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# Leveraging the power of social media to maximize organizational learning and drive performance

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# LEVERAGING THE POWER OF SOCIAL MEDIA TO MAXIMIZE ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING AND DRIVE PERFORMANCE

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I hope that this work will contribute to the rapidly developing body of research on business applications for social media and the discussions taking place.

# DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family, without whose support the work would not have been possible.

# ABSTRACT

This qualitative ethnographic study addresses the phenomenon of rapid social media expansion, which creates organizational challenges. Ongoing development of advanced technology products means that effective organizations must be more adaptive and receptive to new approaches and changes in their environment. In a hyper connected society, one where workers are linked through social media—at work, home, vacation, in a restaurant, or anywhere else—organizations need to unify their communication systems to leverage the potential that enhanced and collaborative communication can yield (Meister & Willyerd, 2010).

The research undertaken is directed at obtaining data on levels of social media penetration into organizational learning to analyze how social media use correlates with performance. In addition to identifying types of social media tools being utilized by organizations with formal learning structures, the research focuses on showing the importance of planning and goal-directed structuring in successful leveraging of social media tools in organizational learning. This provides a basis for recommendations for future research on social media use in this area to permit development of techniques for measuring the impact of the technology on learning and learner productivity and refinement of best practices for adoption and implementation of specific social media tools.

# Chapter 1: Research Overview

> *The use of online communities and networks, where employees are encouraged to co-create content, collaborate, share knowledge, and fully participate in their own learning, is helping to create far more enduring learning experiences. (Jarche, 2010, p. 1)*

Social media networking is a recent phenomenon within the public domain and is considered the Internet's next generation. This represents a major shift in how individuals communicate, collaborate, and build relationships with others, which has important implications for business, academic, and other organizations. Online social media are rapidly becoming the mainstream for communication, and it is virtually impossible to avoid social media networking's impact on any business operation. Social media networking's ever-growing popularity has led to a focus on how organizations can leverage this technology for virtual and mass collaboration (Cummings, Massey, & Ramesh, 2009). Analysis of this phenomenon is the subject of many recent studies, including the theoretical frameworks of Schlenker (2008) and Bozarth (2011).

Utilization of this new media gives a rapidly growing group of workers, teachers, students, and others who are technically connected an opportunity to build new relationships, learn new things, and conduct business, while at the same time keeping in touch with their friends, families, and colleagues. The recognition of organizational communication, internal and external, to social media platforms is imperative considering that in the next few years nearly half the baby boomer workforce will be replaced by the Millennial Generation, the 88 million people born between the years 1977 and 1997 (Hart, 2008; Patel, 2010). Research shows that Millennials find social media tools to be more helpful in terms of learning and getting work done than those born in earlier generations (Patel, 2010), and their adoption and integration into business, academic, and other organizations is important to creating an environment perceived as familiar by these new students and employees.

## Social Media Technology Background

**Definition.** There are many terms and definitions used, sometimes interchangeably, in describing and discussing social media and their effects on organizations. However, the discussion is aided by an understanding of differentiations in the terminology and how it is used: Media are means for mass communication—broadcasting in various forms. Social media are media that allow interaction in the communication. Networking is the linking of groups and individuals, often based on common interests or activities. Social media technology is technology that enables and facilitates electronic social media, primarily those that are Internet based, to be used for networking and other forms of interactive linkage. "Social media can be called a strategy and an outlet for broadcasting, while social networking is a tool and a utility for connecting with others" (S. B. Cohen, 2009, p. 1).

Social media technology permits increasingly sophisticated applications to be developed and widely utilized. These social media tools are being used to enhance communication of all sorts of information, including text, voice and video. This in turn has led to the development of a wide variety of social networks and specialized application often referred to as social media tools.

While these terms are not interchangeable, understanding of social media use in organizational learning often involves using the terms to discuss various activities and practices. Social media are "tools for sharing and discussing information. Social Networking is the use of communities of interest to connect to others. You can use social media to facilitate social networking. Or you can network by leveraging social media" (Steizner, 2009, p. 1). Boyd and Ellison (2007) state that social network sites are web-based services that allow individuals,

> …to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate

> a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. (p. 211)

Social media technology, also known as Web 2.0, refers to "the stage of the World Wide Web where the Internet becomes a platform for users to create, upload, and share content with others, versus simply downloading content" (Schlenker, 2008, p. 1). O'Reilley (2007) defines a social network as "a platform via which individuals provide content and services in the public domain creating a network effect through which others can remix and continually update content" (p. 17). Boyd and Ellison (2007) describe the main characteristic of a social network as "a relationship between individuals, signifying the ways in which they are connected through a number of social familiarities varying from acquaintance to close familial bonds" (p. 1).

**Development.** Online social networking sites began to develop in the early 1990s (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). Simple social networking sites such as Theglobe.com, Geocities, and Tripod were built for live chatting and as personal home page publishing tools, which allowed individuals to network with one another or search for topics of interest. Social media technologies gained popularity between 1995 and 2001, during what became known as the dot-com bubble, fueled by large capital expenditures. During this period, Internet-based industry growth exploded with the advent of the World Wide Web and Mosaic web browser.

