THE SERVICE USAGE IMPROVEMENT FOR ALUMNI LIAISON UNIT, UTM USING WEB 2.0 TECHNOLOGY

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A special feeling of gratitude to my loving parents, Mohammad Ali and Farah whose words of encouragement and push for tenacity ring in my ears. My lovely sisters and brother have never left my side and are very special.

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ABSTRACT

Enhancing communication between Alumni section of each higher education institute and the members is one of the most valuable assets for higher education territory that would help to increase its reputation. Currently, there has been a growing concern in university with regard to lack of communication between graduates and current students. This is a point to an apparent gap between the Alumni and current students of the university. In order to address this problem, this study seeks to investigate the existing services which attract more stakeholders to communicate with the Alumni Liaison Unit. Also, the study examines the effects of Web 2.0 in improving the communication between the Alumni Liaison Unit and stakeholders. Both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis were carried out to achieve these objectives. Two sets of questionnaires and semi-structured interview questions were utilized as means of data collection. About 300 post-graduate students of computing faculty answered the questionnaire and 10 person of this population attend in interview randomly. This study concludes with determining the most popular Web 2.0 services that users as students in university have desire to use and they determined the advantages of Web 2.0 services. Finally, this study offers recommendation for improving the communication in Alumni between members.

ABSTRAK

Meningkatkan komunikasi antara bahagian alumni di setiap institusi pengajian tinggi dan ahlinya adalah merupakan salah satu aset yang paling berharga bagi sesebuah institusi pengajian tinggi yang dapat membantu untuk meningkatkan reputasinya. Pada masa ini, terdapat kebimbangan yang semakin meningkat di universiti kerana kekurangan komunikasi di antara graduan dan pelajar semasa. Masalah ini telah menjadi jurang yang jelas di antara alumni dan pelajar semasa di universiti. Bagi menangani masalah tersebut, kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengenalpasti perkhidmatan sedia ada yang boleh menarik lebih banyak pihak berkepentingan untuk berkomunikasi dengan Unit Perhubungan Alumni. Selain itu, kajian ini juga mengkaji kesan Web 2.0 dalam meningkatkan komunikasi di antara Unit Perhubungan Alumni dan pihak berkepentingan. Bagi mencapai objektif tersebut, kaedah kuantitatif dan kualitatif telah digunakan untuk pengumpulan data dan analisa. Dua set soal selidik dan soalan temubual separa berstruktur telah digunakan semasa pengumpulan data. Kira-kira 300 pelajar pengajian siswazah dari Fakulti Komputeran telah tmenjawab soal selidik dan 10 orang daripada mereka telah menghadiri satu sesi temubual secara rawak. Kajian ini mendapati bahawa perkhidmatan Web 2.0 adalah yang paling popular, dan pelajar di universiti mempunyai keinginan untuk menggunakannya dan juga dapat memanfaatkan kelebihan perkhidmatan Web 2.0. Akhir sekali, kajian ini menawarkan cadangan untuk meningkatkan komunikasi di antara ahli alumni.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AJAX	Asynchronous JavaScript and XML
ALU	Alumni Liaison Unit
AOL	American OnLine
CoP	Communities of Practice
CSS	Cascading Style Sheets
DSS	Decision Support System
HE	Higher Education
HTML	HyperText Markup Language
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IM	Instant Message
IT	Information Technology
RIA	Rich Internet Applications
RSS	Really Simple Syndication
SD	Standard Devision
SN	Social Network
SNS	Social Networking Sites
SOAP	Simple Object Access Protocol
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science
TAM	Technology Acceptance Model
TV	TeleVision
UTM	Universiti Teknologi Malaysia
WWW	World Wide Web
XML	eXtensible Markup Language

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Introduction

According to Tim O'Reilly (2005) as a technology reporter, the word of Web 2.0 explains as the varying meanings in using the World Wide Web technology. Moreover, Web Design that drives to develop some criteria's like communications, creativity, collaboration and functionality of the Web, and secure information sharing. In addition, O'Reilly (2005) believed that the perceptions of Web 2.0 is necessity managed to the development and expansion of Web culture societies; also hosted facilities such as video sharing sites, wikis, social networking sites, RSS feed, blogs, podcasting, etc. (SNS, Mashup).

