



The Electronic Library

Use of social media by science students in public universities in Southwest Nigeria

Joseph Kehinde Fasae Idowu Adegbilero-Iwari

Article information:

To cite this document:

Joseph Kehinde Fasae Idowu Adegbilero-Iwari , (2016),"Use of social media by science students in public universities in Southwest Nigeria", The Electronic Library, Vol. 34 Iss 2 pp. 213 - 222

Permanent link to this document:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/EL-11-2014-0205>

Downloaded on: 01 November 2016, At: 23:17 (PT)

References: this document contains references to 17 other documents.

To copy this document: permissions@emeraldinsight.com

The fulltext of this document has been downloaded 410 times since 2016*

Users who downloaded this article also downloaded:

(2016),"Integrated library management systems: Comparative analysis of Koha, Libsys, NewGenLib, and Virtua", The Electronic Library, Vol. 34 Iss 2 pp. 223-249 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/EL-08-2014-0127>

(2016),"Comparing collaborative annotations on books between libraries and social community sites: A case study", The Electronic Library, Vol. 34 Iss 2 pp. 178-195 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/EL-09-2014-0171>

Access to this document was granted through an Emerald subscription provided by emerald-srm:563821 []

For Authors

If you would like to write for this, or any other Emerald publication, then please use our Emerald for Authors service information about how to choose which publication to write for and submission guidelines are available for all. Please visit www.emeraldinsight.com/authors for more information.

About Emerald www.emeraldinsight.com

Emerald is a global publisher linking research and practice to the benefit of society. The company manages a portfolio of more than 290 journals and over 2,350 books and book series volumes, as well as providing an extensive range of online products and additional customer resources and services.

Emerald is both COUNTER 4 and TRANSFER compliant. The organization is a partner of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) and also works with Portico and the LOCKSS initiative for digital archive preservation.

*Related content and download information correct at time of download.

Use of social media by science students in public universities in Southwest Nigeria

Use of social
media by
science
students

213

Joseph Kehinde Fasae

Engineering Library, Afe Babalola University, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria, and

Idowu Adegbilero-Iwari

Library, Elizade University, Ilara-Mokin, Nigeria

Received 27 November 2014

Revised 7 February 2015

Accepted 4 April 2015

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to investigate the use of social media for academic practices by science students of public universities in Southwest Nigeria.

Design/methodology/approach – Descriptive design was used for the study. Research instrument used was questionnaire where 140 copies were administered to science students, using purposive sampling technique. Three institutions in southwest of Nigeria were selected for the study. Copies of the questionnaire were distributed to students in their lecture rooms and laboratories during practical classes with the permission and assistance of their lecturers. The data collected were analysed using frequency and simple percentage.

Findings – The results reveal that among the various social media networks available, Facebook (93.48 per cent) is the most recognized and most famous, followed by Google+ (63.77 per cent) and Twitter (47.83 per cent). Two-third of the students make use of social media daily to remain up-to-date with trending events/news and to occupy free time when they are bored, among other reasons. The findings show that Google+ (52.17 per cent) is the most beneficial social media network followed by Facebook (29.7 per cent) and Wikia (23.91 per cent). Most of the science students are knowledgeable in the usage and application of social media, while majority of them considered poor Internet connectivity, receiving of unwanted messages/pictures and electricity failure as the leading problems encountered while using social media.

Originality/value – The study was necessary to identify the use and application of social media by science students in public universities in Southwest Nigeria.

Keywords Nigeria, Social media, Use, Public universities, Science students

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Information and communication technology (ICT) has profoundly affected all aspects of our daily activities. The divide between any two people on earth has been bridged by technology. People can create and sustain relationships nowadays without any physical contact. The Web, now interactive, is the most powerful technology tool to affect human communication in the twenty-first century. Mass media, interpersonal interaction and communication have been greatly influenced by ICT. Social media, a major part of the new online media, has further emphasized the continuous influence of ICT on everyone.

The radical evolution of ICT has paved the way for the application of social media in what many believe to be a growing phenomenon in expanding networked and connected information landscapes into library and information services (Alonge, 2014). According



The Electronic Library

Vol. 34 No. 2, 2016

pp. 213-222

© Emerald Group Publishing Limited

0264-0473

DOI 10.1108/EL-11-2014-0205

to Kord (2008), various types of social media are now being embraced by students in higher education institutions as the best means to interact with or relate to their colleagues, friends and family. As it currently stands, the classroom experience and the lecturer–student relationship continue to change, given the impacts of social media day-in and day-out. The Oxford dictionary (2014) refers to *social media* as Web sites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking. Social media is also seen as a collection of Internet Web sites, services and practices that support community building, participation and sharing. According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), social media makes use of mobile and Web-based technologies to create highly interactive platforms through which communities, including lone individuals, jointly create, share and discuss, as well as modify, user-generated content.