SixDegrees.com, launched in 1997, became the first recognized social networking site (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). The site allowed users to create profiles, list their friends, and, beginning in 1998, conduct online searches for other friends. Each of these features existed in some form even before SixDegrees.com was released (Ellison, Lampe & Steinfeld, 2007). For example, profiles existed on most major dating sites and many community sites (Boyd & Ellison, 2007), and Classmates.com allowed people to affiliate with their high school or college and

search the Internet for other individuals who were also affiliated, but users were unable to create profiles or have a list of friends until 2005 (Skog, 2005). SixDegrees.com was the first social networking site to combine successfully these features for the public (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

As social media technology has evolved, many other social networking sites have been created, with the most popular for social and business networking currently being Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, Google+, and LinkedIn. Each of these sites is unique and offers different features and functionalities that individuals and companies utilize for their business and personal purposes. These features have made information sharing not only simple, but also have enabled scalable communication techniques. The technology is incorporated into smartphone and tablet platforms, expanding the reach and immediacy of access to these sites to huge numbers of people. The simplification of what had previously been high-end specialized tools requiring a specially trained expert has increased access and facilitated social connections through social media networks (Martin & Parker, 2008).

The emergence of social media technologies permitting multiparty interaction through the Internet is changing the way people interact in almost every aspect of their professional and personal lives. Social media are of particular importance because of the types of collaboration and communication they facilitate between peers (Avital, 2009). In our society, certain people thrive on interacting and learning from one another and desire to control how and from whom they learn, a process social networking emulates and promotes. Social media tools, when properly utilized, enable learners to connect with a much broader network of people as part of their learning experience (Martin & Parker, 2008).

What makes social networking sites unique and valuable is that they let users express themselves in an environment where exchanging ideas and other information is facilitated by the

validation of an open social network where communication contacts are visible (Ellison et al., 2007). This might result in a connection that would not otherwise have been made or a previously unknown business opportunity realized, promoting growth in social networking for business as well as personal relationships, a trend which will continue as social media use increases across all generations and geographies (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

**Growth.** The past few years have seen exponential growth in social media utilization, nationally and internationally, which is rapidly changing the way people discover, consume, and share information. In this increasingly connected world, information is transmitted electronically, and face-to-face interaction is being reduced in favor of electronic interactions, which increasingly use social media. According to Meister and Willyerd (2010), this has blurred the line between work and nonwork activities, as more and more people engage in work tasks outside their work environment and undertake nonwork-related activities in work environments. While the reduction of boundaries has often been met with organizational resistance, the prevalence of access to social media through new technological platforms ranging from Internet connected phones and other mobile devices to smart cars and television receivers represents an opportunity to leverage the new media channels to meet organizational objectives.

As soon as all or most organization members are in a position to use regularly social media, the inherent characteristics of those channels—flexibility, immediacy, and capacity for collaborative interaction—provide certain advantages. While first utilization is often in extra organizational interactions such as marketing and information dissemination, social media can increase productivity in many internal settings given proper development and use management.

**Penetration.** One of the key factors that determines whether and in what manner social media might be used in an organization is penetration, measured by the amount of access to

particular social media tools and the frequency and duration of their use. Just as being online, connected to the Internet, has gone from an expensive, cumbersome operation to a staple of electronic life, availability of a wide variety of social media tools is common, correlating with an organization's ability to utilize and leverage effectively social media in its activities, including organizational learning (Cummings et al., 2009; Meister & Willyerd, 2010).

By reframing the use of social networking technology, companies can alter communication, collaboration, problem solving, and competitive advantage with little cost (Ketter, 2010). With the drastic increase in Web site traffic to social networking sites, many corporations and educational institutions are rushing to develop their social media presence, including a more open approach toward budgeting for social media initiatives.

Reacting to these trends, more and more companies are using social media tools to build brands for their products and services, capture new knowledge, identify best practices for company processes, recruit talent, and hire and vet new employees. Innovative companies such as iStockphoto, InnoCentive, and Wikipedia have successfully leveraged the power of these concepts to expand their sources of new ideas and gather fresh thinking to create or improve products and services (J. Howe, 2008). J. Howe described how Internet use enabled large, distributed teams of amateurs to do work that was previously the domain of isolated experts or corporations.

The consumerization of social media has produced workers who expect the same utility and experiences with technology they get in the consumer market in their work environment (Cummings et al., 2009). Meister and Willyerd (2010) stated:

> Managers need to better understand the different expectations of each generation and how each approaches new work assignments. It is to everyone's benefit to surface these

> differences early on and learn how to use them to create a better final work product. (p. 60)

This trend impacts learning, including organizational learning. Shifts in technology that facilitate and promote expanded use of social media fundamentally change the e-Learning experience by heightening sociability, sharing, and communicating among learners. Instead of learners who are passive information consumers, social media technology allows them to be more actively involved in developing their own curricula. The new tools also provide learners with avenues for connecting with a much broader network of people as part of their learning experience (Martin & Parker, 2008). Properly applied, these tools can enhance the learning experience, increase efficiency in information delivery and assimilation with the development of better organizational learning systems integrating social media technology, augment productivity, and enhance results.

With the emergence of Web 2.0 technology, the e-learning community has applied the term e-Learning 2.0 to describe any type of online training event that leverages social media or Web 2.0 technology. E-Learning 2.0 has been defined as "learning through digital connections and peer collaboration, enhanced by technology driving Web 2.0" (Schlenker, 2008, p. 1). These digital connections and peer collaboration exchanges generate much of the popular social media content that are increasingly used to enhance organizational learning and development programs.

