ABSTRACT

This article examines the value of social media curricula in business-school courses. One required introductory computer applications course in business was selected to pilot social media exercises and content. To provide context, literature and empirical support addressing social media in academe is reviewed. Specific examples of social media curricula are discussed, including sample assignments. Evidence of the perceived value of social media curricula incorporation among students and faculty is also addressed.

KEYWORDS: Social Media, Pedagogical Methods, Information Systems, B-Schools

INTRODUCTION

There has been a tremendous paradigm shift in how social media (SM) is utilized in today’s college environment. The capabilities of SM have shifted dramatically over the past few years from primarily a tool for social communication to a medium capable of demonstrating various academic lessons: communication, psychology, sales, marketing, and information systems. Capability, capacity, and usage has all dramatically increased while costs associated with SM usage has remained relatively low or in most instances free. Unlike traditional academic curriculums modeled on discipline-specific lessons and learning outcomes, SM bridges several disciplines synchronously, allowing for greater student learning assessment.

Several years ago, the authors of this teaching brief engaged in a state-wide research study examining the impact of SM usage among college students. After identifying several outcomes, the authors realized that SM usage among college students was not being effectively captured for academic outcomes. Though college student SM usage for social purposes is high, there exists opportunities to explore using SM for academic purposes that could enhance the overall college experience.

Demonstrating the value of academic SM usage in the classroom at the college level was particularly challenging largely in part because so few faculty members engage students in academic SM use. The primary author decided to engage several other key college contributors to determine if academic SM usage could be promoted in the business school (B-School). The B-School was selected in part because all contributing authors reside in the B-School and because SM usage in business and industry is already high, suggesting B-School’s would be
better served by engaging SM from various academic lenses. Specific exhibits of SM usage as a research medium, assignment mechanism, communication tool, and faculty-student relationship instrument were introduced. Benefits, challenges, and opportunities for SM development were promoted.

Finally, specific courses were identified as academic sandboxes for academic SM introduction. Course selection was critical because certain courses had curriculums that aligned well with SM use. As an added benefit, academic SM use in these specific courses meant a greater word-of-mouth marketing opportunity because these courses were part of the general core curriculum, meaning all students had to take these courses and the course enrollments were relatively high.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Over the last decade, rapid development and exploitation has taken place in the area of information and communication technologies. Notably, the growth of what are called “Web 2.0” technologies has had a dramatic impact on how people share information (Thomas & Thomas, 2012). Web 2.0 is the technology that enable users to consume, contribute, share, and augment content in an online environment (Tuten & Marks, 2012). Synonymous with Web 2.0 is the concept of SM which allows for the online means of communication, conveyance, and collaboration among interconnected and interdependent networks (Tuten & Mark, 2012).

Largely created, adopted, and used by college students, SM has become a dominant daily activity for most college students (Zula, Yarrish, & Pawelzik, 2011). In academic environments, students use an array of SM tools from micro-blogging to web-based classroom conferences to complement and extend their classroom experiences (Rex, 2011). Existing studies show that over 25% of college students use social media for coursework purposes (Tuten & Marks, 2012).

Consistent with college student use of SM, some college faculty already utilize social media for various purposes: communicating with students, share supporting course content, develop faculty-student relationships to enhance student learning, and for research purposes (Blankenship, 2011). However, faculty academic SM use remains primarily an enigma: faculty still are not comfortable engaging students on SM for a host of reasons including creating biases, sharing controversial material or opinions, and harming one’s reputation (Crittenden & Klepper, 2010). Though there is some research suggesting that faculties are beginning to utilize SM for supplementing existing course content, SM in academic remains confined to specific disciplines like marketing or sales (Blankenship, 2011). This limited SM use by faculty and strong SM presence by students further illustrates a large and unnecessary gap between students and faculty.