As social media is a fairly new medium of communication using Web applications, many studies have been carried out on the use of social media in different sectors around the world, but only a few research studies have been conducted on the subject in Africa and, more specifically, in the Nigerian academic environment. This study, therefore, seeks to fill the gap using science students in public universities in Nigeria.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of the study is to investigate the use of social media for academic purposes by science students of public universities in Southwest Nigeria. Specifically:

- to identify types of social media used by the science students;
- to find out how often the students use social media sites;
- to identify the purpose of using social media;
- to know the most beneficial social media network to the science students;
- to identify problems faced by science students using social media;
- to find out the negative impacts of the use of social media on science students; and
- to determine how knowledgeable the students are in the use of social media.

Literature review

Social media, according to Rambe (2012), constructively subverts traditional delivery modes by breaking down classroom walls and creating new knowledge centres beyond the lecturers. Famutimi (2013) reported that learning and various educational activities should be placed around social media which would allow the lecturer to create a Facebook page, update and post assignments, tutorial questions and suggestions for further reading, as well as to receive feedback from students.

On the social media network used by students, it was discovered that older respondents are likely to be regular users of professionally oriented ones, such as LinkedIn, whereas younger respondents recorded a higher use of entertainment-based networks, such as YouTube (Bridgestock, 2013). Rambe (2012) opined that Facebook offers a “cozy” and less-threatening space for student deliberation on technical obstacles they face in their courses, and is an avenue of pleading for redress. Moreover, it can provide a quasi-formal grievance handling platform where students’ questions are not restricted by the size of the class, lack of time or in-class inter-group issues. Blogs, also platforms for social interaction, offer behind-the-scenes opportunities for students’ jokes

and complaints (Liew, 2010). As ICT has become a major aspect of their daily lives, students strongly rely on technology and have increased their use of Twitter and other forms of social media. Symthe (2009) thereby inferred that the application and use of social media is one of the best ways to get in touch with one another and also provides the opportunity to better understand varying subjects.

However, there must be reasons that prompt students to use new communication technology. Bridgestock (2013) identified reasons students around the world use social media and they include to remain up-to-date, followed by the fact that it is interesting and useful for connections, as well as to have their say. Nikola *et al.* (2013) also discovered that students of higher education in Croatia appreciate social media as a communication and content sharing tool, citing Facebook and Wikipedia as the most popular social media platforms in use.

Nevertheless, it has been observed that lecturers still prefer the formal application mode of interaction which is under strict control. However, according to Aglanu (2012), a lecturer at the University of Ghana Business School, Dr Richard Boateng, advises lecturers in tertiary institutions to make use of social media technology as a new method for effective teaching, most especially those of Internet-based courses. He affirms that this is essential, as current developments in information technology have caught on so well with students to the level that the use of old teaching methods may no longer be appropriate for effective teaching.

However, in as much as social media is open, free and provides enormous convenience as well as aids academic wealth, it has brought with it negative challenges that cannot be overlooked. In Nigeria, Olubiyi (as cited in Camilia *et al.*, 2013) observed that one of the problems of Nigerian students with social media is the fanatical attitude they have towards its use. Expounding further, he reported that the quantity of time spent on their studies is reduced, as students wasted time on idle online chats and other unnecessary acts. This was corroborated by Dike *et al.* (2013) as discovered from their studies that apart from loss of study time, social media use also leads to cyber-bullying and addiction. This undesirable trend is further substantiated by Akubugwo and Burke (2013) when they opined that social media affect students' performance during academic and library sessions. Further still, Kord (2008) submitted that online social networking has a negative influence on college students' academic experiences. Hussain *et al.* (2012) discovered from their research that students who use social media face additional problems, such as electricity failure, low Internet bandwidth, lack of infrastructure such as computers and laptops, difficulty managing time for using social media during the semester, privacy leaks, cyber-bullying and physical problems, among others.

However risky social media use for formal and informal learning is, some students use social media sites to collaborate on individual assignments and projects. Hence, there is a clear need to produce useful guidelines for appropriate communication via social media to protect the university community against online bullying and harassment (Varnhagen and Husband, 2011).