Social learning, labeled Learning 3.0, integrating social media, gaming, real-time feedback, and simulations, fully incorporate Web technology into the learning environment. Meister and Willyerd (2010) point out:

> Social learning yields new knowledge from a social interaction: a text message, a post on a Facebook wall, a comment on a blog post, an entry on a wiki, a lecture access on a

> mobile phone or an insight gained from viewing and commenting a YouTube video. (p. 34)

Many organizations are leveraging social media platforms and social network tools to brainstorm ideas, propose questions, conduct research, and facilitate debate and discussion.

As a result, organizations in many areas are reinventing their structures to make them more personal and social, to increase availability via various formats, and to blend them into their learning environments. They are aware of increased age diversity and consequently, offer learning and communication in various modes of delivery: classroom, online, podcasts, and webinars. Organizations that follow this model are developing engaging and collaborative learning experiences that have greater appeal across generations, giving them a competitive advantage in sourcing and retaining top talent (Meister & Willyerd, 2010). As a result, adopting, using effectively, and leveraging social media networking should become an important point of focus for most organizations.

**Statement of the Problem**

The rapid development and use of social media has changed the way people discover, consume, and share information. This shift in how communication is effected presents challenges to organizations. As Internet, networking, and communication technologies have been embraced by individuals and embedded in their activities, technologically enabled social structures are emerging that change the way individuals interact and communicate, causing what are seen as fundamental changes in communication practices (Vannoy & Palvia, 2010). Although social media technologies have already been widely adopted and are being increasingly utilized in a wide variety of environments, their adoption into organizations with formal learning structures are just beginning to appear in day-to-day operations. Learning organization leaders need to

determine the appropriate methods for leveraging the power of social media tools to maximize learning, which correlates with improved organizational performance. This mandate is especially important when considering that within the next 5 years, a large portion of the expected workforce will be drawn from the Millennial generation (Patel, 2010).

A recent study done by the American Society for Training and Development and the Institute for Corporate Productivity explored the connection between social media and work-related learning. The article discussing the study results, *The Rise of Social Media*, concluded that although using social media technologies can boost productivity, most organizations have yet to integrate fully and formalize the use of social media (Patel, 2010). Organizations that fail to identify how to adopt effectively and utilize social media can be expected to fall behind both as employers of choice and as learning organizations. In fact, recent research identifies a strong correlation between use of social media tools in personal interaction and benefit derived from availability of social media technology at work (Cummings et al., 2009; Patel, 2010).

A majority of organizational learning occurs outside formal structures, primary through interactions with one's peers and during job performance (Schlenker, 2008). This presents a challenge to organizations that want or need to channel and control learning, as there is little information and few developed programs addressing how to incorporate and best utilize social media technology in an increasingly unstructured environment. Accordingly, the need to develop effective strategies for implementation and management of social media technology presents organizational challenges: (a) how to adopt and effectively utilize rapidly developing social media technology, (b) how to reach a learner population that is increasingly attuned to the technology as a preferred method of receiving and assimilating information, and (c) how to proceed when there are few established techniques and best practices in this area.

## The Study and Its Purpose

This study is designed to identify and gauge levels of use of social media tools in selected organizations. The survey questions and follow-up interviews provide information on what social media tools are being utilized, levels of penetration of social media–based technologies, how these technologies are being adapted for use in learning, and how organizations are evaluating effectiveness and results. The qualitative data show how those involved with the technologies react to increased utilization of the new approaches, which should assist in development of improved practices and techniques in this rapidly growing area.

## Research Questions

The goal of the research is to develop data to understand better how social media integrated into work environments can be leveraged to promote learning and improve productivity. The research focuses on key questions facing organizations with regard to implementation of social media technology for learning and performance improvement. The research questions detailed in Appendix A cover the following areas:

1. What social media tools are being utilized?
2. How are organizations leveraging social media technologies to enhance learning and improve performance?
3. What challenges do companies face in implementing and utilizing social media technologies in their learning environments?
4. What are best practices for the use of social media technologies in organizational learning?

## Dissertation Outline

Chapter 1 provides a brief background of relevant recent developments in social media technology, discusses the terminology used, outlines the research questions, and describes the focus and importance of this study. Chapter 2 focuses on existing literature and research relevant to the use of social media technology in improving social learning. Chapter 3 details the study design and the methodology used to gather data, discusses the survey subjects and how they were selected, and outlines how data were collected, measured, and analyzed. Chapter 4 discussed the research findings, presented the data developed in the study, and included the researcher's analysis and comments. Chapter 5 concludes the paper and discusses the research findings. It refutes or supports positions, sets out conclusions drawn from the analysis, and makes recommendations for future research in the field.

## Limitations of the Study

This study was conducted with an awareness of the following limitations:

1. The study did not focus on particular professions or industries.
2. The study did focus on organizations with more than 25 members.
3. Organizations that are not currently using social media were excluded from the study.

## Summary

The study explores some key research questions facing organizations with regard to social media implementation, adoption, and leverage in both private and public sectors. To begin, the paper provides a brief history of the social media phenomenon, looking at the trend toward increased penetration and utilization of social media networking, assessing how learning has evolved by leveraging social media technologies, and focusing on the advantages and limitations of implementing social media technology to promote organizational learning

objectives. The research presented explores different sized organizations currently implementing and using social media tools in the areas of learning, services, and development; and analyzes the effect of their adoption and utilization on organizational learning.

**Glossary of Terms**

*Best practices:* A best practice is a technique or methodology that, through experience and research, has proved to lead reliably to a desired result.

