



مجموعة جامعة
الجميع الذكية
للتعليم القابضة

MIDOCEAN
UNIVERSITY
BY EVERYONE'S SMART UNIVERSITY

Digital Analytics MKT631

Lecture 3

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Social Media

History and Evolution



Lecture Content

- **Introduction**
- **Core Characteristics of Social Media**
- **The Brief History of Social Media**
- **Mobile Apps**

Introduction

Society has shifted from viewing smartphones as a luxury to owning them being the **new standard of living**. Consequently, **mobile Internet** usage has grown to make up 65% of all **digital media time spent**. Mobile apps dominate due to the rapid growth of iOS and Android mobile devices. By replacing the personal computer with a smartphone, a user had the freedom to document what is happening around them and share it in real-time. Beyond devices, the evolution of deep learning systems opens new capabilities for content creators and social media users.

Introduction

Built on the Web 2.0 philosophy (i.e., to give more control to the user over the content), **social media can be defined as** an Internet-based platform with capabilities to allow users to upload text, videos, audio, and graphics.

Core Characteristics of Social Media

The best way to understand social media is through the core features that set it apart from other forms of communication.

(1) Peer-To-Peer

Social media enables interaction among the users in a peer-to-peer fashion, unlike conventional media such as print, radio, telephone, and television that use a top-down, broadcast communications model. The effect of a peer-to-peer medium is the exchange is provided to all users so that every voice has a platform.

Core Characteristics of Social Media

(2) Participatory

Unlike conventional technologies, social media enables and encourages users to participate in it and provide feedback. Users can engage in online discourse through blogging, commenting, tagging, and sharing content, etc.

(3) User-Generated Content

Users generate social media content that is published on various social media platforms.

(4) Conversational

People can freely express their views and opinions on an equal footing in social media due to its built-in peer-to-peer conversation capabilities. Conversations often take place between celebrities, politicians, companies, and individuals in real time. The peer-to-peer conversation characteristics of social media make it possible for members to communicate and collaborate in real time, regardless of their location, wealth, occupation, or beliefs.

(5) Relationship Oriented

Most social media tools allow users to establish and maintain social and professional relationships easily. For instance, LinkedIn members can leverage their profile page to forge new business relationships and expand their professional connections.

Facebook page administrators can use their pages to gain traffic and spread the word about their personal or business project. At the same time, users can share what is going on or how they feel.

The Brief History of Social Media

Social media is not limited to the most common platforms, such as Facebook, X, YouTube, and blogs. It may be considered as any online platform (proprietary or purpose built, public or private) that enables users to participate, collaborate, create, and share content in a many-to-many context.

The Brief History of Social Media

Social media platforms began to emerge around 2004, and specialized analytics platforms to examine social media began to appear around the same time. Because social media platforms were just coming into existence, there was a small audience using these platforms initially. Since then, there has been a steady rise in adoption, and now most people who are online have at least one social media account.

The Brief History of Social Media

Blogs

Blogs are one of the first forms of social media that evolved; the first blogs appeared in the early 1990s and became popular after the turn of the century. Blogs quickly became the choice channel for reputation and brand-building. A blog is a type of online personal space or website where an individual (or organization) posts content (text, images, videos, and links to other sites) and expresses opinions on matters of personal (or organizational) interest on a regular basis. Many blogs may have a theme that interests its followers. Common types of blogs focus on travel, cooking, fashion, art, music, parenting, etc.

The Brief History of Social Media

Blogs

Businesses may also have blogs to cater to their consumers. For example, the clothing brand Free People (see www.freepeople.com for more information about this fashion brand) is considered a lifestyle blog and provides interesting content on design, activities, and travel spots that its free-spirited readers would enjoy visiting.

The most popular blogging platforms are WordPress, Tumblr, and Blogger.

Blogging does not require technical know-how or programming skills. Ordinary users can easily build and manage a professional-looking blog.

The Brief History of Social Media

Tumblr

Tumblr is a microblogging and social networking platform. Tumblr was created by David Karp and was launched on February 19, 2007. It quickly gained popularity as a microblogging platform and social networking site. It allows users to post and share various types of content, including text, photos, quotes, links, audio, and video. Users can follow other blogs and interact with content by liking, reblogging, or commenting on posts. Tumblr has been known for its creative and diverse user community, and it's often used for sharing art, poetry, and personal thoughts. However, it's worth noting that Tumblr's popularity has waned in recent years, and it has undergone changes in ownership and policies.