Methodology

Descriptive design was used for this study. The research instrument used was a questionnaire. A purposive sampling technique was adopted. Three institutions in Southwest Nigeria were selected for the study. One-hundred and forty copies of the structured questionnaire were administered to students in the College of Sciences during

the 2013/2014 academic session, which includes those in microbiology, food science and technology, chemistry, biochemistry, industrial chemistry, agricultural science, plant science, biological science, information and communication science, computer science, mathematics, geology, earth science and physics.

Copies of the questionnaire were distributed to students of the selected universities in their lecture rooms and laboratories during practical classes with the permission and assistance of their lecturers. Two research assistants were employed to facilitate the process. The data were collected within a period of six weeks. In all, a total of 138 copies were returned and completed correctly, thereby producing return rate of 92 per cent. The data extracted were analysed using descriptive statistics which includes frequency and percentage presented in tables and charts.

The three selected institutions from different states in Southwest Nigeria were Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti (EKSU) from Ekiti-State, with 38 respondents; Federal University of Technology, Akure (FUTA) in Ondo-State; and Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife in Osun-State. Each of the latter institutions had 50 respondents, respectively. From the total number of 138 selected science students, 12 of them were in 200 level, 47 in 300 level, 74 in 400 level and only five in 500 level. There are 500 level students because there are some science courses in Nigerian universities that run for five years. However, the researchers of this study decided to exclude the science students who are in their first year (100 level) from the research with the belief that they are still new in their studies.

Results and discussion

Figure 1 shows the types of social media used by science students in public universities and indicates that the majority of the respondents (93.5 per cent) use Facebook, 63.8 per cent use Google+ and 47.8 per cent of the respondents use Twitter. The result implies that nearly all the science students in public universities in Southwest Nigeria that could use social media use Facebook more compared to other types of social media networks. This shows that Facebook is the most recognized and favoured among various types of social media available for social interactions by the science students. The findings, therefore, agree with the opinion of Rambe (2012) and Famutimi (2013) on the relevance of Facebook in teaching, learning and various other educational activities. Google+, Twitter and YouTube were also in high use which suggests that they also provide a sound and intellectual social platform for young people.

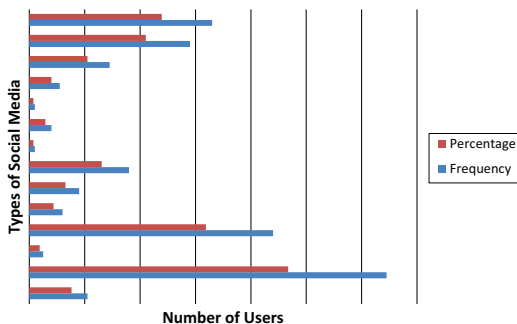


Figure 1.
Types of social media used by the science students

Figure 2 reveals how often the respondents use social media. It indicates that 70.3 per cent of the respondents use social media daily, 18.1 per cent said they use it occasionally, while only 0.7 per cent reveal “never” to have used social media. The study, therefore, discovered that about two-thirds of the science students in Nigerian public universities make use of social media every day.

Table I and Figure 3 show the purpose of using social media by the students. “To remain updated about trending events/news” ranked first among the respondents, “to occupy free time when I am bored” was second and “to stay in touch with friends or family I rarely see in person” was third. “To interact and exchange idea with my lecturers” was the least important according to the respondents. It was discovered from the findings that science students in public universities in Nigeria use social media for various purposes; however, it was clearly shown that among the reasons, “to remain updated about trending events/news” was the favoured reason that a majority of the

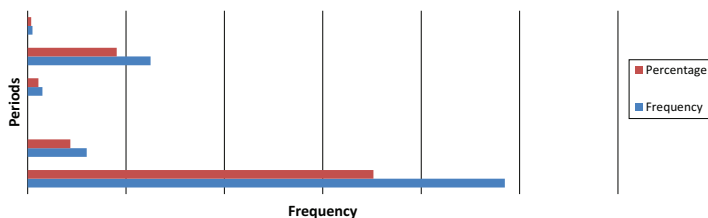


Figure 2.
Frequency of the use of social media by science students

S/N	Purposes	Frequency	(%)
1	For sharing academic events with my peers	90	65.2
2	For submitting assignments	47	34.1
3	To remain updated about trending events/news	105	76.1
4	For connecting with new friends	87	63.0
5	For maintaining existing friendships and family relationships	89	64.5
6	To stay in touch with friends or family I rarely see in person	92	66.7
7	To find employment	31	22.5
8	To occupy free time when I am bored	98	71.0
9	To interact and exchange idea with my lecturers	13	9.4