*Blog:* A type of Web site or part of a Web site. Blogs are usually maintained by an individual with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video. Entries are commonly displayed in reverse-chronological order.

*e-Learning:* Education in which instruction and content are delivered primarily via the Internet. Such online learning may include a range of Web-based resources, media, tools, interactivity, and curricular or instructional approaches. Internationally, a variety of terms are used to describe e-learning, including virtual learning, online learning, and electronic learning.

*Learning Management System (LMS):* The technology-software solution for planning, delivering, and managing learning events within an organization, which may include both online classrooms and blended-learning environments.

*Media ecology:* The study of media environments; the idea that technology and techniques, modes of information, and communication codes play leading roles in human affairs.

*Social learning:* Learning that is collaborative, immediate, relevant, and presented in the context of an individual's unique work environment.

*Social media:* Media for social interaction, using highly accessible and scalable publishing techniques. Social media use Web-based technologies to transform and broadcast media monologues into social media dialogues.

*Social network:* Social structure made up of individuals (or organizations) called *nodes*, which are tied (connected) by one or more specific types of interdependency, such as friendship, kinship, common interest, financial exchange, dislike, or similar relationships.

*Social networking sites:* Web-based services that allow individuals to (a) construct a public or semipublic profile within a bounded system, (b) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (c) view their list of connections and those made by others within the system—In particular, Twitter, MySpace, Facebook and YouTube.

*Virtual community:* Social network of individuals who interact through specific media, potentially crossing geographical and political boundaries in order to pursue mutual interests or goals.

*Web application:* Application that is accessed over a network such as the Internet or an intranet. The term might also mean a computer software application that is hosted in a browser-controlled environment.

*Web browser:* A software application for retrieving, presenting, and traversing information resources on the World Wide Web. An information resource is identified by a Uniform Resource Identifier and can be a web page, image, video, or other piece of content.

*Web 2.0.:* Web applications that facilitate participatory information sharing, interoperability, user-centered design, and collaboration on the World Wide Web. A Web 2.0 site allows users to interact and collaborate with each other in a social media dialogue as creators of user-generated content in a virtual community, in contrast to Web sites where users are limited to the passive viewing of content that was created for them.

# Chapter 2: Review of Relevant Literature

*The mind of the intelligent gains knowledge and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge (Proverbs 18:15).*

This chapter highlights the shift from traditional to electronic media, the development of social media, and how the trend toward increased use of online media affects a wide variety of activities such as broadcasting and publishing, political campaigns, and product marketing. The literature recognizes the increasing use of social media technologies and their adoption as valuable sources of information in many areas and identifies the analytical framework available for assessment of the way these changes are influenced. Also discussed are developments in social media applications in learning contexts and the correspondent changes in learner behavior resulting from the trend toward social media use.

The research undertaken uses an analytical framework Schlenker (2008) and Bozarth (2011) developed to explore the impact of social media on organizational learning and performance to demonstrate the heightened need for forward-thinking organizations to incorporate social media technologies in their learning practices. Organizations want to be relevant and socially responsible in a modern world, which has multiple generations in the workplace as well as an accelerated pace of technological change. As this dissertation research shows, for effective integration to occur, organizations should look to adopt best practices for use of social media tools in their learning structures.

## Development of Social Media Theories

Media ecology theory had its foundation in the work of two prominent communication theorists, McLuhan (1967), whose ground breaking concept was *The Medium Is the Message* and Ong (1982), who further developed McLuhan's theory and postulated that the way people think fundamentally changed with the advent of writing and print. Pauly (2004) groups McLuhan and

Ong together as developers of medium theory, which holds that the way we communicate through particular media changes how we think and perceive our lives.

Griffin (2006) discussed what he called media ecology theory, citing McLuhan's concept that "we shape our tools and they in turn shape us" (p. 354); communication technology that McLuhan saw as "changing life on our planet—the *phonetic alphabet*, *the printing press*, *and the telegraph*" (p. 357); and suggested that digital communication was further changing the way we think. Applying medium theory provides an analytical framework to understand better the emergence of digital communication technologies, particularly the use of social networking technology, to promote learning in selected organizations.

The advent of new technologies in communication has impacted our ability to socialize and form communities. Social media technologies are being used for interactions with family and friends, and to create entire new relationships that would not be possible without the recent technological advances. Electronic technology makes it possible to be linked to and interact with others virtually anywhere in the world. The ability to mimic closely personal relationship patterns is a key attribute of social networks (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

Online communities have been characterized as groups with shared interests or goals for whom electronic communication is the primary form of interaction (Dennis, Pootheri, &Natarajan, 1998), such as groups that meet regularly to discuss a subject of interest to all members (Figallo, 1998) or groups brought together by shared interests or a geographic bond (Kilsheimer, 1997). Online community development grows out of electronic technology, and the literature analyzes whether real communities, those with extranet impact, can be formed online.

Virtual communities are characterized by frequent participation and development of a strong sense of attachment (Hiltz & Wellman, 1997). Members of these self-selected groups tend

to participate and contribute on a regular, often daily, basis, and form relationships with community members based on mutual integration (Figallo, 1998).