Furthermore, Tim O'Reilly (2005) identified the word of "Web 2.0", as the second generation in the world wide web, explanation of a sequences of technologies according to seven fundamental values like the Web in place of platform, attaching the cooperative intelligence, the subsequent Intel inside is data, software end is issued cycle, models of lightweight programming, software beyond the single device's level, and experiences of rich user. This insight has been extensively extent in all parts of life. The desires that improve under the web 2.0 umbrella contain of Really Simple Syndication (RSS), Social Networking Sites (SNS), blogs, instant messaging, wikis, mashups, social media sharing, social tagging, etc.

The Web reproduces to service; also mainly reproduces to self-service. With the aim of succeeding in self-service it is necessary to take a comprehensible realizing and association with the client. In addition, it should be attempt to stretch them a fast and simple knowledge. Thus, it is just as factual in our real life. As considered by McGovern (2010b), Starbucks cafe is earning millions in substituting their espresso technologies. By doing this, the machines are in best working command. They needed some machines that are not in great situation; because of this, the server and the client may see and communicate with each other simply. Considering, connecting to and increasing identification for the client as considered by prospective student, is one of the best factors of clearness in social media and communication that is a method to get to actually distinguish your clients.

Simões and Borges Gouveia (2011), identified that Web 2.0 is an emerging significant factor in altering the learning models in higher organizations. As well, in the sector of technology, the Web 2.0 tasks intelligent matter and the alter clients in active workers creating and curating information. As illustrated by Bartolomé (2008), the usage of Web 2.0 instruments like blogs, wiki's, RSS feed, podcast, and social networks can be the provisions of innovative teaching methods. It is also associated with the models such as syndicated content, communities of practice, peer-to-peer learning, learning as a creative activity, and non-formal education, and creation of personal learning environments. As considered by Redecker *et al.* (2009), such implements may use by the aim of developing the Learning 2.0 methods that can develop the motivation of students, improve the contribution, make the social skills and learning simpler, inspire cognitive skills of higher order, and increase the self-directed learning skills. On the other hand, the Indian institutions of higher education have not accomplished the required efforts to adjust the new necessities belong to the digital natives, immigrants studying, network society, and employed there up to now.

In the perspective of Wattal *et al.* (2010), as the Web 2.0 employments highly collaborating Web 2.0 technologies, certifications the user contribution in numerous methods several innovative Web 2.0 facility models have arisen, containing Facebook and Wikipedia. With the aim of extensively distributed workers, the Web

platform identifies as an intelligent agent, fostering collaboration, and controlling the shifting information from platform bases.

Recently, the development of technology is the reason of being easy in networking. People have the chance to interrelate with each other. Moreover, they have the chance to share the opinions, and considered their professional and personal experiences deprived of even affecting by their counters. As considered by Chi *et al.* (2012) current alumni schemes are typically industrialized to ease networking among the alumni and their individual institution of higher education, nonetheless the majority of these present schemes are not existence to use through the many of the alumni intended for numerous causes.

In the viewpoint of both Alumni and students, the social media setting is an excessive place to border them for programs and institutions. Currently, persons mostly try to use social network services like Facebook more than using the traditional sites for communication like IM, discussion groups, and think webmail. According to the report by Nielsen Online in Murch of 2009 that the blogs and social networking sites during the year of 2008 have founded more time spent among users in comparison with the personal email.

In terms of incidence of tasks and quantity given, it is significant to restate that all social media ambitious or not, and fundraising is related to making relations and communications. It is not exclusive to social media or something different. In the sector of Alumni who will contribute and request in what way they can prepare more. Thus, it is fine on the method to financial health and development, if a college recognizes how to promote and involve its alumni.

1.2   Problem Background

A university's alumnus grouping is one of its most valuable assets in terms of the financial, strategic and social contributions that could be made towards the credibility and longevity of the institution. The goodwill and support of a primary stakeholder grouping such as the alumni is crucial to higher education institutions wanting to prosper in a fast-changing and highly competitive market, notwithstanding the declining subsidies from the State. Alumni representation on the Institutional Council is a conduit to potential involvement in networking, lifelong learning, career services, mentoring, and fundraising and community development activities (Barnard, 2008).

