Generation Gamers set to rise online, whilst having fun

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Abstract

Online Social networks and Communities have witnessed an explosive growth towards user participation and developed into a wide array of Community involvement: they include Forums, Social media platform, email and in-built chat programs as the main form of online social networks but with the caveat of developing into social problems online and addiction.

Introduction

This conference paper will delve into the paradigm of community involvement in digital Online social media platform that was afforded with the advent of Web 2.0 technological break through. With the ability of dynamic updates on Social media, communication was communicated with ease and in real time. The focus will shift to Social media tools and delve into these areas more thoroughly. The first element of Social media is Forums: Forums will demonstrate the knowledge and information regarding a specific topic that users will navigate to learn or add input. Second, websites contain the content and part of the wider e-commerce component along with the eco-system of Social media. Third, Social media platforms and Community formed will shape how the consumer behave with their media consumption and the advancement of social platform like the API (application programming interface). Fourth, email has been around since the introduction of the internet and a status quo for messaging. Emails have evolved to social media space by having the ability to form groups. The importance of email is relevant as an identifier for a unique user, so login to any Social media platform or other online services will require a valid email address. The conference will then intersect Social media and gaming by using Twitch platform to broadcast gameplay from professionals to amateurs. The scheduled tournament play known as e-sport will attract huge crowds watching the tournament. The online game being studied is World of Warcraft since the game has broken records with the amount of paid players subscribed to that game. However, addiction, anti-social behaviour and social problems have emerged since the introduction of Online Social networks more broadly, and online gaming in the form of MMORPG (massively multiplayer online role playing game) has encountered such behaviour and addiction on some portion of the gaming community.

Social media Platform

Forums

Specialised field or a common interest of the topic in the forum has been the epitome of Social media. Forums are statically based and an earlier form communicating, and does not require real time response and hence, forms the bases prior to Web 2.0. A person would post content on the forum, then another user may respond to the thread at a later date. Haavisto (2012) further delves into online discussion forum and identify it as a constant flow of knowledge, ideas, innovation, new techniques including research and an opinion, whether personal or professionally. The vast discussion of content and topics in forums attract like minded people in a specific topic for relevant information, the experience from other people, product innovation from professional feedback in some cases. Furthermore, Koopman (2011) contends that online forum has propelled digital online learning as a discourse for scholars such as courses and subjects offered online and forums used as a privately discussion forum for the students and teachers / convener / tutor / lecturer. The wide adoption of online forum in the educational sector has proven to be a major component for learning, thus, other sectors such as online gaming would benefit from a dedicated forum for a particular game genre or a specific online game to interact with the Community. Bourgonjong et al. (2016, pp.1733-1734) highlights that games forum is generally depicted as "a site of struggle", outlining the content of the forum containing information to overcome aspects of the game, or some cumbersome feature of the game. The online gaming Community is an aspect of everyday life in society, hence is part of the "social institutionalisation" through forums.

Websites

In the World Wide Web, websites are addresses for a web page containing content relevant for e-Commerce, Forums, Organisations, Educational, Government, Personal space and so much more. Each website can be coded to contain highly rich content and Social features such as offering a help enquiry for customers making enquiries such as Open University (www.open.edu.au). However, the world wide web is a digital address that contains relevant information to search such as Google search engine, and transaction sites such as Ebay. When the services are added collectively, it forms a cohort and users spend significant amount of time surfing the web as a comprehensive experience accompanied with the interaction of Social media. Lacka, Chan and Yip (2014, pp.151-166) further examines the activities of users purchasing items online and finds the convenience at their fingertips. Furthermore, there is product feedback for consumer awareness about certain products and aspects including pitfalls to be aware of, thus generating some advantages for consumer with informed choices. Yet, Chapman et al. (2016, pp.18-22) argues website technology continue to evolve by fusing gaming ideology and education as a seamless learning tool whilst having fun known as "edutainment". The element includes video, games, pictures and voice overs indicating a multimedia learning experience which would suggest an interactive experience. The benefit to this type of fusion would benefit the Community as a whole with better learning experience and to engage certain topic more intelligently.

Social Media Platforms

The dynamic interaction with Social media has enabled billions of users worldwide to engage in a novel experiment introduced at the start of the twenty first century to reach anybody anywhere provided they have the right social media platform and connected to the internet. The engagement with people on social media has been unprecedented with virtually everybody in the world familiar with mainstream Social media app like Facebook. Business and Organisations have taken advantage with Social media to promote their own brands for a cost effective marketing tool and to post Public relations messages. Holland et al. (2016, pp2622-2625) argues that using Social Media is part of everyday life and controlling and mitigating professional use versus personal use not become "cyber loafing". With the update feed that Social Media generates, Freer (2012) asserts that organisations can turn Social media into focus groups and Social media gaming for user interactivity for specific industries such as Health Organisations through gamification. This can be achieved through Facebook API (application programming interface), when businesses can enhance the users experience and tailor their experience to promote brand awareness. The Social media space will only expand and involve more stakeholders to become the fabric of society.

