



# A study on advantages and disadvantages of social media in higher education

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**Abstract:** Social media has become a useful educational tool in the present or prevailing situation. Nowadays students have a great knowledge on internet and social media sites. It keeps the students well informed on the trending news of the world. The 2019 novel corona virus is rapidly spreading in India and also to the rest of the world. Due to this deadly virus many people were infected and also have caused many deaths in all parts of the world. Due to this sudden outbreak, lockdown was imposed and all schools, colleges and universities have been closed. As a result, education system has changed drastically giving rise to e-learning platforms. This paper gives an outline of advantages and disadvantages of social media on higher education during this pandemic situation COVID – 19.

## Introduction

Social media like Facebook, Twitter, Myspace, Google+, LinkedIn, Instagram, and so on are used daily by millions of people worldwide, especially young people. Facebook is possibly the most popular among the social networks for personal and educational purposes. Moreover, students use online social network platforms daily from 10 to 60 min on average. During this decade, new ways to seek knowledge have emerged using social networks in both formal and informal learning. Social media allows people to exchange ideas and opinion. The emergence of social media is significantly influencing the academic life of students. Nowadays social media has been accepted by higher education where students are getting connected with their teachers and fellow students.

The rapid growth of social media, mainly due to technological factors such as increased broadband availability, the improvement of software tools, and the development of more powerful computers and mobile devices, has been phenomenal. In the past, the web was a one way information transfer tool as content was predominantly produced by experts, who published factual information and had the skills to create web pages. Users could only view websites but could not correct, change or add any content. Currently, the web has become an interactive and participatory "read-write" universal channel where users are allowed to be both producers and consumers of digital content in real time right through a web browser.

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus. The COVID-19 virus spreads primarily through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Most people infected with the COVID-19 virus will experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and recover without requiring special treatment. Older people and those with underlying medical problems like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, and cancer are more likely to develop serious illness. Due to this deadly disease many people were infected leading to more number of deaths. In order to reduce the risk lockdown was imposed for the whole country. In India lockdown was imposed and all schools, colleges, universities and organisations were closed. Therefore classes were conducted for the students through social media platforms. The objective of this paper is, therefore, to examine the potential benefits of social media in education.

### **Evolution of social media**

Social media encompass a wide range of tools that integrate technology, social interaction and content creation. A social network is an online community that brings people with common interests, opinions, activities and experiences to get her by sharing the news, photos, videos, and events. By tracing back, the history of Social media, it can be found that the face of social media today is quite different from what was considered to be social media in the past. Six Degrees is the social media that was evolved for the very first time in 1997. Users could create a profile and invite people as friends. This way of communication lasted till 2001. By the start of 2000, around 100 million individuals began to use internet and social networking websites. More individuals started to use visit these websites for socializing, dating and educational purposes. After that, communication methods like blogging and instant messaging evolved. MySpace was the very first social networking website using which people could setup a profile and make friends that became inspiration for the next generation social media, including Facebook. LinkedIn is another website used for professional people who need to build moderate public image and develop professional public relations.

The social media website containing largest number of subscribers is Facebook. It was launched by Mark Zuckerberg in 2004. Facebook has currently boasts over a billion users. The second most famous social media website is Twitter which was created by Jack Dorset, Biz Stone, Noah Glass and Evan Williams. Twitter has more than 500 million subscribers.

Flickr was one of the earliest and still is a standout amongst the most prominent photograph sharing social media websites. Besides Flickr, Photobucket and Instagram are among the top online social media to incorporate on business cards and other media. Other social media networking websites include Tumblr, Foursquare, Pinterest, Spotify, Google Buzz, Loopt, Blippy, and Groupon.

## Different Social Media Sites

There are numerous online networking platforms that include but are not limited to Facebook, twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, YouTube, LinkedIn, Google+, Flickr, snapchat, vine, Tumblr. Some of them are explained briefly.

- Facebook: Facebook is an American online [social media](#) founded by [Mark Zuckerberg](#). Facebook is a popular website that allows users to interact and collaborate within a pre-defined virtual community.
- Twitter: Twitter is an American microblogging and social networking service on which users post and interact with messages known as "tweets". Registered users can post, like and retweet tweets, but unregistered users can only read them. Twitter offers a quick way to post class announcements and reminders as well as real time information on class fieldtrips. It also helps classes track information on any topic.
- Blogs: Instead of traditional writing projects, blogs create opportunities for students to write and display their writings on a large scale.
- YouTube: YouTube is an American online video-sharing platform headquartered in San Bruno, California. The service, created in February 2005 by three former PayPal employees Chad Hurley, Steve Chen, and Jawed Karim was bought by Google in November 2006 for US\$1.65 billion and now operates as one of the company's subsidiaries. It is like a Facebook, YouTube is an excellent option of flipping classroom in that students can watch lectures and resources before entering the classroom.
- Instagram: Instagram is an American photo and video sharing social networking service owned by Facebook, created by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger and originally launched on iOS in October 2010. "A picture is worth thousand words". Instagram can showcase student work by offering a place to feature student hard work or even interesting details about a student.
- Google Docs: Google Docs is a word processor included as part of the free, web-based Google Docs Editors suite offered by Google. The service also includes Google Sheets, Google Slides, Google Drawings, Google Forms, Google Sites, and Google Keep. It is a popular technology with teachers and students. Students and teachers can use these tools to collaborate on assignments, projects, newsletters among other things. It allows more than one person to work on a particular document at the same time. Google docs can promote the team work.

### Social media uses in India:

The usage of internet in India has been growing from year to year. The time spent in internet also keeps on increasing from time to time.

The digital revolution is leading to major transformations higher education, where disruptive innovative technologies are changing the traditional methods of teaching and learning and paving way for India to become a 'Knowledge Economy'. The introduction of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) is one of the key drivers of technological innovation in education in India which enables thousands of learners to participate in these open and free courses simultaneously without any barriers of geographical boundaries. The most of the MOOCs courses are purposed for unlimited participation and open access via the web. There are no boundaries to share the knowledge. SWAYAM (Study Webs of Active-learning for Young Aspiring Minds) programme initiated by the Government of India. The objective of the programme is to take the best teaching-learning resources to all.

### MOOC

A massive open online course is an online course aimed at unlimited participation and open access via the web. The different courses offered under MOOC are from management to the

technology and most of the courses are applicable to day today work environment. The most popular MOOC are edX, coursera, Udacity, etc.

## SWAYAM

The Swayam program offers digital classrooms with the help of internet and satellite connectivity to the remotest corners in the country. Swayam will provide online study material to students free of cost and the courses will be taught via digital classrooms.

Advantages of Social media in higher education:

- Increased Student Collaboration
- Increased Student Participation
- Team Projects are easier to review
- Rich eLearning Media available
- Video Conferencing abilities

Disadvantages of Social media in higher education:

- Student distraction can become an issue.
- Lack of control for inappropriate content
- Relying on Social Media for all contact
- Diminishes Understanding and Thoughtfulness

## Conclusion

It concludes that social media is effective tool for educationalists like students, teachers and research scholars for sharing and communicating the information. An e-learning system can play a very important role for students in order to cooperate and work together through the social media channel. Social media can prove to be a helpful research tool for students and can help them in their studies.

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