Table I.
Purposes for using social media

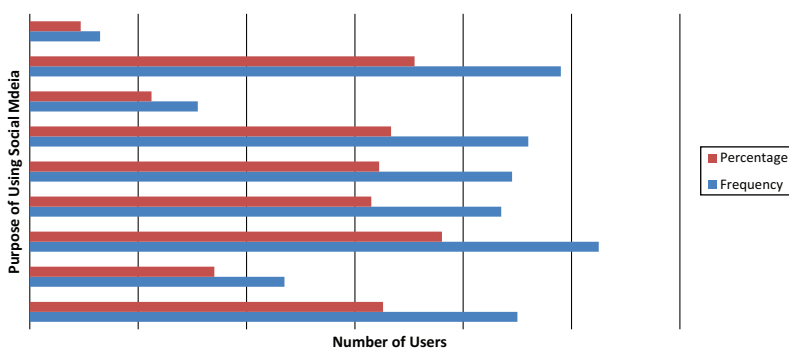


Figure 3.
Purposes for using social media

students use social media platforms. This corroborates the findings of [Vanozzi and Bridgestock \(2013\)](#) who concluded from their research that the popular reason students around the world use social media was to keep them updated. Sometimes, sudden changes in certain academic programmes or events could earlier be communicated through various types of social media networks mentioned in [Figure 1](#) by management before it appears on the notice board.

[Figure 4](#) presents the most beneficial social networks to the science students. Google+ leads with 52.2 per cent, Facebook has 29.7 per cent and Wikia has 23.9 per cent. This implies that more than half of the students believe that even though Facebook happens to be a popular social media known to them, Google+ remains the most beneficial social media network to them. This could be as a result of the robust educational features which Google+ provides for its users.

According to [Table II](#) and [Figure 5](#), poor Internet connectivity with 79.0 per cent constituted the major problem, followed by receiving unwanted messages/pictures (63.8 per cent), and electricity failure was next as affirmed by the respondents with 52.2 per cent. It is obvious that poor Internet connectivity is the leading obstacle to the science students in public universities in Nigeria among the other problems faced in the course of using social media. Poor Internet connectivity, which could be as a result of low Internet bandwidth and electricity failure, was also discovered to be among the problems faced by social network users as reported by [Hussain et al. \(2012\)](#).

[Figure 6](#) presents the responses on the negative impacts on the science students of the use of social media. The results indicated that “receiving of unwanted messages/pictures” has the highest percentage (62.3 per cent), while “it distracts my

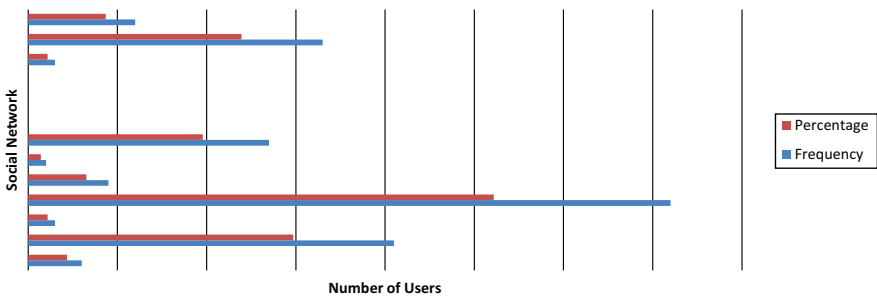


Figure 4.
The most beneficial social networks to the science students

S/N	Problems	Frequency	(%)
1	Receiving unwanted messages/pictures	88	63.8
2	Some sites do not allow transfer of information from one to another	32	23.2
3	Too many social media tools to learn	25	18.1
4	Electricity failure	72	52.2
5	Poor Internet connectivity	109	79.0
6	It discourages face-to-face communication	36	26.1
7	Leakage of user's privacy to their colleagues and lecturers	30	21.7
8	Physical problems including backache, joint pain in fingers, dry face and blurred vision due to prolonged use of computer/phone	31	22.5

Table II.
Problems faced by the students

attention from main classroom activities” has 37.7 per cent. “It has become addictive to me” according to the respondents has 28.3 per cent. It is clear from these results that the use of social media has a negative impact on students, with “receiving of unwanted messages/pictures” constituting a major negative impact. This may cause distraction in the classroom as pointed out earlier. Moreover, it could cause loss of concentration on the part of students expecting an important message from their lecturers, friends or parents. Sometimes, these receivers may need to use time which should have been better used on academic events in deleting such unwanted/pictures on their mobile devices, leading to loss of time as pointed out by *Dike et al.* (2013) and *Olubiyi (Camilia et al., 2013)*. However, if the situation is not well managed, it could lead to reduced performance by students.