Emails

Individual Email address is more relevant than ever as an email address is an individual identity and every single Social Media platform, login websites, documents and forms require an email address as part of valid identity. The core functionality of emails was part of the inception of the Internet as a correlation, and email in the early days of the internet was used as document sharing and writing a form of a letter to the recipient. When email groups was created, an early form of Social media had entered the sphere, hence paved the way to the notion of Social media. Beleraj (2019, pp.) argues that both email and Social media are avenues that tap into the Consumer market that has already been fragmented with different platforms, technologies and some with traditional approach to marketing form like radio, television advertising, catalogue, brochures and newspaper. Email marketing is a cheap form of marketing that will reach to all subscribers inbox with relative ease. Social media is simply a post and everyone joined in that group will automatically see the post. Haesevoets et al. (2019, pp.1-3) examines the real intended use for emails in Corporate Organisations and argues that it is embedded in these Organisations as their primary tool for communication. Email serves as a document, and a timestamp of the email sent, and email distribution can further be compartmentalised into departmental for instance. Email use is the status quo for digital and a social culture in personal or in business Community.

Online Gaming and Social Media

The cornerstone to this conference is the quality gamers now enjoy with the added support with Social Media platform in the gaming community. Moreover, Social Media Platform Twitch and Youtube is very popular amongst gamers, since they can record and broadcast their gameplay live or recorded and post at a later date. The advantage of Twitch for instance is professional play; casual / intermediate players that want to broadcast their game play. Deng et al. (2015) highlights the scheduled tournament held in Twitch that hosts the best players from around the world to compete in the form of e-sport. Even though gaming stream has not attracted the attention of mainstream, the gaming community is aware of streaming and millions around the world log into stream and watch professionals play or casual play. Furthermore, Williams et al. (2006, pp.339-344) asserts that MMORPG comes with Guild chat for members in the guild as a Social interaction amongst the players using World of Warcraft chosen as a study focus. The social aspect is compared to Social capital from Sociology as the game mechanics exist online and players around the world play their game at their own leisure. The core aspect of the game is levelling up the chosen character to the maximum character level, and attending raids with guild members and invites to fill the gap needed. Not only is this game a social aspect and Community based, but it also demands team work to succeed in the game and played at an optimum level. Snoggrass et al. (2017, pp.1928-1941) further argues there are guilds that are more relaxed and referred to as 'casuals' and the more serious players are guilds focusing on end game content as 'hardcore' players. These hardcore players are more involved in the gaming aspect and prone to use outside content such as Social Media to post information concerning the raid content and schedules. Thus, the gaming community are also entrenched with Social media at large.

Social Media Problems / addiction

Like with most things, if excessive usage is not controlled in a reasonable manner and there is a need to keep on going or increasing, then that is a form of addiction. Social problems in the digital age started rather quickly, right after the Social Media Platform launched to the Community. The adoption of the new Social media platform rose exponentially, with millions of users joining and becoming part of the Community with the aid of the smartphone technology. Sahin (2017, pp.120-121) explains social media addiction to always be online and interacting with the latest update and status of the update. The uncontrolled behaviour and motivation with compulsive nature is causal to the actual mechanics of the Social media platforms core functionality that has allowed this to occur. The human nature response to the novel experience tends to be automatic, impulsive, reflexive and reactive since the response spans from instantaneous to a delayed response outlined by Osatuyi and Turel (2018, pp.95-98). However, Visser et al. (2013, pp.1515-1516) does agree with the notion of social problems in Social media per se, however in World of Warcraft most players possess social competence, meaning the cognitive mind is sharp and laser focused on task at hand. The ability to succeed in the game and working in a group and applying technologies such as voice chat, additional mods for specific mission is a skill not captured by other studies in the field of Social media and depicted online gaming in the basket of anti-social and addiction. Based on the specific online game of World of Warcraft, that does not appear to be the case provided all other responsibilities have been taken into account.

Conclusion

The rise of Social Media platform and the online community has witnessed an exponential growth with users flocking by the masses to platform such as Facebook's inception. Gamers in particular have been the beneficiary of digital media tools, online community and social media platforms. The gaming experience has been enriched as a result and made players harness additional tools outside their gaming scope for better experience and results oriented. Traditional forms of social media like the email system continue to play their role in the social media space and serves as the status quo for business organisation and for personal use. Social media platform such as Facebook has shown that the platform has become its own eco-system through the use of API that enables coders to embed their application into Facebook port to enrich the experience of Facebook users and time spent. However, social problems and addiction have emerged from consumer behaviour into the Social media platforms, and whilst it has been proven to be psychological and cognitive based, compared to any other scenario, the novel experience and the mechanics of Social media indeed encourages this sort of consumer behaviour. Gaming community and in particular World of Warcraft players are also susceptible to anti-social problems and addiction, however there was no evidence found that gaming increases these sort of behaviour. Instead, the mmorpg game have shown that the game requires skills, working with team members whether in guild or invites as pug to tackle the end game content or a quest. The gamers in the study have shown to be social competence by employing other various parts into their gaming experience and having fun while playing.

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