education with extensive experience in social media. Business and other organizations are expecting their recruits to have high proficiency in these technologies, too. This article is an overview of the use of the main social media in teaching. Facebook, blogs, YouTube, Twitter, MySpace, and Second Life are discussed with examples of how they can be used to foster robust collaboration among learners in management education. The movement to richer media such as video blogs (vlogs) is assessed. Caveats for implementing the social media in higher educational settings are noted.

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Keywords: social media; collaboration; management education; networking



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Introduction

At the outset of the second decade of the 21st century, management educators find their students are digital natives, sometimes called “millennial students” (Reinhardt *et al.*, 2009), who have been involved with computers from the time they were toddlers. While still in preschool they enjoyed computer games such as *Putt Putt Saves the Zoo* (Humongous Entertainment, 1995). They grew up with online virtual worlds and simulations, such as *World of Warcraft* and *Sims Online*. So they generally feel comfortable with computer-based collaborations such as those using social media. Social media are largely free and generally usable by students and instructors. These collaborative platforms are collectively known as Web 2.0 technologies and are characterized by the fostering of a high level of interactivity with groundbreaking implications for educational practice (Selwyn, 2007). Students using computer-mediated communication can have richer, more extensive exchanges than are likely in a face-to-face (F2F) classroom situation. This sometimes immersive experience can lead to more positive student attitudes and outcomes (Mazer *et al.*, 2007). It is useful for students to become more knowledgeable about sites such as Facebook, as social networking sites are increasingly where companies are turning for marketing, recruitment, and other activities (Hagel and Brown, 2008). This article will provide an overview of teaching approaches and issues using such social media as Facebook, blogs, YouTube, Twitter, MySpace, and virtual worlds such as Second Life.



Facebook

The current social networking platform of choice among students in higher education is Facebook (Selwyn, 2007). Facebook users have personalized websites called "Profiles" that they develop through easy-to-use menus. Users can adjust the privacy settings of their accounts so as to limit access to their Facebook profile. "Friend" status generally enables full access to a person's profile including the ability to view all the photographs in the person's albums there and post comments to it. One can send "Friend Requests" to other Facebook members and correspondingly accept friend requests from other people in order to link up, thus allowing access to view each other's profiles and write on each other's "Walls," which are interactive blogs of their doings and comments from other people. These walls are often embellished with links, photographs, videos, and virtual items or gifts. Special pages can also be created for events and groups.

Not widely known is that leading scholarly management societies have Facebook groups. For example, the Organizational Behavior Teaching Society and the Academy of Management have them. These groups are ready ways to locate links to Facebook profiles of other management instructors to enable deeper interfaces with them.

Uses of Facebook

The uses of Facebook by management instructors include the ability to provide an attractive interactive venue, such as a Facebook group, for students to post threaded discussions on course-related material and activities, as well as reply to other student postings creating the sort of interactivity expected by accreditation agencies, most particularly in online courses. Some discussions might be initiated by the instructor, others by students. By posting comments about class sessions to each other's walls, students might restructure their thoughts on the information, improving their learning through repetition. Some students might be assigned the task of putting up wall postings on important content and other things for particular class sessions. Additional students might be assigned the task of checking the completeness and accuracy of the information (Selwyn, 2007).

Another assignment might be for teams of learners to create Facebook events. To create a Facebook event, a learner would go to their Events page by clicking the "Events" link on the left of the login page, then clicking the "Create an Event"

button on the right of the page. One of the event types is "Education," and they can choose "Informational Meeting" as a subtype. They might try to create an event to raise money for some good cause and try to publicize it to the wider studentry of the university through Facebook. Students can invite their entire friends list to the event. Also, administrators of the group have the option of inviting all of the group members to the event (Holzner, 2009). Additionally, Facebook can be used as a means of recruiting an opportunity sample of respondents for student research projects, even doctoral dissertations (Selwyn, 2007).

Facebook is being used already by the preponderance of students in higher education. Therefore, having students use it to get to know each other and perhaps form a Facebook group for the class where they can post threaded discussion is quite readily accomplished. Some students might well add other students in the class spontaneously. By having a Facebook exercise, one can have diverse, handicapped, older, foreign, and commuter students networked in the course more. Indeed, gaining insight into each other's interests and doings could foster greater solidarity in the class as a whole and in project teams. Of course, the instructor might suggest that students avoid displaying content that might get other students upset. Perhaps using a limited profile for the purpose of the course might be advisable for some (Vander Veer, 2008).