As considered by Barnard (2008), the most alumni schemes these days do not suggest networks with the aim of communication; mainly through the present student community division, and only the minimum amount of preset networks that planned to make communication are available. Thus, they are indirection from alumni session to institute of higher education and vice versa.

Chi *et al.* (2012) also reported that the several alumni networks were firstly started from provincial groups of alumni transported composed for university fundraising actions. At the next sector, these networks gradually increased added position in the expansion of the universities since of their huge outreach possible that the welfares the university and helps present students in their vocational tracks. Chi believes that the alumni collections have been in reality for periods of time and they also are continually altering with time. Through the expansion of the internet and the social networking that push the alumni scheme to experience enormous variations, there has been a very large variation in recent years.

In the perspective of Chi *et al.* (2012), since the existence of humans, networking has been taking place around the world. It is obvious that every individual has a network; but some identify it and some of individuals do not.

According to Blance, with the rise of Web 2.0, recently there is a fresh mode of communicating online and one that actually changes the nature of communications. Additionally, in a study by Hong (2008) which conducted on 40 institutions using the DSpace stage as their official source found that the faculty contribution rate was 4.6% per documentation with an average of 1.9%. Given what seemed to be a problematic issue of participation, this study was dedicated to widespread community use as a success issue. To loan this objective, a method assumed that placed emphasis on the institutional repository's aptitude to connect individuals with the imaginative and intelligent productivity of one another. This can similarly be defined as a Web 2.0 method.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) permissible institution of higher education and business schools to have wider spectators in distant countries, and at a comparatively low cost. It gives a chance to connect with that audience almost promptly Simões and Borges Gouveia (2011) believe that, information challenges is much quicker and it was less controlled; also Internet users around the world had easier admission to it. The participative type of the Web also named interactive or collaborative Web which is constructed on allocation and exchange between Internet workers. According to Simões and Borges Gouveia (2011), the information shared online such as; text, audio, video is the basement of their collaboration which make it at ease for more individuals to contribute and allow aggregation of the movement of information.

Web has a thoughtful effect on the mode they communicate at the same time. As cited by Kvavik (2005) the Web is one of the responses to how networking could be fundamentally improved through the acceptance of ICTs.

While the welfares of using social media are abundant, alumni sections, by inadequate fiscal incomes and human, may now influence a rising number of alumnae. It still needs effort, making a twitter account and Facebook page is just the start.

Different a traditional fundraising occupation, wherever there is a current community of alumni contributors and friends that require a relation through the institute, the initial day you start a social media contribution, you are not portion of a communication nor do you have any preliminary followership. According to Kowalik (2011), the reason that is significant when making your institutes' social media community to make credibility through in it and promote your situation.

As cited by Barnard (2008) such an outline would place existing scholars in spread of the skilled information of alumni and of their sections in what way to overwhelmed the real challenges in the real world. On the other hand, Potential students practice it to study more about courses, college routine from the present students. These schemes may also provide the requirements of the parents, who required distinguishing about the universities from the current students, alumni and the departments. As the present alumni systems do not contain of any of these features, there is a thoughtful essential for re-engineering the alumni schemes.

In a study by Anthony (2010), he reported that in examining the efforts of other organizations, it seemed that institutional sources faced trouble in attracting lot of contribution. This was showed in later studies such as a study by Davis *et al.* (2007) on the institutional source at Cornell University has labeled participation, particularly intended for faculty, as varying among low and non-use.

In this sector, according to Barnard (2008), the alumni schemes should be advanced in means they growth the interactions between numerous groups of people related to the institution of higher education, like among existing students and alumni, among alumni and departments, and among existing students and prospective students or their parents.

As considered by Sevier (2007), we need some students who make communication together, with the lecturers, and the managers. Moreover, he believed that in future time, we suppose to expression at giving paternities of current students

their individual file. In addition, it's actually problematic to device the efficiency of social networks afar successively of simple traffic informations.

As reported in the Bren School, the administrative were looking at using Twitter to involve the potential students, while they did not obligate an account this social network or recognized what was this. Also they reported that we initially perceived of consuming Twitter as a service for free SMS in the perspective of Brad J. Ward. He exploited it intended for the similar aim that when he was employed at the admissions office of Butler University. Initially, the university proved an account of Twitter @brenadmissions that is anywhere we wanted to inform to updates to the students. According to Kowalik (2012), once making an account for Twitter, it was particular with the name and it was not interpretation firmly as a tool of admissions tool.

