

# Assignment 1

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**Title:**

*How LinkedIn has developed an online community that helps people to grow their networks and transforms the recruiting industry.*

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## **How LinkedIn has developed an online community that helps people to grow their networks and transforms the recruiting industry.**

### *Abstract*

Over the past decade, Web 2.0 has become the medium which allows people to interact with other users online. The websites that exist on the web today, continuously evolve into different platforms and create content and webpage with a purpose of social networking. This encourages communications and discussions to happen among individuals and groups of users on the online platforms. The generated websites avails user to collaborate online, creating new means for individuals to interact with each other and to form communities online. With the emergence of all interactive Social Networking Sites (SNSs), the influence of Web 2.0 as a tool in changing the society is inevitable. The use of SNSs in the social application has also transformed the recruiting industry. In this paper we will focus on the recent development that Web 2.0 has adapted, with LinkedIn as the main SNSs model and discuss the usefulness of the online community that has been built up on LinkedIn for the recruiting industry as well as the effectiveness of LinkedIn as a network growing tool.

### **Introduction**

The rise of Web 2.0 has shifted the technological and sociological paradigm and increased the integrity of our everyday life with the utilization of the Internet. The shift has generated different types of websites and online platforms across the Internet and these websites have become today's current trend all around the world. Social media platforms are known to be user generated and are characterized with a greater user interactivity, higher engagement rate and user's collaboration (Mrabet & Triki, 2014). When users are gathered online via the Internet, they communicate with each other and develop a community online. This new way of community development happens through the forum where most online activity and connectivity take place, which's the Web 2.0 (Fuchs, 2010). The development of these online communities is constructed in different platforms through the services that are available. A virtual community is built under the interaction between users that have the same interest, and their participation in the SNS platforms. Some of the examples of the existing virtual communities are Facebook, WhatsApp, LinkedIn and Skype. These online communities have brought a revolutionary change in many sectors including social and economy aspect. As an example, LinkedIn has resulted in the formation of an online community bringing in a new way of recruiting process and transforming the way network between individuals are built around the globe (Porter, 2015). As the SNSs

serves a purpose of connecting people and bringing them together as a community, LinkedIn worked to operate a platform that focuses on businesses-oriented services and has changed the world of HR from the aspects of recruiting industry and the development of the individual's networking growth.

### **Web 2.0 and Online Communities**

Web 2.0 is known to be the current stage of the development of the Internet which offers reliable connections and avails user interactive platforms to people using a wide range of devices. This has facilitated quick and convenient interactions between people in different locations at any time and bring them together resulting in what is known as an online community (Haythornthwaite & Kendall, 2010). The connectivity being developed between the individuals helps users to participate and collaborate online and this increased internet connectivity has made the world to become a global village. It has become very easy for people who are miles and miles away from each other to interact in real time. This has been enabled by the global internet connectivity and the promotion of the freedom of expression. The connectivity between the users of an SNSs who share a common interest builds up an online community consisting of members who continue to interact with each other on the web driven by the same motives (Porter, 2015). The cost of internet has become highly affordable all over the world especially with the use of fiber optic technology. As a result of these developments, businesses have grown rapidly due to the increased market share, expanded marketing space and reduction in the cost of production. People are using the Internet in ways that drive changes around the community within the emergence of Web 2.0 (Haythornthwaite & Kendall, 2010). Many people today, see Web 2.0 as an opportunity for growth in business and some still see it as a risk that could bring down the social culture. Regardless of the risks, there are more advantages to this development. Online platform such as LinkedIn created an online community adapting web 2.0 as a mean for people to demonstrate their personal skills and build professional network.

### **LinkedIn in Social Recruitment**

LinkedIn is one of the Web 2.0 tools that have brought a greater change in the recruitment industry. Through this platform, the job seekers meet job providers online which makes the recruitment process becomes efficient. Through LinkedIn, professionals in different fields post their profiles which include their academic qualifications, their job experiences and their interests and hobbies. Through this platform, it becomes very simple for some organizations to get their desired professionals which translate to better performance for the business (Dukaric, 2010).

Business managers are also able to meet and interact very efficiently with each other. The interactions between users, and the information that are being provided via LinkedIn enables hiring managers to conduct a comparative recruitment and help them in making decision to hire the candidate with the best skills via the Internet and increase the overall performance of the organization. LinkedIn has become a platform which individuals come online to connect with others and is used as a tool to search for new candidates and job openings with a higher rate of success, as it is one of the biggest world's professional networking site.

The emergence of web 2.0 is known to attain an evolutionary change in the world of recruiting industry. Prior to web 2.0, the first stage of internet (web 1.0) did not facilitate the internet user to participate and contribute on the web because of their "read-only web" system, so people weren't able to interact with each other online (Wood, 2011). As we all know, our everyday life before the internet existed was slightly more difficult than how it is today. One of the biggest notable change that we can see is the availability of instant access to information which eases the finding of business opportunities and growing connections, allowing people to search, apply for jobs at any time. This couldn't have been achieved with the traditional recruiting. Before the platform LinkedIn emerged, it was difficult for organizations to identify talented people to work for them. The process was very manual and was not very successful. Many companies used to advertise their vacant positions through the print media which would give room for anyone to apply for the positions. This process was risky since it was possible to employ people who were not well qualified. This situation has been changed by LinkedIn. With LinkedIn, the profession information of an individual is publicly available which makes the recruiters to targets new employees with a great level of accuracy (Cardon, 2007). However, the availability of public information about one's qualification has its own limitations. One of the greatest challenges is that the information presented by an individual in his or her profile could be misleading. It is not very likely that a person can talk about their limitations. This could at times results in recruiters obtaining false information from the platform, which is something that could be detected earlier when a face to face selection for recruiting is held.