Instructors sometimes "Friend" their students to their Facebook profiles as part of a course project, to seem more approachable to building relationships, or out of sincere interest in their doings. One of the issues of using Facebook in teaching is privacy. Facebook has been called a "weird twilight zone between public and private information" (Cohen, 2009). For example, one instructor of MBA students had a student with several photos of binge drinking from hoses and being passed out in various poses. It was suggested by the instructor that he might wish to eliminate those to sidestep the chance that his drunken escapades might be parsed by potential employers to his detriment. It is possible to request students to waive their privacy, but once they do so, such things as photos of drunken antics might be there for the instructor and other students to ponder. This creates a teachable moment since it might key them into the vulnerability they might have if fellow employees or, worse yet, superior managers might parse them (Cohen, 2009). Familiarity breeds contempt.



Sometimes students find that having overly extensive and rich access to an instructor's personal life through Facebook diminishes their credibility (Mazer *et al.*, 2007). Instructors using Facebook may find that students and others might post discrediting or defamatory messages on their or other learner's walls, creating problems on occasion. Comments posted to a teacher's wall on Facebook may affect a student's perception of a teacher in unexpected ways. Instructors must look at Facebook and other social media with a mind to ascertaining whether the information available to students there is appropriate by the standards of the university administrators and students. Young instructors might be able to utilize social networking sites in ways that are more comfortable with learners who might perceive attempts at informal friendliness by older instructors as "creepy" or seemingly perverse (Mazer *et al.*, 2007).

Blogs

A "blog" is a web-based log, journal, or chronicle developed by an individual or group, with ongoing updates that feature diary-type commentary, often with critiques of and links to online articles and relevant news. Blogs can be a great medium for sharing content among a course's learners and the instructor. The instructor might create a blog covering the progress of the course, session by session. PowerPoint slides, lecture notes, videos of lectures or class sessions, etc., might be included for learners and others (assuming this is openly posted on the web) to view. Learners might share notes on articles, interviews, and other materials related to class assignments there too. Ideally this will allow bloggers to cover much more material than they would be able to on their own (Murley, 2008). An instructor may create a "vlog" (video blog) including videos of important segments of classes, directions for reports, and comments on the progress of the class. Students might have vlogs where they share highlights of their project team meetings, articles they have been reading for the course, or multimedia reports that they have developed for the course.

YouTube

As we enter the second decade of the 21st century, the use of video is burgeoning in many areas of society, including higher education. This is fostered by new easy-to-use pocket-sized camcorders that come with one-touch digital zoom and high-

definition resolution with models offered by Flip, Creative Labs, Kodak, Sony, Sanyo, Samsung, etc. For example, some new cameras are the size of an iPod and can shoot hours of footage, plug into a USB port for easy downloading, come with free software for easy editing (which took the author all of five seconds to get started with), feature image stabilization, and are available in the United States for about \$130 and in Europe for about EUR 160. So, it is possible to have a class of students all acquire such inexpensive pocket-camcorders instead of textbooks and provide them with a protocol of interview questions and supporting video tutorials.

Students might be asked to go interview managers in firms they are familiar with or ones they might locate by searching for alumni in LinkedIn as subjects. They might be instructed to ask questions constructively to elicit interesting and useful business cases. So, if the course is Strategy, they might be asked, "would you discuss the most interesting strategic action your company has taken?" Ten minutes of the highlights of such an interview might be shared with other learners, either on a course website or in a F2F class session. Alternatively, students might be requested to post them to free public forums like YouTube, Facebook, or Vimeo. Some of these new cameras have "Post to Facebook" or "Post to YouTube" as an output option. That is, the ease of making and sharing videos is getting incredibly easier.

Twitter

Twitter, the best-known free microblogging application, is particularly useful for fast exchanges of thoughts, ideas, and information (Ebner, 2009; Reinhardt *et al.*, 2009). It presents many possibilities for reframing communication among students and their instructors about curricular and co-curricular topics (Reinhardt *et al.* (2009)). "Tweets" are Twitter messages which may be up to 140 characters. Twitter is excellent for giving a quick and simple notification to people or sharing something such as a hyperlink just as it is needed (McFedries, 2007). Generally tweets are about what the sender is currently doing or thinking, or to alert followers about some imminent event or particularly notable resource. Other Twitter users who have been accepted as followers of a particular person's tweets will receive them. Twitter has been characterized as the prime example of Mobile 2.0, as a communication platform accessible anywhere and anytime (Griswold, 2007).