The literature also addresses specific learning outcomes associated with academic SM usage. Blankenship (2011) contends that academic SM use improves student engagement by encouraging more fruitful discussions of class content for those students who do not feel comfortable talking in front of large groups or may be restricted by the time constraints of a class. Kupetz (2010) values the concept of blogging, or sharing opinions in an online environment because it allows for students to disseminate what they read and then contribute meaningful opinions to a larger audience. Thomas and Thomas (2012) believe that SM use enhances traditional teaching strategies because of the ability to modify or continually develop SM content with respect to topic shifts, current business events, and fast, easily-accessed content delivery channels of this content. In addition, facilitating SM use in the classroom promotes out-of-class academic SM use which enhances peer-learning and student networking development, both of which are critical learning outcomes in any B-School (Tuten & Marks, 2012).
Social media in the contemporary business world is not a new concept, though B-Schools often treat this as a growing phenomenon. Businesses and organizations have been utilizing various SM tools for marketing and sales purposes for some time (Young, 2009). Within marketing and sales fields, what has shifted is the greater emphasis on SM marketing and lesser emphasis on older, more expensive marketing approaches that involved mass physical mailings and individualized outreach and engagement (Rex, 2011). Expanding beyond the marketing and sales capabilities of SM, other areas of business utilize SM for a host of outcomes: sharing information internally, engaging customers for quality purposes, addressing financial concerns, and networking with potential future customers and employees alike (Meredith, 2012).

The power of SM has been widely adopted outside the academic environment, notably, in the business world. For many students, using SM is not merely a valuable social networking tool, but an essential part of preparing for careers (Blankenship, 2011). These students desire to learn by completing projects as a supplement to traditional lecture – exam curricula. To accommodate students, experiential learning has become a dominant facet in higher education, particularly in B-Schools (Young, 2009). SM use for academic purposes including classroom assignments allows for students to enhance their technology skills, exposes students to greater networking opportunities, and allows for faculty to enhance their curriculums through free or inexpensive technology tools that are considered exciting, fun, dynamic, and cutting-edge (Cardon & Okoro, 2010).

SOCIAL MEDIA CURRICULUM

While still evolving, SM curricula typically manifests in the marketing and sales disciplines within B-Schools (Young, 2009). The public-oriented dynamic of these disciplines lends itself to the SM components of reaching large audiences with mass marketing content in a timely and inexpensive fashion (Blankenship, 2011). However, there remains at the core of all SM a critical information systems or technology component that all B-School students, regardless of major, must be familiar with. SM encompasses not just the soft-science majors, but also has the potential to impact learning outcomes in the finance, management, accounting, and information systems disciplines, among others. Typically, B-School core curricula requires all students to take an introductory information systems course, and most B-school majors also have discipline-specific information systems course-offerings: marketing coursework includes marketing software use, and the finance and accounting disciplines typically incorporate financial software in several courses. In addition, numerous studies across multiple B-School disciplines support the belief that many businesses and industries expect students to have familiarity and experience with SM platforms (Kupetz, 2010; Rex, 2011; Meredith, 2012). In the context of this teaching brief, the social media platforms that are dominant in today’s business world include Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter.

The SM platform selected for inclusion in the introductory information systems course is Facebook. Facebook represents the dominant, cross-disciplinary SM tool which encompasses an overwhelming majority of college students, a significant number of faculty members, and nearly all large business and industries (Duggan & Smith, 2013). Although the information systems course selected is considered freshman level, it is a core business course required by all business students and thus is often populated by all students regardless of class level (e.g., sophomores, juniors). As such, assignments were indicative of learning outcomes spanning freshman- to senior-level. The six Facebook assignments, abridged descriptions, and intended learning outcomes that were required of all students in the information systems course selected are provided below:
(1) SM Digital Footprint – Create or modify an existing SM presence emphasizing business professionalism. The business SM page should be free of unprofessional content, reflect an educated and mature approach to SM use, and represent the student’s best work.
   a. Learning outcomes: students will learn how to create, modify, and manage SM content and websites through this practical exercise that enhances communication, marketing, and information systems skills.

(2) SM Data Mining – Search for colleagues, faculty members of interest, groups/clubs of interest, and any particular companies or organizations of interest. Examine SM dynamics of these individuals and organizations through assessment of their digital footprint. A written summary of experiences should follow.
   a. Learning outcomes: students will learn how to use SM tools for data mining purposes which enhance research, marketing, and sales skills.

(3) SM Networking – “Follow,” “Like,” or send a message to several networks. This can include introductory messages to individuals, adding certain organizations to your network, or sharing content from organizations of interest on your personal SM page. A written summary of experiences should follow.
   a. Learning outcomes: students will learn how to effectively network through SM including selection of organizations, topics, and areas of interest to follow, promote or engage. This exercises improves student’s communication, decision-making, and information systems skills.