In the sector of marketing, this is the greatest choice to develop your content in front of potential scholars. Once the students' phone started to vibrate or ring, the student will automatically check the message and will be prompted of the school. This technique is an excessive method to prompt students of future admittance aims. According to Kowalik (2011), you might even hold challenges contribution permitted permits to a sporty event or a bookstore aptitude diploma, if the initially precise email reply to a trivia question is established.

According to the researches that conducted, very few studies are available about Alumni and enhancing communication. Therefore, lack of a literature review was sensible during of the steps of this study.

1.3   Problem Statement

This research was conducted from the recognized problem, assumed by examination and observation to the current Alumni UTM website.

In this study, there are several features that should be deliberated in certifying to improving the communication between the Alumni and customers. The main question of this research is "What are the needs of Web 2.0 services (Tools) to enhance communication at the Alumni in the perspective of students?"

To answer the research question the following hypothesis regarding Davis (1989) Model will be analyzed:

H1: Awareness of services and its benefits has a positive impact on student's perceived ease of use.

H2: Web 2.0 characteristics (ease of communication and collaboration) have a positive impact on student's perceived ease of use.

H3: Perceived ease of use positively affects attitudes towards usage of Web 2.0 services.

H4: Attitude of the users toward using Web 2.0 positively affects behavioural intentions to web 2.0 services usage.

H5: Behavioral intention to use Web 2.0 positively affects service usage improvement.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

At the end of this study, it would be expected to find needs of Web 2.0 services with the aim of helping to increase the quality of communication and it works through the perfect satisfaction among Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) students.

This study seeks to investigate the Alumni's needs for enhancing the effectiveness and provide better services for customers. The objectives of this study are as follows:

i.   To investigate the existing services which attract more stakeholders to communicate with the Alumni Liaison Unit.

ii. To examine the effects of web 2.0 services in improving the communication between the Alumni Liaison Unit and stakeholders.

iii. To propose a framework of web 2.0 services usage to improving the communication between members and the Alumni Liaison Unit.

1.5   Scope of the Study

This study will emphasis on the enhancement of communication between students and the Alumni Liaison Unit. The identified respondents of this study consist of graduated and non-graduated students of the Computing Faculty in current semester.

Hence, the Alumni is one of the important territory in each university, this study was also conducted and limited to the Alumni Liaison Unit.

The study focused on UTM's ALU. This study covers two major scopes as emphasized in below:

i.   The subject territory is limited to the Alumni Liaison Unit

ii. The customers are UTM students

1.6 Significance of the Study

Hence, it is actually significant for institution of higher education to emphasis on the alumni networks and finds some techniques to improve their development and expansion.

The findings of this study would be significant for several groups such as:

Usually a huge amount of money invests for developing softwares, web sites and so on especially with specific characters for specific uses. It can be seen such of these in Alumni which are not use frequently by graduated students and current students. In point of view of researches, it is because of that these services are not introduce to students and the researcher is seeking to find out the ways to encourage currents students involve them to gain benefits after their graduations.

The current students will be the future's alumni; so if they involved communicating each other, it will be advantage of the future students and alumni. According to Chi *et al.* (2012), communicating is a procedure where the alumni may attendant the existing students such as to make suitable career selections. Associated with the necessities of securing a job in the designated field, practical and professional prospects at work, and probable career trail choices, the alumnus who are characteristically working in an exact industry they have immediate evidence. In the perspective of Arceo (2003), the alumni may performance as counselors for present students in assisting them in various ways, typically by explanation of career choices and prospects.

The other significance of this study is that, researchers can be used this study as a source of information for their literature review in the future studies in the field of liaise and Alumni in the territory of higher education.

1.7   Conclusion

This section outlines the background of the problem and the problem statement which the present study attempts to address. The current problem faced by many students in the ALU in UTM. In particular the main focus is in the developing a framework for the ALU for creating an effective communication between the Alumni and members. This chapter also defined the objectives of the study followed by the scope of the study, as well as the significance of the study also outlined. Lastly, this chapter concluded the parts of the study which forms the basis of the research.

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