Using Twitter

The instructor should set his or her account so that only the groups he wants to receive certain tweets, for instance particular classes, do so. Some instructors allow tweeting during class sessions to involve and excite learners about the session's discussions and topics. Instructors can bolster class morale by sending out tweets such as "I look forward to engaging our guest speaker tonight who will discuss his role in developing new programs for Singapore Airlines." Twitter can be used to enable a network to contribute a spontaneous pool of ideas, links, and other resources collaborating on the development of a larger support base.

In a large class section of perhaps hundreds of learners, tweeting enables an immense amount of interactivity, ideally enriching the sessions in which it occurs (Ebner, 2009). It might be used by learners to obtain reactions from select other learners before sharing a final version to the entire group. For courses with projects that have a series of steps or procedures that other students might have already traversed, tweeting might help class members bring each other along.

At Marquette University Professor Gee Ekechi assigns some students to tweet guest speakers' thoughts during the presentation, called "live tweeting." This exercise is intended to foster the development of listening, information gathering, multi-tasking, and succinct writing skills. It also forces students to pay attention and develops the classroom community environment via increasing interaction (Perez, 2009). Linda Menck, who also teaches at Marquette, reported increased communication with students about a course and its topics through the use of Twitter. She also reads student tweets to see what they are interested in and what they find problematic about the material. She is glad to see them exchange useful links about the advertising industry and public relations, which are the focus of the course (Perez, 2009). Menck has found Twitter a medium that allows instructors to be more informal with students. She reports that one student was drop-jawed when she tweeted, "Going into 3-hour faculty meeting. Time to catch up on my sleep!"

Course event announcements

Twitter can be used to announce events and meetings, or to remind attendees to bring specific items, or to remind students that a particular report should be brought to class, or that team presentations should include embedded videos. Students

might use Twitter to organize teams for particular projects.

Twitter features

One interesting Twitter utility is hash tagging one's tweets. Hash tags are a simple way of grouping messages using a "#" sign followed by a name or code for a particular purpose. So a message might be "#examination" to enable learners to be able to properly sort messages.

Tweeting as distraction: a generational divide

An older instructor might perceive Tweeting students in his class as an indication of their distraction from the doings at the front of the room, which the instructor might see as "the main event" (Reinhardt *et al.*, 2009). However, millennial students often feel most engaged when simultaneously receiving information of a variety of types from multiple sources. That is, for example, this author's Ivy League student son proceeded through secondary school doing math and science assignments while watching movies, IMing, text messaging, and listening to music simultaneously. As someone who entered secondary school in 1961, this author has to wait for the pin to complete its drop in order to focus in a way that seems peculiar to students in the second decade of the 21st century.

Formative evaluation of Twitter

One of Twitter's benefits is the instant feedback it can provide, which of course can either be good or bad. A university that offers a Twitter interface for students to post their gripes to and suggestions for improvements can attempt to deploy quick responses and often agile remedies to improve student satisfaction and ultimately retention. However, it is possible that some students might abuse such a Twitter interface and demand services beyond appropriate levels (Manjoo, 2009). A final caution is "think before you tweet." Most tweets currently end up on the Internet where they can be Googled, forever! (Galagan, 2009). Twitter has enabled more editing capability for existing tweets in late 2009.

MySpace

MySpace is a social networking website that allows users to create individual profiles and provides many utilities and applications for sharing multimedia and blogs with friends. Users create blurbs describing their interests and feelings often more



than opinions. MySpace's popularity has recently been eclipsed by Facebook's success to a great extent. However, students might be encouraged to create MySpace sites to share their endeavors through video and audio files. Students might be assigned to develop a MySpace profile page around a particular course theme, then invite other students and the professor to comment on their work. A student project might be to have them create MySpace-themed pages on a particular industry or various companies in the industry (Kolb, 2008). With more than 150 million members, MySpace guerilla opportunities might be useful for students to be sensitized to. Student exercises on building MySpace friend networks, attracting friends who build buzz and businesses, marketing to specific schools or colleges might be developed (Percival, 2009).