### **Networking on LinkedIn**

LinkedIn allows their users to maintain a close list of connection and encourages people to expand their networks from finding people that are on their connection list (Dukaric, 2010). The network that is being built on the users' profile can grow very widely and consist not only friends that they already know, but also their 2nd degree of connections (their friend's connections) and

go as far to their 3rd degree of connections (the connections of their connections). These connections that are being displayed can build up trust for the potential business partners to work with each other as they are recommended from someone trustworthy. This feature accommodates individuals to search for jobs opportunities online and can help to create new connections with others in a much easier way (Dukaric, 2010). Users can maintain their connection and invite other people to join their connection list. Although people are allowed to connect widely, the privacy guidelines still respect the users as all connections to be made on LinkedIn must be confirmed by each individuals and profiles of the users will only appear after the approval. LinkedIn as an SNS provides a platform and the tools for people to interact and connect with each other, building up an online community of professional workers around the globe. It can be said that the platform is being used for “networking” just as much as other social media platforms, but its main focus is to build a platform for people’s career and to form business connections.

People often use SNS such as Facebook to share their opinion and come together as groups creating an online community with the motive to socialize, whereas LinkedIn is used to grow people’s connection and with the purpose of finding new professional networks. Chang, Liu and Shen (2017) argued that people motivation of using LinkedIn differ to their motives on using other SNSs. While people use Facebook to locate, share and communicate with their friends, LinkedIn is used for group activities, self-promotion, work and job-related issues. LinkedIn also offers the ability for their users to expand network online within a broader context. Users are able to locate people from around the world and find the proper candidate for a specific task or job description with no restriction. With the number of different SNSs dominating the internet today, each one of the SNS has their own purpose and attract users differently. SNSs such as LinkedIn and Facebook attract their own group of users who came along with different motivations, type of engagement and different perception of usage (Chang, Liu & Shen 2017). Moreover, LinkedIn is considered as a successful SNS as it has gathered users from around the globe, creating an online community with a large number of users. LinkedIn as an online community has become one of the largest professional networking platforms with more than 500 million users (Gallant, 2019). They have strategically planned to provide a service that meets the needs of their users (Dippelreiter, 2008). LinkedIn facilitates their member with such sophisticated tool and technology that eases the process for its users to achieve their main purpose of being online and accessing the SNS.

### **Self-presentation in Online Community**

In the world of online community people pay a great deal of attention on how their images are being portrayed online. Performing an identity in social media has been normalised as a flow of social interaction, with people attempt in constructing their identity to fit in their milieu (Pearson, 2009). Just like in other SNSs, people seeking for jobs on LinkedIn strive to present the best version of themselves and many have reconstructed their identity to create a good self-impression. Within this context, individuals construct their identity relating to their relative networking and play with their aspects of the self-presentation. Chiang and Suen (2015) also suggested that job seekers could increase their chances of being recruited by building an optimal presentation of themselves on LinkedIn. LinkedIn users fill up their profile highlighting their specific skills and experiences to create an idealised perception on their professional identity, followed by the statements from their colleagues and clients giving them feedback to reassure their capability to complete their profile. This attempt to manage one self-presentation by controlling the information that is being included on our social media profile is known as the *impression management* (boyd, 2007). This impression management is done by individuals or group of businesses in hope to create desirable images of themselves and gain employment opportunities or client.

Furthermore, LinkedIn recommends their user to connect their profile with their social media account, which plays an important function in building up their online self-presentation. By linking their profile to other SNS such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter it builds up credibility and trustworthiness as many employers likes to do a background check on the potential candidate to understand them better in details to their social status, education and vision (Donath & boyd, 2004). The friends and colleague's connection lists that are being displayed on LinkedIn can influence a recruiter evaluation or draw hiring managers. This public display of connections shows the quality of a person and their status within the community as their connections provide more information about an individual to the profile viewers. For more effectiveness in the recruiting industry, there is a need to use not only one platform but a combination of web 2.0 tools.

The main reason to why people needs to establish the authenticity of the information being provided on their profiles is to enhance truthfulness in the recruitment industry. In most of SNSs today, user's personal information is being presented publicly (Ridings & Gefen, 2004). This trait

poses a great security threat to the owners of the information. There are many instances when such information has been used in potentially dangerous practices such as the impersonation for the purpose of fraud or false identity. Although this may be true, information being displayed for the public on LinkedIn can be managed through the privacy setting and it operates in a way that people could only 'connect' with mutual approval. This form of connections formed in LinkedIn builds up a trusted online environment or a community of people trying to create professional network and personal connections (Donath & boyd, 2004).

### **Conclusion**

With the emergence of Web 2.0, technology has changed the way people are interacting with one another, it has made creating a community online possible and has changed the recruiting culture on a global level as recruitment now could be done via the Internet (Wang, 2012). Internet could bring in different and new experiences for people and adapt the technology that is available today to form communities. SNS such as LinkedIn depicts the change internet has brought as it is considered as a valuable tool in today's recruiting industry. LinkedIn has been among the best online platforms that can be accessed with readily devices such as desktops and mobile phones. With the development of Web 2.0, there has been a creation of good opportunities on the social and economy aspect through the online communities. Users will continue to try to manage their images/profile online. The way LinkedIn users build their profiles and the way they represent themselves help them to determine the types of job and the opportunities they will get. As an SNS, LinkedIn successfully connects individuals with each other and businesses with their current or future potential partner within the online community.

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