How knowledgeable the science students are in the use of social media is shown in *Figure 7*. A total of 43.0 per cent of the respondents said they are very knowledgeable,

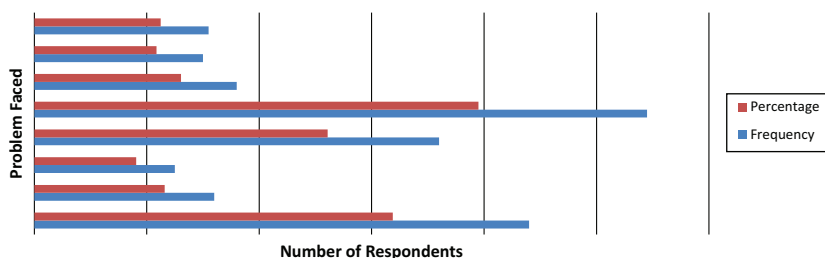


Figure 5.
Problems faced by
the students

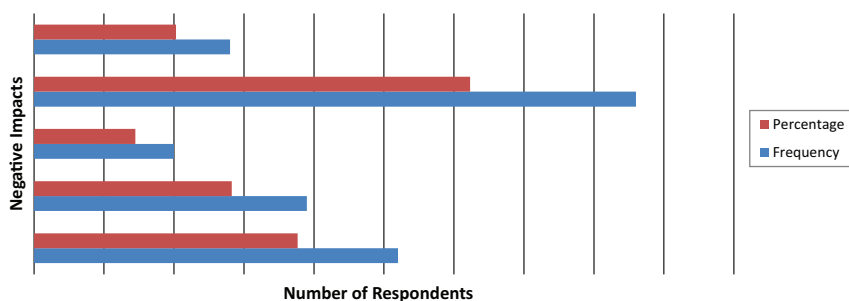


Figure 6.
Negative impacts of
social media



Figure 7.
Respondent
knowledge in social
media use

37.0 per cent are partly knowledgeable, while only 20.0 per cent of the respondents selected not knowledgeable. This implies that more than two-thirds of the science students in Nigerian public universities are knowledgeable in the use of social media. It is understood that, with time, the other science students who are not knowledgeable, probably because they are not interested or they did not see the need in using it with the belief that it will distract them from their studies, would soon adapt to the usage of social media.

Conclusion

The emergence of social media technologies and the impacts on daily activities as well as the acceptability by the rest of the world, especially in academic environments, to share, exchange and interact with colleagues, friends and relations is a development that has come to stay. This study investigated the use of social media for academic purposes by science students of selected public universities in Southwest Nigeria. The study found that Facebook is the most popular among the social media networks surveyed. Two-thirds of the students used it every day to remain up-to-date with trending events/news and to, among other reasons, engage themselves when they are bored or less busy. Google+ was found to be the most beneficial social media network to the Nigerian public universities' science students surveyed, followed by Facebook and Wikia. Most of the students were found to be knowledgeable in the usage and application of social media, while a majority of them considered poor Internet connectivity, receiving unwanted messages/pictures and electricity failure as the leading problems encountered while using social media. Moreover, receiving unwanted messages/pictures and distraction from study, as well as addiction to the use of social media, which could lead to loss of concentration while studying, were found to be the major negative impacts of social media on the students. With the emergence of ICT, the present day library is expected to move beyond the traditional means of meeting the information needs of its users in Africa, and other parts of the world. Libraries and librarians, therefore, need to embrace the use and application of social media in line with Library 2.0 principles, by taking the library to library users (students and staff members), as it was noted that social media helps to share information in the easiest way in a digital library environment (Alonge, 2014).

Recommendations

Based on the findings, there should be a solid policy framework by the legislative arm of government towards making poor Internet connectivity a thing of the past. Service providers in the country should improve their network performance. Government should ensure that there is a dedicated line from the electricity companies saddled with the responsibility of generating and distributing power to all academic institutions in Nigeria. This will ensure a stable supply of electricity to all educational institutions. University administrators can adopt social media into their course delivery system, and teachers can engage students on social media platforms for educational purposes to make academic use of students' interest in social media. Seminars can be organized in sensitizing students on the appropriate way to use social media, and its positive and negative effects on academic practices. Additionally, to minimize distraction received from social media, students should focus on social media that are more beneficial to their academic programmes.