Virtual worlds: Second Life

On September 15, 2009, the University of Texas announced it was creating an archipelago of 45 islands in the Second Life virtual world to provide cost effective, ecologically sustainable, agilely collaborative, innovative, and exciting learning opportunities, for initially 15 higher education institutions in the state. This is to be subsequently extended to all institutions of higher education in the state. Second Life was seen as a way to help students and faculty to collaborate cost effectively with others in different states and nations (Wagner, 2009). The folk singer Bob Dylan (1965) sang, "... you don't have to be a weatherman to tell which way the wind blows." This article's premise is that three-dimensional immersive virtual reality worlds will be the most important management education platform of the future.

Second Life is the virtual world of choice for education (Warburton, 2009). It provides visual, audio, and kinesthetic realism in its virtual space producing an immersive experience that conveys a feeling of being there, as well as a strong sense of cohabitation when other avatars (characters chosen by Second Life participants to represent them) are present (Warburton, 2009). It is a three-dimensional simulated world in which learners can interact with one another, the instructor, and a variety of audio and visual objects (O'Hara, 2009). Importantly, it aligns with the learning preferences of millennial students (Jarmon *et al.*, 2008), who want to be engaged with multimedia that is non-channelized, interactive, collaborative,

international, unpredictable, exciting, and novel. Multi-user virtual worlds in some ways replicate and in other ways extend far beyond physical classrooms (Haycock and Kemp, 2008). In Second Life, students obtain avatars, which may reflect their real appearances or quite different ones. Indeed, it is quite possible for an avatar in Second Life, in the course of a meeting, to change its visage from that of a man into that of a woman, into that of a Jedi knight, into that of an octopus, and then into that of a meteor. In Second Life learners can work together in teams sharing documents, PowerPoints, videos, and their comments in both natural voice and text media. Learners can visit existing businesses and organizations in Second Life; interview their owners, staff, and customers; assess their business and revenue models; learn various marketing approaches; consider a virtual business's facility development plans; develop human resource management plans; etc. Teams of students might be assigned to create businesses in a virtual world. A forthcoming textbook *Management through Collaboration: Teaming in a Networked World* (Wankel and Global Team, 2011) will have innumerable exercises and projects for learners from scores of countries to collaborate globally in Second Life. As with all assignments, instructors can ascertain the length and depth of Second Life projects to assure that they do not take an inordinate time given the amount of learning anticipated.

Learners can be motivated by the opportunity to express their personal identity through their development and use of avatars. Also, the opportunity to create objects and win instructional games in Second Life can be motivational for many learners. Some instructors put students to work creating three-dimensional objects in Second Life from basic building blocks called prims. However, to do so requires more time commitment by students and support staff. Further, the benefits to learners from engaging in such tasks seem elusive.

Diverse and global

Second Life has many areas where people from countries around the world gather and speak their own languages. For example, there is a virtual Poznań, Poland, where Polish students gather to relax in cafes and walk around the old town. Visitors to Second Life are able to readily locate places with foreign architecture styles, cultures, and languages. It is possible to utilize automatic translations among many languages using the



Google translation utility when text is used in Second Life. Also, it is possible for avatars to be conduits of natural voice exchanges. So it is possible to be a cybertraveler in the virtual world and visit a Korean village where you make inquiries and arrange things using a phrasebook or your limited Korean vocabulary. It is possible to have field trips for classes to go to foreign sites in Second Life together to experience and discuss them together.

Learners can be assigned to create several very different characters from their normal identity, perhaps a different race, ethnicity, gender, a disabled person, someone of quite a different age and then keep a log on how people react to each of the different characters and analyze these differences and report on them (MacLeod, 2008).

Launching learners into a virtual world

As mentioned above, today's students come to higher education as digital natives, with hundreds of hours of experience in virtual environments (Haycock and Kemp, 2008). They typically find Second Life to be a very engaging interface that maintains their involvement. Sometimes students have preconceived notions about what learning exercises in Second Life would be like. Some expect that it would be very close to the *Sims Online* game. Others anticipate something akin to *Grand Theft Auto*, thinking that they will drive sporty cars and playfully engage all objects they encounter.