(4) SM Analysis – Using existing software programs introduced in class, analyze your digital footprint on SM. Analysis should include how SM is utilized, common thematic posts, demographics of followers and networks, and an executive summary snapshot of your perceptions of your digital footprint.
   a. Learning outcomes: students will learn SM applications and analysis through the use of SM software programs. Students will learn how to write business executive summaries related to SM analysis. Skill-sets emphasized include writing, application program use, and general business.

(5) SM Business – Create a business plan for a fictional product or service that is to be offered solely through SM. The business plan should emphasize marketing, sales, SM content management, and exhibits that demonstrate the final SM page.
   a. Learning outcomes: students will learn how to engage in business-plan writing for SM business ventures. Content management, writing, marketing, financial, and general business skills are enhanced.

(6) SM Consulting – Prepare a consulting summary designed to highlight your abilities as a SM consultant. The goal is to demonstrate your capabilities to offer consulting on SM best practices, SM content creation and maintenance, and an overall SM how-to guide for inexperienced, late adopters of SM.
   a. Learning outcomes: students will learn initial consulting and entrepreneurial skills that will enhance their overall degree program. Creativity, writing, general business, and critical thinking skills are enhanced.

The nature of all of the above-mentioned SM assignments allow for content modifications that reflect specific disciplines, should faculty in any business disciplines choose to adopt any of these assignments.

EVIDENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA EFFECTIVENESS

Undergraduate students who were enrolled in an introductory business information systems course during the Fall 2013 semester at a large, Midwestern University in Ohio completed a quantitative survey to evaluate the perceived benefits of incorporating SM curricula in the
classroom. The electronic survey was administered after all SM content and assignments had been disseminated, or after the tenth week of the semester. A discussion of SM and its relevance to business was conducted, followed by SM assignments relevant to the discussion. A follow-up discussion was held connecting academic SM use with business SM relevance concluding with the remainder of the SM assignments. During the following week students were surveyed about their perceptions of the value the SM assignments have on using SM for business and academic purposes. The survey was conducted immediately after the conclusion of SM content discussions and assignments so that this content would remain relevant and current to the students. Due to the nature of the survey program and electronic surveying, participants’ responses were anonymous. Appendix A provides a copy of the survey given to the students. A total of 100 students completed the survey.

Each assignment was presented to the students followed by a question asking students to rate its impact on the following:

1. student’s ability to understand social media from a business perspective
2. student’s ability to understand social media data mining
3. student’s ability to understand social media networking
4. student’s ability to understand how to write social media business plans
5. student’s ability to utilize social media software programs and conduct social media analysis
6. student’s ability to assist others with social media business activities and tasks
7. student’s understanding and knowledge of social media from an academic and/or business perspective

The student’s responses regarding the effectiveness of each SM assignment (Table 1a) and the overall impact on their understanding of, and ability to use, SM (Table 1b) indicate that they view the SM assignments as valuable tools for greater understanding of the importance of academic SM from a host of lenses within the business discipline. It should be noted that all six of the SM assignments have traditional business curricula research support behind them. Traditional business curricula typically includes business plan writing, exposure to networking and data mining, and opportunities to study business consulting. The primary modification here is the emphasis of SM as the dominant learning paradigm.

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being “significantly improved”, the average rating for the effectiveness of each social media assignment (Table 1a) ranged from 4.24 (understanding of how to write SM business plans) to 3.92 (understanding of social media networking), with an overall average rating of 4.11. The percentage of students who rated these assignments as improving their understanding/ability (ranging score of 4 and 5) ranged from a high of 92% (understanding of SM from a business perspective) down to a low of 70% (understanding of SM networking). Using the same scale as above, the mean of overall impact on students’ understanding/ability of social media from academic/business perspective is 4.41 (Table 1b). 94% of students thought the combined six assignments had a positive impact (ranging score of 4 and 5) on their overall learning.

Student's responses indicate that each of these assignments included in this course are improving students' understanding of, and ability to use SM. Furthermore, students' responses can be used to identify the specific assignments that have the most significant improvement on students’ learning.

Overall, while there is little variance between the mean ratings for each of the assignments, suggesting significant value for each. Some of this can be explained to the fact that students possibly have already been using SM for purposes related to the assignments.
Having already utilized SM for personal gains and experiences creates baseline knowledge when using SM for academic- and business-related purposes.