Studies of persistent Internet use have identified both entertainment and searching for friendship as motivational forces. Research in social psychology has shown different motivations for individuals to join regular, noncomputer mediated communication groups. Human beings have a need to belong and be affiliated with others, because groups provide individuals with a source of information, help in achieving goals, and give rewards (Watson & Johnson, 1972). According to social identity theory (Hogg, 1996; Tajfel, 1978; Turner, 1978, 1985), people form a social identity of values, attitudes, and behavioral intentions from perceived membership in distinct self-inclusive real or imagined social groups. A myriad of virtual communities have developed and such development is viewed as another step in the evolution of media ecology.

**The Social Media Shift**

The formation of online communities corresponds with growth and development of the Internet and its use. Many scholars and nonscholars have written about the Internet, what it means to society and the world, and the effect it has on people's lives as it changes and develops. "The thing about social media is that it is always new, and as such, these stages represent a moment in time. They will continue to evolve and expand with new technologies and experiences" (Solis, 2011, p. 5).

Initially, there was little that was user-friendly about the Internet, and it was primarily used by computer engineers, experts, scientists, and librarians (W. Howe, 2010). There were no personal computers during that time and users had to learn to utilize complex systems to access information or for other uses. Further development of communication technology has produced a powerful shift in how Internet-based socializing occurs. Blogs, peer-to-peer social networks,

video sharing sites, and related technologies are rapidly changing the way we gather news, seek out entertainment activities, conduct research, learn, and make purchasing decisions. Individuals of all ages are consuming differently and allowing information gathered online to influence their behaviors and how they interact with and relate to each other in business, academic, and social environments. Commentators have recognized that individuals of all ages are participating in the online environment, but initially observed that young people more readily turned to online social networks to establish friendships and, ultimately, communities. As soon as they developed, this group began utilizing social networking sites and other types of social media tools to communicate, exchange information, and conduct research.

This shift in communication and information access from traditional media to social media will be particularly significant as this generation, labeled Generation Y or Millennial (Twenge, 2007), has come of age with computer and Internet capabilities in their homes, giving them access to social media. To stay relevant, their workplaces will have to make that shift, and business organizations' structure must accordingly be changed to accommodate these workers. Galagan (2010) postulated the media shift will have far-reaching effects on organizational structures, evolving from a hierarchical order to one that is more directly democratic.

The expanded use of new media, particularly social media, is rapidly having an impact on the modern workplace. As people who have access to Internet technology have become accustomed to going online and using e-mail and other applications to communicate, research, and conduct financial transactions, they are also utilizing the technology for work tasks.

"Pew Research" (2011) found that adults are increasingly utilizing social media sites such as MySpace, Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn to communicate with both friends and business associates. Figure 1 shows:

- 65% of online adults now say they use a social networking site, up from 61% in 2010 and 29% in 2008 and just 5% in 2005;
- Social networking use among senior Internet users over 65 shot up by 150%, from 13% in 2009 to 33% in 2011;
- The number of 50- to 64-year-old Boomer Internet users online doubled from 25% in 2009 to 51% in 2011;
- Boomers, ages 50 to 64, grew their daily social networking site usage a significant 60% from 20% to 32%. (p. 1)

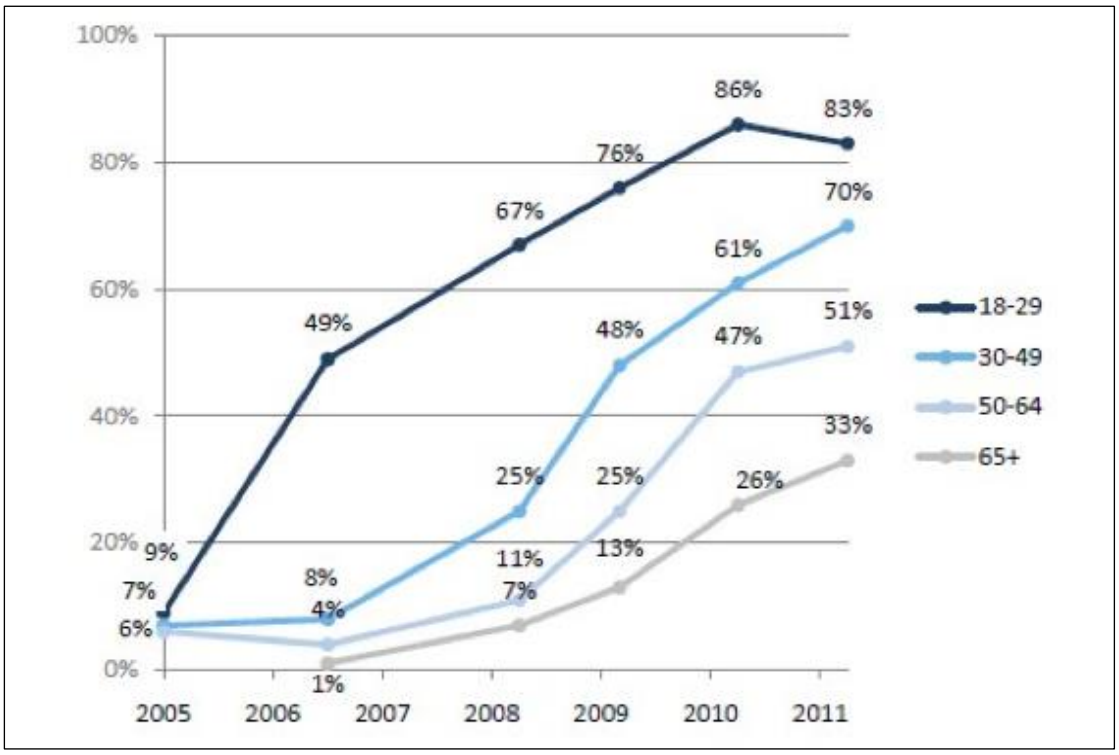


*Figure 1.* Social networking site use by age group, 2005–2011. The percentage of adult Internet users in each age group who use social networking sites. Total *N* for Internet users age 65+ in 2005 was < 100, and so results for that group are not included. Adapted from How gray is social network? by Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project survey, 2011. Copyright 2011 by the Pew Internet & American Life Project.