Even in the second decade of the 21st century, some learners are intimidated at the prospect of creating an avatar and launching it independently in a virtual world such as Second Life (Dodson, 2008). This can be addressed by creating support structures among peers, the instructor, information technology staff, teaching assistants, students from previous sections, etc. Some faculty, including this author, have made Second Life assignments team projects to partner up less techno-savvy students with the more technologically adept ones so they can help each other understand and operate in a virtual world. This works out extremely well and provides very valuable leadership, mentoring, and peer facilitation experience. Other instructors have their students work independently in Second Life, exploring on their own and reporting their observations back to the class. This has the advantage of curtailing free riders. Students can be requested to blog their Second Life experiences and their reflections on them as well as their

recommendations for improving virtual world assignments.

Joe Sanchez (2009b), of the University of Texas, has designed Second Life orientation activities centered on creativity and play. His students develop a familiarity with Second Life and their abilities to operate in it in a carnival or a tropical beach setting. Sanchez has a welter of interesting and involving events and games which students can play to win prizes at the carnival. Sanchez's purpose is to design student orientations that avoid instructor-led, step-by-step directions typical in many other courses. Frauenheim (2006) reports that people are willing to be more flexible in their thinking and to experiment in virtual worlds.

A popular way to transition students into virtual world-based learning is by providing them with a virtual university campus where they can relax with the structure and familiarity of a F2F academic environment (Haycock and Kemp, 2008). Indeed some universities such as Harvard have created virtual copies of buildings from their brick-and-mortar campus in Second Life. Some schools such as the University of Cincinnati recreate classrooms for learners to communicate with their instructors and other students (Haines, 2007). Despite a wide range of initial proficiency in the use of Second Life by students, most students succeed when required to reach increasing levels of competence in its use (O'Connor and Sakshaug, 2009).

Course support and librarian interface

Library services are offered by a number of higher educational institutions in virtual worlds. Charles Livermore, eBrarian, of the St. John's University (New York) library, assists learners in overcoming stumbling blocks they might encounter on the road to becoming active in the virtual world. His avatar Hopalong Oh has an office on Emgeetee Island in Second Life (owned by the author). He has worked in supporting management courses, holding sessions for students on researching companies and using analytic tools such as the Baldrige Criteria through meetings in Second Life. He has augmented his presentations with media including PowerPoint slides in Second Life. In addition to office hours in Second Life, he has made himself available for meetings at a wide variety of times, thus aligning with the schedules of students living in Europe while taking online courses offered by professors living in New York. One benefit for St. John's students has been that those located in semester abroad situations have been able to have



personal one-on-one reference librarian support from one of the university's most knowledgeable and respected reference librarians.

Since Second Life has to be downloaded and installed onto a machine, students relying on desktops in university labs might encounter difficulties. This might be addressed by arranging to have Second Life installed onto certain machines and having the location of these noted in the assignment.

There are email-based discussion lists where communities of those involved in teaching in virtual worlds share information and support each other. A leading one is called the Second Life Educators Discussion, or SLED (Second Life Educators, 2009). This group has more than 5000 participants. Additionally, SLED and other such associations have groups and pages in other social media.

Examples of higher education in Second Life

Just as life in virtual worlds reflects life in the real world to a certain extent, so education in virtual worlds reflects education in the real world. That is, in both situations instructors can lecture, have discussions with learners, have learners work in break out teams, have learners do projects in service-learning, etc. Certainly, just as some learners do much more than is required in brick-and-mortar classrooms, some learners in Second Life perform incredibly beyond what is required or expected. Similarly, students can be absent unprepared and unmotivated in either situation. One activity that some instructors in Second Life undertake is to have learners visit Second Life sites related to the topic of their courses. So, for example, some information science instructors take their learners on tours of Second Life library sites (Sanchez, 2009a). Another type of student project in Second Life is digital storytelling where students create an experience or display, which others can walk through and be told their stories. Such stories might be about their careers or about their grappling with a particular project in the course. Some instructors might require students to provide them with progress updates on the development of a story display or experience as they proceed through a series of steps. Some instructors might require that learners provide an outline of the story or experience they have been working on to be approved before they create it. As is the case in real world courses, instructors should solicit ideas on

improving the course and its assignments as the course proceeds (Sanchez, 2009a).