Table 2a: Social Media Effectiveness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Signif. Improved</th>
<th>Slightly Improved</th>
<th>No Effect</th>
<th>Slightly Reduce</th>
<th>Signif. Reduced</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Overall Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding of SM from a business perspective</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>4.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding of SM data mining</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>4.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding of SM networking</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding of how to write SM business plans</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>4.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to utilize SM software programs and conduct SM analysis</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>4.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to assist others with SM business activities and tasks</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>4.05</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>4.11</td>
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</table>

(e.g., data mining, networking). Having already utilized SM for personal gains and experiences creates baseline knowledge when using SM for academic- and business-related purposes.

Table 2b: Overall Impact of Social Media (Academic and/or Business Perspective)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Strong Positive Impact</th>
<th>Slight Positive Impact</th>
<th>No Impact</th>
<th>Slight Negative Impact</th>
<th>Strong Negative Impact</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Overall Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding and Knowledge of SM</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>4.41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now that we have a baseline understanding of how SM assignments impact student learning, a follow-up survey is planned to measure faculty attitudes and perceptions about SM curricula. The impetus for determining faculty views on SM stems from having student input first. This is critical when approaching faculty who, while may feel student-centered, might rebuff SM as merely a social engagement tool with little academic value.
Additional Student Benefits

SM use for academic purposes should be beneficial to students in a host of ways. As the literature review suggests, SM is inherent in almost all facets of the college experience, usage is increasing, and SM usage improves student learning in various functional areas including communication and business. Tangible benefits include the creation of professional SM pages that can be highlighted to potential employers, and the ability to begin creating a digital footprint that also reflects technology capabilities in SM.

Students experience the benefits of SM in the classroom as SM lectures, exhibits, and case studies are disseminated. SM lectures and discussions stimulate learning in multiple dimensions: they supplement existing course content on potentially mundane information systems topics with contemporary, dynamic content in an area that most students are familiar with. SM classroom materials provide real-time exhibits, demonstrations, and opportunities for hands-on learning. Combined, lectures, demonstrations, connections to existing course content, and hands-on learning through SM assignments allow for multi-dimensional learning that is considered current, stimulating, and reflective of today’s SM-influenced business environment.

Authors of this teaching brief reported that many students networked with them throughout the semester both through SM as well as in person during class. Students also contributed to in-class discussions related to SM, including offering insights on the assignments and sharing content beyond the scope of the course but relevant to the topic. This added, unforeseen benefit demonstrated two opportunities: the potential to market the information systems major in a different light which could impact enrollment in the major, and students’ inherent desire to increase student learning when they felt topics and assignments were exciting and interesting. In addition, when the authors engaged students through SM, a faculty-student relationship emerged which could positively impact student learning.

Additional student benefits include expanding their digital networks with fellow students, business leaders, and companies or organizations that students may desire employment with. Students also acquired expanded knowledge and skills which would enhance their learning opportunities in various other courses. Finally, these newly-minted skills could now be reflected on resumes, further improving their employability.

Additional Faculty Benefits

Although faculty were not surveyed with respect to their views on SM curricula, there are potential benefits to faculty who utilize SM to engage students. Student-faculty engagement through SM creates greater facial recognition in the classroom, potentially enhancing in-class relationships, student participation, and student engagement. A secondary benefit attributable to this is the potentiality for more students to become engaged in the classroom due to seeing their peers participate more as a result of academic SM usage. In addition, given that positive student-faculty relationships (e.g., academic relationships, classroom-oriented) positively impact student learning (Astin, 1993), enhancing these relationships through SM is yet another tool in the faculty arsenal of satisfying students.

Speaking directly to the faculty benefits, the authors of this teaching brief have all engaged students through SM curricula and assignments for the past two years. SM use by the authors allows for direct observation of the students SM presence, and the authors note almost immediate changes in students’ SM content, evolving from inexperienced and somewhat unprofessional material to more business-oriented and professional in nature. Finally, the lead author presented SM curricula components at both the Midwest Academic of Management (MWAOM) and the national Decision Sciences Institute (DSI) meetings. Numerous faculty from a host of disciplines attended and participated in the sessions and the feedback was highly
positive with regards to new approaches to teaching. A further observation from several faculty members was that including SM in general business courses might promote the information systems major as more approachable than previously thought, thereby improving enrollment and retention within the information systems major. It was also recommended that SM curricula include additional technologies as well, including Twitter, Instagram (e.g., marketing, sales), and Google+.