The Brief History of Social Media

Tumblr's Advertising Miss

In November 2016, Yahoo introduced a profit-sharing program with Tumblr bloggers. The program suffered, and many Tumblr users expressed discontentment and shied away from the advertisements. One of the reasons that Yahoo failed to reap a return on their investment is that Tumblr's audience is composed mostly of millennials (who are predisposed to be distrustful of most advertising). Besides, millennials are hard to target with online advertising and avoid websites and applications that use excessive advertising on their sites.

The Brief History of Social Media

YouTube

The introduction of YouTube marks the beginning of the viral video era. While other video sites, such as Facebook, are quickly gaining market share, nothing comes even close to YouTube in the sheer size of the audience. YouTube is a video-sharing website on which users can upload, view, and share videos. It was created in February 2005 and has been owned by Google since late 2006. YouTube eliminated the need for recording on VCR, CD, DVR devices, and Cable TV networks. It is the second most visited website on the Internet.

The Brief History of Social Media

YouTube

YouTube users watched more than 7 billion hours of video every month in 2015.

Due to its popularity, it is the second largest search engine, next to Google. In 2016, YouTube introduced YouTube Red, a paid-for subscription service. YouTube Red eliminates the advertisements that distract from its videos and introduced YouTube Red originals.

The Brief History of Social Media

YouTube

The world of online video has changed dramatically.

- In 2023, almost 5 billion videos are watched by users on YouTube every single day.
- The first 720p HD video > 4k videos through smartphones.

The increasing sophistication of devices, coupled with more powerful and inexpensive software, allows anyone to become an accomplished **content creator**. The content creator's world continues to expand with the introduction of **streaming live video**. Mobile device users can now broadcast a live video stream of their choosing.

The Brief History of Social Media

YouTube for Business

An important feature of YouTube is the YouTube channel. A YouTube channel is an online public space (or page) on YouTube. A YouTube channel allows channel owners to upload videos, leave comments, or make playlists. Businesses from around the world use their YouTube channels in a variety of ways such as advertising their products and services, educating customers, posting training materials, etc. YouTube is a great advertising channel and offers a variety of ad types and formats. Marketers utilize YouTube influencers by sponsoring these users and using their network of subscribers.

The Brief History of Social Media

Twitter/X (Microblogging)

Twitter is an online microblogging service that allows users to post and read short messages called “tweets.” A tweet is a text message limited to 140 characters. In fact, microblogging is a miniature version of blogging that allows users to exchange and publish brief messages, including text, images, or links to other websites.

Over time the business world has adopted Twitter as a marketing communications channel: only 20 of the Fortune 500 companies engage with their customers on Facebook, while 83% have a presence on Twitter. It remains a favored means of communications for business, news, and politics, but Twitter’s future as an independent social media channel is uncertain.

The Brief History of Social Media

Using Twitter/X for Business Purposes

Twitter is a thought-sharing website, but not every business can thrive there. Certain verticals, such as real estate, would be better off focusing on more visual media-sharing sites, such as Facebook or Instagram. Twitter users can use tweets, sponsored tweets, and right-hand rail ads to communicate to customers and potential audiences.

The Brief History of Social Media

Facebook

Founded in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg, Facebook is an online social network service where users can create profiles, upload photos, and video, send messages and keep in touch with family, friends, and colleagues. As of October 2016, Facebook has more than 1.8 billion registered users. Apart from its primary function as an online social network site, Facebook has become an important marketing and outreach channel for all sorts of organizations including governments. Also, Facebook groups and Facebook events can advertise business events.

The Brief History of Social Media

Facebook Pages

Any business can benefit from having a Facebook page, where page administrators can build audience, and target followers using Facebook advertising. However, Facebook pages have many rules, regulations, and laws surrounding their use for businesses.

The Brief History of Social Media

Facebook Messenger

Facebook Messenger is a mobile application created for friends and family to communicate and is also an innovative tool for shopping, marketing, productivity, and personal improvement. Facebook Messenger uses “bots” to automate messaging. Bots and social media seem like they should be polar opposites, but with half of humanity using social media, it may serve to create a necessary counterbalance to the massive amount of online communications, as well as a scaling mechanism for twenty-first century digital marketing.