Older age groups have also increased their use of social media by using blogs and other online media sites for daily news and entertainment information (Lee, 2006). Online news

readership also increased. CNN found that 43% of online news sharing occurs via social media networks and tools such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and MySpace, followed by e-mail (30%), Short Message Service (15%), and instant messenger (12%; Indvik, 2010, p. 1). Another study from "Pew Research" (2011) revealed that,

> …27% of frequent sharers (those who share at least six stories per week) account for the online distribution of 87% of all news stories. The average consumer of online news content shares thirteen stories per week and receives twenty-six stories via social media and/or e-mail. This proclivity for online sharing has contributed to an overall increase of news consumption in the U.S. (p. 1)

It is likely that this pattern of increased use led by frequent, active users will occur in other environments, including organizational learning.

Older adults are also actively creating peer content, as evidenced by the mass proliferation and mainstreaming of personal blogs (Lee, 2006; Rosenbloom, 2004). Businesses organizations are also experimenting with peer production by collaborating with individuals and firms, and encouraging consumers to participate actively through social media channels (Tapscott & Williams, 2007).

**Traditional media and the online shift.** The literature recognizes that the media landscape is also rapidly shifting as social media replaces print and other traditional electronic media. Print magazines and newspapers face hardships as a result of lower readership rates and decreased ad revenues. In 2008, Tribune Co. Chairman Sam Zell called this decrease in readership "the worst newspaper ad slump since the Great Depression" (as cited in O'Neal, 2008, p. 1). Media corporations throughout the United States reduced their workforces, with some newsrooms seeing an involuntary 50% reduction in editorial staff and others filing for

bankruptcy protection (Ballinger, Ho-Walker, & McGregor, n.d.; Kurtz, 2008; Learmonth, 2008). These downturn trends continue to force many media corporations to downsize. In addition to layoffs, some companies instituted mandatory furloughs and wage reductions, while others offered unpaid leaves of absence (up to 6 months) or voluntary buyouts (Ballinger et al., n.d.).

In contrast, the success of online ventures and social networking enterprises was recognized in the market with the purchase of MySpace by Rupert Murdoch, which later failed and was sold at a loss by News Corp. The same can be said for YouTube, which was purchased by Google, showing acknowledgment that online social networking sites are developing as news sources at the expense of more traditional outlets (Associated Press, 2006). Given the correlation between the financial collapse of print media and the proliferation of channels for news gathering and dissemination using social media technology, these trends are significant, as the literature recognizes. Audiences are turning to Internet sites in greater numbers than ever. According to Fredricksen (2012):

> Digital revenues remain a sole bright spot. Emarketer estimates U.S. digital ad revenues for newspapers will grow 11.4% to $3.7 billion, after rising 8.3% to $3.3 billion in 2011. Print advertising revenues at newspapers, however, will dip an additional 6% to $19.4 billion in 2012, eMarketer estimates, after falling 9.3% to $20.7 billion in 2011. (p. 1)

These studies also show that old and new technologies are coexisting in many areas. Newspapers have created blogs to run alongside their print publications (Gill, 2005), and traditional media companies have accepted blogging and online video as part of their offerings. At the same time, new media companies consisting solely of online entities but mimicking traditional publishing houses have been forming.

Advancing this trend, bloggers were given accreditation to cover the presidential debates alongside print media and TV beginning in the 2004 primaries (Boyd, 2006). Blog use for commentary and analysis continued in the 2008 election cycle, with added impetus from technology allowing users to question the candidates via YouTube and visit candidate's pages on social network sites.

Barack Obama's use of social media in his 2008 campaign was lauded by the press and generally described as being extremely successful (Lee, 2011). His campaign collected and utilized 13 million e-mail addresses; 2 million profiles on a dedicated Web site, MyBarackObama.com; and 5 million more on MySpace and Facebook (Stelter, 2008). Postelection commentary recognized that the Obama campaign's effective use of social media contributed to his victory in the democratic primary and ultimate success in the Presidential election in 2008. Early in the primary process, the Obama campaign had 125,858 friends on MySpace, more than double the 52,472 friends the Clinton campaign had.

Both the Democrat and Republican party campaigns fully embraced social media a no-website-left-behind (Stelter, 2008) approach in which they attempted to contact and influence voters on all available sites. Politicians and their campaign organizations use social media as their first and often primary channel for getting their message out, a trend that has important implications in other areas where rapid dissemination of information and receipt of response feedback is crucial to success.

With regard to 2012 U.S. Presidential election, Facebook has eclipsed Myspace, and Obama has 31 million followers. Obama has a Twitter account to reach out to younger voters; he has 22.7 million followers, 32.2 likes, and he had a high number of retweets (forwarded tweets), which help leverage his cause (Foulger, 2012). Similarly, his supporters were also involved in

maligning-mocking his main political candidate Romney via hashtags such as #romneyshambles. Similar Romney tried the same, with hashtags such as #youdidnbuild that, but only had a small number of followers compared with Obama. Finally, there was evidence that Romney bought fake Twitter followers to make him look more popular than he was.