Faculty benefit by using SM as an academic learning tool largely in part because the overwhelming majority of students have a SM presence and thus, find academic SM use familiar, interesting, and engaging. Faculty who have a SM presence also demonstrate contemporary practices in business, an inclination to remain current, and due to the nature of SM, open and accessible. An added benefit to faculty who engage students on SM includes the virtual connection of having physical recognition of students which promotes inclusion (e.g., most students have pictures of themselves on SM which makes them more recognizable in the classroom).

Because SM is inherently engaging, SM examples within the respective discipline (e.g., accounting, management) facilitates the creation of extended dialogue and discussion in the classroom. Instead of having to guess who might be interested in particular topics discussed in class on a particular day, faculty can identify who is interested by the engagement demonstrated on SM. Combined, this will breed a greater depth of discussion in the classroom which fosters overall student learning for all students.

Finally, as more courses migrate to an online or blended format, SM becomes yet another tool for faculty-student outreach and engagement. While course management sites like Blackboard have a limited social media component (e.g., messages, wiki-groups), Facebook has more intimate capabilities including personalized profiles, extended personal content which can be data-mined for personal connectivity, and photos which add a personal dynamic. The fact that SM remains a very low-cost alternative for outreach and engagement is perhaps the most dominant benefit of faculty-student engagement through SM use.

RECOMMENDATIONS

There are many approaches that can be taken when considering adopting SM in B-School course curricula. From cursory discussions on SM from a discipline-specific lens to high-level adaptive SM exercises within SM platforms addressing a discipline-specific case or problem, SM has a place in all B-School disciplines due to the nature of SM addressing both hard- and soft-business skills. The first step to adding SM content to B-School curricula is identifying which aspects of SM are appropriate based on the level of the course (e.g., freshman-level, senior level), enrollment size of the course, and how much SM engagement exists within that specific discipline the business environment. Sales and marketing disciplines can, and are currently engaging numerous SM exercises because the SM footprint in sales and marketing industries is large. Conversely, finance and accounting disciplines may elect to pursue SM content more cautiously because SM use in these disciplines in business perhaps is scarcer at present time. Or, as was done by the authors, multi-disciplinary SM exercises that, while emphasizing the primary discipline, expose the interrelationships among all disciplines, should be considered.

In order to moderate concerns about adopting SM in the classroom, the authors offer a few suggestions to faculty. First, faculty who are apprehensive about sharing their personal SM presence with students should create a professional SM page with which to share with students. It is very common for public figures and business leaders to have multiple SM pages and this strategy would be expected for faculty who utilize SM for academic purposes. Second, faculty SM pages should be devoid of any controversial or one-sided opinions or views to avoid any semblance of biases, particularly on relative hot-button topics. Faculty might consider including
basic photos of themselves, possibly family members if warranted, favorite interests and hobbies, and an overall profile that cultivates a personality beyond the classroom.

Third, faculty should adopt SM assignments relative to their interests with respect to the existing course description and content so that when they lecture and promote discussion of these assignments and topics, they will have first-hand interest and engagement. Faculty who are genuinely interested in the topics they are engaged in are always transparent with their excitement, interest level, and demonstrated expertise. These assignments and lecture materials could include SM topics that are secondary to the intended discipline as long as they connect to the primary discipline in some fashion. An accounting course could utilize SM content, exercises, and discussion topics that emphasize SM costs, budgeting, and operating expenses, for example. Information systems courses could examine SM from a host of lenses: hardware software, programming, and managing SM technologies.

The last suggestion involves connecting SM curricula to the job market. Faculty should address, from their respective disciplines, how SM is being utilized or has the potential to be utilized in the future in industry. Once assignments and lectures have commenced, faculty should continuously demonstrate the link between employability and student’s digital footprints.

CONCLUSIONS

SM use spans various populations usage rates among all SM users continues to increase in both quantity and quality. College students comprise one of the largest demographics of SM usage today. SM is cross-functional in nature and as a result, encompasses many academic disciplines. SM studies have found an academic home in the business and communication areas, and is expanding quickly in the fields of psychology, criminal justice, and sociology. Within B-Schools, many departments have cultivated a SM presence largely in part because the business and organizations with which they partner or engage also have a significant SM footprint for a host of activities. These activities include everyday business functions, outreach and engagement with customers, and outreach and engagement with college students who are often viewed as potential interns and employees of the future. This circular relationship between SM users suggests SM has a place in the classroom beyond its primary function of serving as a communication, marketing, and possible sales tool.

