

THIS ISSUE

Social Media Use by La Verne Faculty: 2011 Study



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Social Media Use by La Verne Faculty in Teaching: 2011 Study

About 800 full-time and part-time faculty members were asked to respond to a survey on the use of social media in teaching, and 249 valid responses were received, with a response rate of 31%. The survey was conducted during April 19-30, 2011. Half of the respondents were full-time and half were part-time faculty. The social media referred to in the survey included: *Social Networking Sites (Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn), Open Source Course Sites (MIT OpenCourseWare, iTunes Universities); Blogs (Blogger, WordPress), Microblog (Twitter), Wikis (Seedwiki, Wikipedia, Blackboard Wiki tools), Multimedia Sites (YouTube, Google Video, iTunes, audio and picture sites), Social Bookmarking (Scholar, Digg, de.licio.us), Text Messaging and Instant Messaging (MSN Messenger, Yahoo Messenger), Internet Telephone (Skype), Audio/Video Conferencing, Cloud Computing (Google Docs, and other online hosting and storage), Online Virtual Worlds or Gaming Sites (Second Life), etc.*

The major findings of this study are:

1. Almost 70% of the responding faculty “somewhat agree” or “strongly agree” that they have the knowledge and skills in social media, and can use them in teaching if they choose to.
2. Over 70% “somewhat agree” or “strongly agree” that “Developing the knowledge and skills of using social media professionally is important to students' future career”, and “the University should expose students to professional use of social media.”
3. More than half of the responding faculty “somewhat agree” or “strongly agree” that they feel using social media will “improve students’ efforts in the class” and will also “help students learn more about the course subject”.
4. The most concerns expressed regarding use of social media are: adequate equipment (37.5% “somewhat agree” or “strongly agree” about the concern), adequate training (35.3%), time (29.5%), and adequate support from university technology staff (28.7%).
5. About 30% of respondents “somewhat agree” or “strongly agree” that they use “social media in my teaching frequently” and 45% “plan to add social media technologies to my current teaching”, while 53% “plan to use social media in teaching within one or two years”.
6. The social media applications used the most are multimedia sites (e.g. YouTube), wiki, blogs, and audio/video conferencing (e.g. Skype), while social networks (e.g. Facebook), open source course sites, Microblog (e.g. Twitter), and Cloud Computing (e.g. Google Docs) are most preferred to be added later on.
7. Nevertheless, a handful of faculty members (over 30%) indicated that they may never use currently-listed social media tools in teaching.
8. Over 35% of the respondents “somewhat agree” or “strongly agree” that students are more satisfied with the contents, course delivery, and student-to-faculty interaction “due to social media use in my teaching”, while only about 7-8% “somewhat disagree” or “strongly disagree”. The rest are either “neutral” or do not really know. In addition, similar percentage of responding faculty “somewhat agree” or “strongly agree” that using social media have “improved overall student learning outcomes in my class” and “my students’ learning outcomes in knowledge and skills, “facilitated my students to participate and contribute more”, and “assisted students to learn more.”

One message that this study may suggest is: the University needs to take steps to address faculty concerns on equipment, training, and staff support. It is important to those who plan to adopt social media in teaching.