Political correspondent Helen Thomas (2008)(Source not listed in reference section. Year conflict?) addressed the technology's effects in her book *Watchdogs of Democracy* (Title not listed this way in reference section. Check source for accuracy.), observing that journalism has been radically changed. The proliferation of Internet media affects how the public receives news. Consumers expect rapid news updates; there are generational differences that cannot be ignored. Corporate news conglomerates, Washington insiders, and world leaders alike give consideration to a continuum and combination of both traditional and emerging social media.

Research on Internet utilization also shows that in many areas existing media and new online outlets coexist and, increasingly, intersect. An example is the public relations field, which is media-centric, placing a heavy emphasis on influencing media. As the traditional media landscape has changed, public relations has had to make a transition in order to remain viable and relevant. Public relations structures were traditionally based on a model that stressed controlled, deliberate methods of communication with information flowing in one direction, a situation that social media is changing. Public relations entities must adapt a more interactive approach.

David Scott (2007) in his book *The New Rules of Marketing & PR*, asserted that traditional approaches do not work in the new online-focused environment and were in need of revamping. He argued that new strategies and tactics are needed—ones that take into account the new ways consumers are obtaining information and trusting these sources. Without this,

practitioners risk the possibility of not engaging audiences, losing their sense of trust and legitimacy, and ultimately being left behind in their field while those skilled in the online sphere become more competitive in the marketplace. In his view, public relations practitioners that utilize online strategies in their campaigns should not be afraid to give up a certain degree of control and should instead focus on more direct communication tailored to particular group's needs, an approach necessitated by the increased availability and sophistication of social media technology.

**Prevalence of social media technology.** In many areas, social media are rapidly becoming the key communications technology. Galagan (2010) stated, "Whether we like it or not, whether we use it or not, social media is changing the way we work" (p. 1). Not only are more people using social media more often to communicate and collaborate, but their use is changing us and how we operate socially. Instead of losing privacy to the government or an employer, people are tweeting it away at an ever-increasing rate, creating an unprecedented level of social transparency.

Social media is increasingly channeling information flow. Pervasive availability and use of social media applications such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+, and Twitter has organizations urgently trying to determine how to leverage the interpersonal connections inherent in social media for their own purposes. These organizations, often with their own formal learning structures, are looking to develop and use social media tools to increase information access and gain insights into new ideas and developments (Greenfield, 2011).

According to Forrester Research (2009), one third of U.S. adults post at least once a week to social sites such as Facebook and Twitter. Another 60% maintain a profile on a social network site, and 70% read blogs and tweets and watch videos online. It has become commonplace to use

the Internet to share what we are thinking, reading, listening to, seeing, and eating, as well as who we are paying attention to in the networks being used (Li, 2010). According to The Nielsen Company (2009), time spent on social networking sites by Internet users worldwide has increased from 3 hours per month to 5.5 hours per month, and that statistic can be expected to increase further with the expanded availability and usability of social media (as cited in Hubbard, 2011).

A Rudder Finn company (2009) survey (as cited in Lickteig, 2009), Intent Index, showed that 79% of people with desktop computers and 91% of people with mobile devices used them to socialize, supplanting face-to-face or other types of electronic communication such as telephone or e-mail. Michael Schubert, chief innovation officer overseeing digital strategy at Ruder Finn said:

> The way the Internet has allowed us to share knowledge laterally instead of up the chain of command requires a new way of thinking about our online communications. The Intent Index underscores the important of knowing what people seek, and how we, as communicators, can intersect with what they're looking for. (p. 1)

As a result, social media are becoming more important in community building and maintenance, both socially and in the workplace.

Similarly, social media penetration has expanded across demographic boundaries, where the frequency of social site usage among adults has made them an important part of Internet communities. These digital immigrants, new to the system but willing to adapt, are joining online communities in many areas. As the use of social media has become commonplace, organizations are beginning to provide in-house networking tools for learners. This has led researchers to develop data on what factors influence successful use of social media tools, focusing on

demographic and cultural factors. Understanding the current needs and interests of each group for which social media use is important allows the technology to be focused on valuable and meaningful engagements to leverage its value (Lee, 2006).

Such social analytics will play a key role in social media management. According to Jim Lundy, vice president and general manager for collaboration at Saba (as cited in Hart, 2008):

> Analytics are being used to determine how people interact and who key influencers are when a group solves a problem using social media. Companies are already mining their usage data to see what teams or departments are first to come up with the best ideas. Social network analysis maps are going to replace the traditional organizational chart. (p. 3)

Literature in the field recognizes that communication media play an important role in idea development. Organizational scientists have frequently studied feedback and information seeking in business environments. Since Ashford and Cummings's (1983) seminal work, many studies have found that proactive feedback seeking is an important individual resource for workers, enabling them to clarify their role expectations, evaluate the adequacy and appropriateness of their work behavior, and improve their performance (Ashford & Tsui, 1991; Morrison, 1993).

Ashford and Cummings (1983) identified two methods of feedback seeking: monitoring, in which individuals attend to and take in information from the environment by observing the situation and behaviors of others to gather cues, and inquiry, in which individuals seek feedback by directly asking those around them for personal input. Their study demonstrated that perceived cost and value of feedback obtained were the primary determinants of the ways in which their research subjects utilized these methods.