By introducing SM curricula through various assignments in an introductory information systems course in business, the authors demonstrate that SM has academic value across all B-School disciplines, can be taught through SM use rather than relying solely on lecture and discussion alone, and has both tangible and intangible outcomes. By focusing on six specific SM assignments that enhance existing common business functions, this article provide furthers the limited body of research on academic SM use: students report increased learning opportunities attributable to SM content in the classroom. The value to the student is increased and enhanced understanding of SM from both an academic and business perspective as well as opportunities to utilize dynamic course content relevant to the modern business world that strengthens their technology, critical thinking, creativity, and general business skills. Secondary takeaways include stronger faculty-student relationships both in the classroom and on SM websites and expanded student engagement in the information technology disciplines.

The results from this study show a high-perceived value of all six SM assignments introduced in this study, and a general sense of overall value when combining all of the SM assignments. Although existing research provided a basis of assumption that these assignments would be received favorably, the overall results were unexpected to some degree given the high value placed on the assignments by the students.
Overall, SM provides a valuable, inexpensive academic tool that faculty can utilize for a host of learning outcomes, particularly student engagement. Students and businesses/organizations already utilize SM, and faculty often serve as the link between college students and businesses. Thus, the authors highly recommend that faculty should engage in SM curriculum design to further their existing courses.

APPENDIX A: SOCIAL MEDIA ASSIGNMENT FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer the following questions related to the social media lectures, discussions, and assignments. The purpose of this survey is to gauge whether students feel there is value in utilizing SM for academic purposes to promote overall learning. Your answers are completely anonymous and do not have any impact on your grade.

Please rate questions 1-4 using the scale below.

- My Understanding Would be Significantly Improved
- My Understanding Would be Slightly Improved
- No Effect
- My Understanding Would be Slightly Reduced
- My Understanding Would be Significantly Reduced

1. SM Digital Footprint – Create or modify an existing SM presence emphasizing business professionalism. The business SM page should be free of unprofessional content, reflect an educated and mature approach to SM use, and represent the student’s best work. How would you rate the impact of this assignment on your ability to understand social media from a business perspective?

2. SM Data Mining – Search for colleagues, faculty members of interest, groups/clubs of interest, and any particular companies or organizations of interest. Examine social media dynamics of these individuals and organizations by looking at their various pages and content. How would you rate the impact of this assignment on your ability to understand social media data mining?

3. SM Networking – “Follow,” “Like,” or send a message to several networks introducing yourself. This can include introductory messages to individuals, adding certain organizations to your network, or sharing content from organizations of interest on your personal SM page. How would you rate the impact of this assignment on your ability to understand social media networking?

4. SM Business – Create a business plan for a fictional product or service that is to be offered solely through SM. The business plan should emphasize marketing, sales, SM content management, and exhibits that demonstrate the final SM page. How would you rate the impact of this assignment on your ability to understand how to write social media business plans?

Please rate questions 5-6 using the scale below.

- My Ability Would be Significantly Improved
- My Ability Would be Slightly Improved
- No Effect
- My Ability Would be Slightly Reduced
- My Ability Would be Significantly Reduced

5. SM Analysis – Using existing software programs introduced in class, analyze your digital footprint on SM. Analysis should include how SM is utilized, common thematic posts, demographics of followers and networks, and an executive summary snapshot of your perceptions of your digital footprint. How would you rate the impact of this assignment on your ability to utilize social media software programs and conduct social media analysis?

6. SM Consulting – Prepare a consulting summary designed to highlight your abilities as a SM consultant. The goal is to demonstrate your capabilities to offer consulting on SM best practices, SM content creation and maintenance, and an overall SM how-to guide for inexperienced, late adopters of SM. How would you rate the impact of this assignment on your ability to assist others with SM business activities and tasks?

Please rate the following question using the scale below.

- Strong Positive Impact
- Slight Positive Impact
- No Impact
- Slight Negative Impact
- Strong Negative Impact

7. Adding together all of the assignments that you just read through (1-6), how would you rate the impact of these on your understanding and knowledge of SM from an academic and/or business perspective?

REFERENCES