The Brief History of Social Media

Reddit

Founded in 2005, Reddit has become a major entertainment, news, and social networking website where community members can submit their content and share other content, like an online bulletin board system. In 2014, Reddit became the “respectable” online venue for brand conversations, due to the community’s honesty and marketers’ need for authentic conversations around brands. Reddit.com is a combination of hundreds of “forums” that are each centered on certain topics (i.e., sports teams, funny videos, and movies).

The Brief History of Social Media

Reddit

Reddit's unique contribution to social media is the invention of the "SubReddit," which acts as a bulletin board around a subject and can include collaborative efforts. In each forum, which is dubbed a "SubReddit," users can submit his or her content (i.e., photos, video, direct text) or share content (i.e., website articles). Registered Reddit users can vote on any submission, which alters its ranking on the SubReddit. The more positive votes a submission gets, the higher up on the SubReddit it is. If a submission from a SubReddit gets a lot of net positive votes (positive votes minus negative votes), then it may end up on the "front page" of Reddit, which shows all the top submissions from across all its various SubReddits.

The Brief History of Social Media

Yelp

Yelp was founded in 2004 as a restaurant and retail review site; it grew quickly and went public in 2011. Yelp revenues come from businesses advertising. By 2010 Yelp had published more than 4.5 million user-generated reviews. At the same time, Yelp expanded throughout Europe and Asia; in 2016, Yelp.com had 135 million monthly visitors and 95 million reviews. By using Yelp, a member can rate restaurants, stores, or an activity, on a scale of one to five and can also include pictures and comments with the ratings.

The Brief History of Social Media

Snapchat

Snapchat is one of the newest social media platforms catering for the younger generation where it “snaps” their day, what they are doing, and more. Snapchat has become one of the top three social media platforms, especially for millennials, who favor it over all others. Founded in 2011, it offers an easier way to communicate with friends than the other social platforms offered. With Snapchat, photos sent to individuals are intended to last up to ten seconds depending on the sender. With the gaining popularity, Snapchat is leveraging its features into new and innovative marketing strategies for organizations.

The Brief History of Social Media

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a social media platform for professionals to network with each other and is also used as a recruiting tool for many large companies. LinkedIn has more than 400 million members, and its membership seems to be growing at ~100 million new users each year. In the realm of B2B marketing, companies leverage the power of LinkedIn as a strategic platform for promoting their products and services.

The Brief History of Social Media

LinkedIn

LinkedIn offers a unique space where businesses can not only establish their professional identity but also connect with decision-makers and key stakeholders in their target industries. Through compelling company profiles, thought leadership content, and sponsored advertising, organizations can effectively showcase their offerings to a highly relevant and engaged audience. Additionally, LinkedIn's sophisticated targeting options allow businesses to use specific demographics, industries, and job titles, ensuring that their marketing efforts reach those most likely to convert. The platform's networking capabilities facilitate relationship-building, nurturing leads, and fostering partnerships, making it an indispensable tool for B2B companies looking to expand their reach and influence within the professional sphere.

The Brief History of Social Media

Online Collaborative Projects (Wikis)

Online collaborative projects or tools allow people to plan, coordinate, add, control and monitor content in collaboration with others. At the core of the online collaborative projects is the concept of wiki. A wiki is a type of online content management system that allows users to add, modify, or delete content simultaneously in collaboration with others. Famous examples of wiki-based platforms are Wikipedia and Wiki-spaces.

Ward Cunningham conceived the concept of the wiki.

The Brief History of Social Media

Using Wikis for Business Purposes

Wikis are an excellent way to communicate and collaboratively work on projects with other people. A very good example of a collaborative wiki is www.wikipedia.com.

Wikipedia has more than 30 million articles in 287 languages written collaboratively by volunteers around the world. However, Wikipedia is just one type of website built on the wiki model. There are several other notable wikis. Google (www.sites.google.com) provides project wikis that can be configured for business purposes. Wikis are also helpful in SEO or product display websites.

The Brief History of Social Media

TikTok

TikTok has undergone a remarkable evolution since its inception in 2016. What began as a platform primarily focused on short-form, user-generated music videos has rapidly transformed into a global cultural juggernaut. One of the pivotal aspects of TikTok's evolution is its democratization of content creation. It shifted the power to craft viral moments from traditional gatekeepers to everyday users. As a result, TikTok's content has diversified significantly, encompassing various niches like cooking, fashion, science, and social activism. This evolution has allowed creators to find their unique voices, resulting in a wealth of diverse and engaging content that resonates with audiences worldwide.