The United States Air Force (USAF) has developed a robust simulated operations facility in Second Life for education and training with their December 2008 launch of MyBase, a set of regions in this virtual world. Visitors are provided access to information on the USAF and its history. It has numerous interactive displays that avatars can operate by clicking on them. Learners and others may engage in activities such as flying a P-51 Mustang, which is a virtual replica of the aircraft used by the Tuskegee airmen in WWII, try out a challenge course and shooting range, watch a movie in the base theater, dance to USAF band music in the club, or engage in a basic military experience in which one can try out actual replicas of US military dorms, dining halls, etc. The Air Force hopes to leverage and further develop the skills of digital natives and their comfort with the use of electronic technologies to bolster the usefulness and effectiveness of its training. Avatars can visit MyBase by logging into Second Life and typing "MyBase" into the search box (Richeson, 2008; O'Hara, 2009). The Air Force plans to develop certification and degree programs to be earned at MyBase. In a future phase, the Air Force will build another new secure site in which operational environments will be created for training. For example, prior to deployment to an airbase in Iraq, airmen might use MyBase to train together for their future assignment. Similarly, the US Navy has a naval undersea warfare center in Second Life used for operational testing, training, collaboration, product development, and design work (O'Hara, 2009).

Games, role-plays, simulations, and virtual internships

For many years, University and industry training and sensitization for many job categories and functions have utilized real-life role playing or other simulations for businesspeople, transportation operators including pilots, medical personnel, lawyers, teachers, nuclear power plant operators, dangerous material processors, and soldiers. Multi-User Virtual Environments such as Second Life are especially well-suited media for the development and deployment of engaging role-playing scenarios for learning. Performative action-based activities such as role-playing and improvisation built with a progression of steps or scaffolding

activities foster experiential learning (Jarmon *et al.*, 2009).

Instructors can create games and activities in Second Life that engage students in learning material. For example, learners could take true or false quizzes where a true response might be indicated by leaping into the air and a false response might be indicated by spinning around (Oishi, 2007).

Virtual workplaces can be created where students might come to have a variety of operations explained to them and to do some of them in concert with others. Perhaps they might be provided with an overview of the activities of an upscale resort hotel. Or, they may be shown the many tasks completed in running a seafood restaurant in Manhattan. Because the time, costs, and other logistics of travel might be mitigated, learners might be provided many more virtual internships than would be feasible for real-life ones. At San Jose State University's School of Library and Information Science, Library Science students are offered opportunities through Second Life to develop their competence and comfort in working with library users (Haycock and Kemp, 2008).

IBM has new employee orientations and mentoring in virtual worlds. A robust Second Life application is IBM's new employee orientation and mentoring in virtual worlds (Frauenheim, 2006). Similarly, student affairs offices of universities might hold many parts of their new student orientations in virtual world settings. For example, the parents of foreign students who might not be able to come with their sons or daughters to on-campus orientation activities might be able to join with other parents in informal meetings and receptions as well as sit down in various replicas of campus venues to listen to presentations on financial aid, housing and residence life, student club opportunities, the structure of the curriculum and its logic, and various welcomes from deans and other administrators. Similarly, course instructors might hold meetings in a virtual world a week or two prior to the first meeting of their F2F course for the purpose of discussing the course requirements and textbooks, or answering any questions students might have about the course.

Harvard Law School has mock trials of real disputes about Second Life property in the virtual world (Seton Hall Law School, 2007). St. John's University in New York hosted the first virtual

world debate with the University of Vermont. The moderator was located in Slovenia (Murley, 2008).

In the second decade of the 21st century, many categories of people must be trained to have the best responses to emergencies. For example, educational institutions of all levels have had incidents involving violent perpetrators from the student body, as in the Virginia Tech incident, or by terrorists, as in the Russian school incident. Some institutions, such as Seton Hall University, have had catastrophic fires. Second Life can enable simulations with gunmen, explosions, and other emergencies that would be difficult and perhaps inadvisable to implement for training purposes in F2F situations. So, students and instructors might be provided with information on procedures to be followed in an emergency, and then they might enter a Second Life simulation of one where they can see how these procedures are supposed to work.

The University of Maryland provides simulations of a spectrum of emergencies involving highway accidents, oil rigs, refineries, and offices that enable a discussion of decisions on repair alternatives and the deployment of replicas of equipment that would be deployed in real world remedies (Semuels, 2008). One could imagine such things, as sensitizing students to issues like workplace violence could be accomplished through Second Life simulations.

Interviewing Second Life business people

This writer has developed exercises in the Second Life virtual world for learners to study business models of entrepreneurs there. For example, a student can go into a dance club and ask to speak to the owner(s) and interview them about their revenue model, marketing approaches, recruitment compensation, production, outsourcing, and other business activities. Then they can be assigned the task of developing their own virtual world business plans.