Libraries and library professionals can also help in assisting students make gainful use of social media by embracing the use and applications of social media in connecting and communicating with library users who are mostly students. Further studies should be carried out on relating to how adopting social media into the course delivery system in public universities in Southwest Nigeria can help make positive use of students' addiction to social media.

References

- Aglanu, E.D. (2012), "Social media is an essential for effective teaching-lecturer", *Joy Online*, available at: <http://edition.myjoyonline.com/pages/education/201209/94655.php> (accessed 10 March 2014).
- Akubugwo, I.G. and Burke, M. (2013), "Effect of social media on postgraduate students during academic lectures and library session: a case study of Salford University Manchester, United Kingdom", *IOSR Journal of Research & Method in Education*, Vol. 3 No. 6, pp. 44-50.
- Alonge, A.J. (2014), "Social media for library and information services", paper presented at the First Librarian's Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN) Conference, 19 May, Abuja.
- Bridgestock, L. (2013), "What drives student's social media usage?", available at: www.topuniversities.com/blog/what-drives-students-social-media-usage (accessed 23 July 2014).
- Camilia, O.N., Ibrahim, S.D. and Dalhatu, B.L. (2013), "The effect of social networking sites usage on the studies of Nigerian students", *The International Journal of Engineering and Science (IJES)*, Vol. 2 No. 7, pp. 39-46.
- Dike, V.W., Nneke Eke, H. and Babarinde, E. (2013), "Social media and reading among secondary school students in Enugu State, Nigeria", *Moussaion*, Vol. 31 No. 1, p. 61.
- Famutimi, T. (2013), "What use is social media in education?", *PunchMobile*, available at: www.punchng.com/i-punch/what-use-is-social-media-in-education/ (accessed 23 July 2014).
- Hussain, I., Gulrez, N. and Tahirkheli, S.A. (2012), "Academic use of social media: practices and problems of university students", available at: www.ipedr.com/vol30/37-ICEMI2012-M00074.pdf (accessed 9 July 2014).
- Kaplan, A.M. and Haenlein, M. (2010), "Users of the world unite! The challenges and opportunities of social media", *Business Horizons*, Vol. 53 No. 1, pp. 61-64.
- Kord, J.I. (2008), "Understanding the Facebook generation: a study of the relationship between online social networking and academic and social integration and intentions to enrol", PhD dissertation, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS.
- Liew, W. (2010), "Digital hidden transcripts: exploring student resistance in blogs", *Computer and Composition*, Vol. 27 No. 4, pp. 304-314.
- Nikola, D., Martina, C. and Ana, K. (2013), "Croatian perspective(s) on the lecturer-student interaction through social media", *International Journal of Management Cases*, Vol. 15 No. 4, p. 331.
- Oxford Dictionary (2014), "Definition of social media in English", available at: www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/social-media?q=social+media (accessed 23 February 2014).
- Rambe, P. (2012), "Constructive disruptions for effective collaborative learning: navigating the affordances of social media for meaningful engagement", *The Electronic Journal of e-Learning*, Vol. 10 No. 1, pp. 132-146.

Symthe, B. (2009), "MIS lecturer engages undergraduates with social media", available at: www.ellerbuzz.com/2009/11/story/mis-lecturer-engages-undergraduates-with-social-media/ (accessed 10 March 2014).

Vanozzi, M. and Bridgestock, L. (2013), "Students' online usage: global market trends report", in QS Quacquarelli Symonds, *11th International Conference on Information Systems and Technology Management – CONTECSI*, 28-30 May, São Paulo.

Varnhagen, C. and Husband, A. (2011), "Social media: use and usefulness at the University of Alberta", *Report of the TLAT Subcommittee on Social Media*, available at: [http://ctl.ualberta.ca/sites/default/files/files/Social Media- Use and Usefulness at the University of Alberta-Report of TLAT Subcommittee on Social Media.pdf](http://ctl.ualberta.ca/sites/default/files/files/Social%20Media-Use%20and%20Usefulness%20at%20the%20University%20of%20Alberta-Report%20of%20TLAT%20Subcommittee%20on%20Social%20Media.pdf) (accessed 11 March 2014).

Corresponding author

Joseph Kehinde Fasae can be contacted at: Kennyfash2000@gmail.com

For instructions on how to order reprints of this article, please visit our website:

www.emeraldgroupublishing.com/licensing/reprints.htm

Or contact us for further details: permissions@emeraldinsight.com