The Brief History of Social Media

TikTok

Another significant factor in TikTok's evolution is its influence on the music industry. The platform has become a launchpad for emerging artists and a powerful marketing tool for established musicians. TikTok's ability to turn obscure tracks into chart-topping hits and its role in creating viral dance challenges has revolutionized music promotion. This has led to the music industry recalibrating its strategies to leverage TikTok's enormous reach and impact on pop culture. Overall, TikTok's journey from a niche app to a cultural force showcases its adaptability and its capacity to redefine social media and entertainment in the digital age.

The Brief History of Social Media

TikTok

TikTok has emerged as a dynamic platform for digital marketing, especially for brands aiming to connect with a younger, highly engaged audience. Its short-form video format offers a unique opportunity for creative and visually appealing content that can quickly capture viewers' attention. Digital marketers use TikTok to launch influencer partnerships, run engaging challenges, and share behind-the-scenes glimpses of their products or services. The platform's algorithm-driven "For You Page" ensures content reaches users with aligned interests, maximizing the potential for virality. Brands that effectively leverage TikTok in their digital marketing strategies can tap into a vast and rapidly growing user base, create memorable campaigns, and build brand awareness in a way that resonates with the modern, mobile-centric consumer.

The Brief History of Social Media

Visual Social Media (Instagram and VSCO)

Visual social media platforms serve various purposes and are included here because of their focus on media sharing. Instagram is a mobile photo-sharing app and social network created in 2010. It provides easy upload service, which allows instant feedback from the community of users. Instagram has a crowd-sourced, self maintaining feedback loop built into the platform that curates creativity and interest for an individual. Initially, Facebook feared Instagram, due to its dominance in the photo uploading service. In 2012, to combat competition, Facebook bought Instagram for \$1 billion. VSCO is a new shooting and editing photo app. Many of its users edit the photo before uploading it to Instagram or other social networks, but it has developed into a photo-sharing service for those keen on photography.

The Brief History of Social Media

Influence

In the digital era, the concepts of influencers and influencer marketing have become integral to the realm of social media. **Influencers** are individuals who have cultivated a dedicated and engaged following on platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, or TikTok due to their expertise, authenticity, or charismatic personalities. They hold the power to sway the opinions and behaviors of their followers, making them influential figures in various niches, from lifestyle and beauty to technology and education. **Influencer marketing**, on the other hand, is a strategic approach used by businesses and brands to leverage the reach and credibility of these influencers. It involves collaborating with influencers to promote products, services, or causes to their followers.

The Brief History of Social Media

Influence

Influence marketing through social media harnesses the persuasive power of influencers to convey brand messages to their followers. It's a symbiotic relationship where influencers receive compensation or other incentives for promoting products or services to their audience, while brands benefit from the influencers' credibility and reach. This form of marketing is highly effective because it capitalizes on the trust followers have in their favorite influencers. When influencers authentically endorse a product or service, it often feels like a recommendation from a friend rather than a traditional advertisement. As a result, influencer marketing has become a cornerstone of many digital marketing strategies, allowing brands to connect with consumers on a more personal level and drive meaningful engagement and conversions.

Mobile Apps

Mobile apps are becoming an integral part of our lives. Mobile apps are special-purpose tools developed to perform a variety of activities we do every day while on the move, such as communicating, social networking, sharing information, and shopping. Tinder and Skout, for example, are designed to facilitate social relations, and Viber aims to facilitate communication.

Social media is not only limited to the types above, but any online platform, including purposely built mobile apps, that enable us to participate, collaborate, create, and share content in a many-to-many context while using our mobile devices. Content can be anything, including information, audio/video, profiles, photographs, text, etc.

Organizations are increasingly creating purpose-built social media apps for collaboration activities. A good example of such a platform is the Enterprise 2.0, which uses social media tools, such as blogs, wikis, and group messaging software to allow employees, suppliers, and customers to network together and share information.

According to Wired Magazine, the average American spends nine hours a day glued to one or more screens creating and/or consuming social media content.

Consequently, we will study social media and its analytics in depth in later Lectures.

In this lecture, we discussed:

- **Definition of Social Media**
- **Core Characteristics of Social Media**
- **The Brief History of Social Media**
- **Mobile Apps**



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Thank You