Organizational culture

Second Life has its own sets of codes, norms, and etiquette, however, students in Second Life also are part of the university's culture and, perhaps, the cultures of business students, the class, and their project team in the class. The amalgam of cultural elements from these varied memberships can be quite different from any of them separately. One application is to have students play organizational roles and do things such as try to foster different sorts of organizational cultures.



Universities might set dress codes for the students such as business casual for attending class, but allow looser standards for social events (Semuels, 2008). Meetings in Second Life at Sun Microsystems, the Silicon Valley company, have added an additional rule: employees should show up as humans. However, other companies allow workers to take the form of animals and other entities while they are at work in the virtual world (Semuels, 2008). A meeting by the author with students on his Saint John's financed Emgeetee Island in Second Life had the students changing avatars during the discussion from gorilla form, to female form, to monster form, to male form. It took a bit of time to get comfortable with this. At an Intel meeting a man in a rocket pack jetted in and out of a room. Certainly creative expression is a hallmark of Second Life that corporate America is still learning how best to embrace (Semuels, 2008).

Community building

One instructional benefit of Second Life is enabling a rich media environment for social interaction among the students and the creation of communities within the class. The masking of real-life identities in the virtual world is useful to dissolve social boundaries that might exist between athletes, foreign students, people of different genders, heights, etc. This in turn might lower social anxiety (Jarmon *et al.*, 2009).

Team and community creation in Second Life is an emerging topic in higher education. Various approaches to facilitate collaboration in virtual worlds are being tried. The sense of shared presence in Second Life is also being studied. Such issues as the dissolving of real world social boundaries are being examined for their benefits in educational situations.

Meetings

Second Life can be an exciting venue for presenting to students. It allows numerous people from far-flung places to assemble in one place to view a presentation without physically leaving their computers. Second Life has been the venue for conferences such as the 18th Annual National Service-Learning Conference in 2007 (PR Newswire, 2007). Saint John's University hosted a large group of professors, administrators, and doctoral students in 2009 from the University of Florida to examine their facilities and hear about their teaching approach in Second Life. Seton Hall University had a Constitution Day program that took place in

a Second Life virtual Guantanamo Bay detention center (Marks, 2007).

Service learning

Some instructors have utilized Second Life as a venue for service learning. For example, Central Michigan University students teamed up with the United Nations Organization on a joint online education project in which they were assigned the task of brainstorming ways a not-for-profit organization could raise real money in a virtual world (Hansen, 2008). The American Cancer Society raised more than \$115,000 in 2007 through a footrace for Second Life avatars. Other ideas for raising money for not-for-profit companies include charging audiences for admission to musical or other theatrical events in the virtual world and selling stylish virtual clothing and gear for Second Life avatars (Hansen, 2008).

There are many non-profit organizations located within Second Life. Clusters of them occur in areas including Commonwealth Island and Non-profit Commons. Non-profit organizations in Second Life are often very willing to work with students on class projects that benefit their targeted communities or help in running the activities of a non-profit itself. So, Second Life can be used as a virtual world platform for real-life community engagement. The Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter Partnership Foundation awarded an Academic Service and Entrepreneur grant to University of Texas students enrolled in a course taught by Joe Sanchez called Working in Virtual Worlds. It was used to spur a competition to find the most innovative way for students to serve their community online through Second Life (Sanchez, 2009a).

Also, at the University of Texas, Joe Sanchez had a student team create a three-dimensional virtual world environment where the usefulness of mosquito nets was provided as an immersive experience of malaria prevention in sub-Saharan Africa. The students worked with a not-for-profit called Nothing but Nets (Sanchez, 2009a).

Caveats

Second Life, like real life, has places and people's actions that might be considered "inappropriate" in a university course setting. Therefore, it is wise to have students warned in the information on the course outline about assignments in Second Life that they might encounter something inappropriate (Berger, 2008) and that if this was a significant concern for them, an alternative assignment might

be developed. However, university islands and other places can be restricted from “mature content,” etc., in Second Life. Unlike real life, in virtual worlds one can always close the program to immediately eliminate any unpleasant encounters. In late 2009, Linden Labs introduced new viewers that exclude mature content. Second Life currently requires that viewers be adults to access mature content, which helps protect learners from inappropriate matter. Still, learners should be given instructions on how to exit any area quickly (for instance, by setting multiple landmarks that they can quickly be teleported to) in case they encounter someone with whom they do not desire to interact. One such landmark that students might have is the Sistine Chapel on Vassar College’s island (O’Connor and Sakshaug, 2009).

IBM has developed instructions for its employees for Second Life conduct that if employees “encounter behavior that would not be acceptable inside IBM, you should walk away or even sign out of the virtual world” (Semuels, 2008). Intel has informed its employees that if they use Intel in their avatar names they are not allowed to visit some of Second Life’s seamier locations, such as virtual strip clubs. Indeed, one might suggest that students or employees be required to have the avatars they use at their university or in their company dedicated to totally appropriate uses, and if they wish to do something more venture-some they should create a separate avatar (Semuels, 2008).

Students must contribute a relatively significant amount of time to become active in Second Life (Sanchez, 2009a). Second Life as an interface for educational activities can be cost effective, engaging, sustainable, and provide useful experiences in the immersive interfaces that will be commonplace soon. The University of Leicester’s Second Life support people have reported that by 2013 they believe students should find learning in a virtual world as normal as attending F2F lectures (*Western Daily Press*, 2008). The reaction of students to their experience in Second Life exercises to a great extent is a function of the quality of the learning exercises developed for them by the instructor. If they are seemingly pointless, ambiguous, not properly weighted in the credit towards the final course grade calculation, or otherwise dismaying to the students, of course reactions from learners such as boring, complicated, frustrating, awkward, tedious, empty, ugly, or overwhelming might be the result (Sanchez, 2009b).

Conversely, a well-designed and supported learning experience in Second Life might have learners eager to create Second Life business enterprises and inform their friends in business about the opportunities and uses of this interface.

Second Life is a virtual environment that shares aspects of real life. It shares some features of online gaming with realistic virtual figures called avatars. It markets very differently from gaming because the users themselves can choose the interactions themselves (O’Connor and Sakshaug, 2009). In virtual worlds it is possible to present learners with helicopters, club parties with techno music, and many benefits and entertainments that would be hard to match as far as the pleasure that might be provided in the real world by instructors who might offer pizzas one session (Jana and McConnon, 2006).

Currently higher education institutions can get classroom buildings and other educational buildings for free from the New Media Consortium in Second Life, <http://www.nmc.org/>, accessed October 8, 2009 (New Media Consortium, 2009). However, owning land in second life requires fee payments.

Conclusion

Students currently entering management education are digital natives (Palfrey and Gasser, 2008; Tapscott, 2009) with extensive experience using social and other new media. Business and other organizations are increasingly taking advantage of this wherewithal. This article has provided an overview of the use in management education of such social media as Facebook, blogs, YouTube, Twitter, MySpace, and Second Life for collaborative projects.

Currently Web 2.0 is characterized by its mobile and virtual world collaborative platforms. Social media continues to evolve. Over the next decade, Web 3.0 will emerge. Students using social media will (1) interact *ubiquitously* in the sense that they will be able to engage in project collaboration using their mobile devices wherever they happen to be; (2) regularly utilize *heterogeneous* smart (artificial intelligence) interfaces with many types of people, often through automatic translation interfaces; and (3) engage in *massive* groups, with class assignments frequently entailing collaborations of hundreds of other learners in disparate locations (Witbrock, 2008). New platforms will lessen the divide between physical and virtual reality (Quitney and Rainie, 2008). The web will become completely



integrated into every physical environment (Garrett, 2008).

This author is currently developing a management textbook with almost 1000 management professors in 90 countries (Wankel and global team, 2011) using crowdsourcing, which involves leveraging a mass collaboration enabled by Web 2.0 technologies to complete the project. This type of distributed problem solving and coproduction will be increasingly important over the next decade for endeavors of all sorts. It can be expected that crowdsourcing will be used in management education to provide learners with direct experience in working together with peers in far-flung places on collaborative assignments. Web 3.0 will help management students to understand which of their peers have the background and know-how to best

collaborate with them on a project, reflecting the emergence over the next 10 years of smarter web agents who will provide advice on the context of the answers they provide. For example, if a student is researching a business plan for establishing a surfboard rental business in a Chinese resort, Web 3.0 applications might recommend particular related businesses that might be suppliers or competitors in the region that the student is targeting in his or her report (Ohler, 2008). Indeed, we can expect the social media platforms discussed in this article to play a central role in the future of management education globally.

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