Empirical data in both field and laboratory research settings corroborate Ashford and Cumming's findings. Both Ashford (1986) and VandeWalle and Cummings (1997) found that perceived value was the most important determinant of feedback seeking. Similarly, Fedor, Rensvold, and Adams (1992) and VandeWalle and Cummings (1997) reported negative relationships between perceived cost and feedback seeking. Consistent with prior research, these characteristics can be regarded as gates to feedback-seeking behavior.

As these early studies showed, information seeking carries a certain level of perceived cost. Where communication involves costs of social exchange (Berger & Bradac, 1982; Huston & Burgess, 1979; Miller & Steinberg, 1975), individuals seek to reduce uncertainty in interactions with others. Sensitivity to these considerations is an important factor in planning for use of social media tools, as there are costs embedded in any context associated with information seeking.

When seeking resources, either in the workplace or in other settings, individuals become conscious of the rewards and costs of the exchange. Rewards include the acquisition of resources (e.g., items of information that can be accessed and used in social actions) and positive effects such as personal attraction, social acceptance, social approval, and respect-prestige (Blau, 1967). Blau also pointed out that information-seeking behavior is subject to inferences and interpretations others make.

In asking for information, an individual is often taking a public action from which others could potentially infer that he or she is incompetent and incapable of working independently. To the extent that individuals perceive public inquiry as a sign of weakness or insecurity, they will avoid seeking information (Schoeneman, 1981). Ang, Cummings, Straub, and Earley (1993) reported that individuals often refrain from seeking information because of face-loss costs when

obtaining face-to-face feedback. They argued that communication technology and information technology can be designed to mitigate some of the face-loss costs present in direct support seeking.

In personal interactions, contextual cues (e.g., nonverbal cues such as facial expressions, postures, dress, social status, as well as vocabulary, grammar, tone, and accent) have been found to influence the ways in which impressions of others are formed (Goffman, 1959; Lea & Spears, 1992). In such face-to-face encounters, the major sources of damaging information negative impressions—are identified as the social contextual cues perceived and exchanged during the interaction (Lea & Spears,1992). By contrast, in technologically mediated intermediacy done over the Internet, many of these cues are absent or strongly attenuated, and mediated requests reduce their effect by serving as a buffer between the seeker and the giver (VandeWalle & Cummings, 1997). Ang et al. (1993) found that seekers in the computer-mediated feedback environment sought feedback two-and-a-half times more frequently than those in the face-to-face environment, an important advantage of social media interaction that can be utilized to promote learning productivity.

**Online media as facilitator of learning.** The analytical approaches used in these studies can be applied to undertake and evaluate emerging media trends and their applications. While most previous research focuses on comparing offline with online technology in terms of perceived cost differences in requesting support, this study is directed at obtaining data to examine the effect of different levels of online communication *personalness*—perceived personal directedness—on support enactment. Research on message personalness suggests that the way requests are proposed affects people's involvement. Personal, directed requests increase the recipient's level of involvement and corresponding motivation (Taylor, Gould, & Brounstein,

1981), which in turn establishes the leverage potential of different approaches in this area. Initial understanding of how social media technologies are currently utilized provides a basis for this work.

Involvement has been recognized as an interaction between people and external stimuli (Salmon, 1986). Petty and Cacioppo (1981) suggested that involvement is a function of the personal relevance of messages. Accordingly, a person's involvement may be directed by understanding his or her feelings about the level of message personalness during communication with others. Similarly, J. B. Cohen (1983) linked involvement to a person's activation level—the frequency of interaction with the medium. Because involvement led to activation and motivation, personalness of online requests was found to be relevant to message penetration.

At the same time, the personalness of directed communication was also found to create a sense of exclusivity. This occurs when intended receivers are given favorable status via direct messages while people who are not part of the targeted audience are not privileged to the content the sender disclosed. Developed evidence suggests that the perceived personalness of requests directly affects the likelihood that the recipient will act on the request.

This type of social pressure also works in online exchanges. According to Hwang (2009), social norms influence three dimensions of online trust: integrity, benevolence, and ability, indicating that the level of correspondence with social norms will affect people's receptiveness to information in online business relationships. For example, clarifying security information makes people more willing to use a credit card to buy an online product.

Li (2010) asserts that there has also been a fundamental shift in power, since individuals have the ability to broadcast their views to the world. This shift has come about because of trends in the new culture of sharing:

1. *More people online*. Not only is the number of people online growing, but the time they spend and the kinds of things they do online are both also multiplying. According to Internetworldstats.com, 1.7 billion people globally are active on the Internet. Penetration ranges from 6.8 % in Africa and 19.4 % in Asia to 74.2 % in North America.

2. *The widespread use of social sites*. These days, it's hard to find any Internet user who hasn't watched at least one video on YouTube. Adoption has been quick: in September 2006, only 32 % of all active Internet users around the world had watched a video clip online; by March 2009 it had grown to 8.3 %. Similarly, 27 % of global online users to 63 % of all users ages 18 to 54 globally. So when people go online, they are now spending a disproportionate amount of time on content they have created themselves.

3. *The rise of sharing*. The past few years have been dominated by the rise of a culture of sharing. The activity of sharing is a deeply ingrained human behavior, and with each new wave of technology—printed paper, telegraph, telephones, and e-mail—sharing gets faster, cheaper, and easier. (p. 5)

**Integration of Electronic Media in Learning**

Clark (2002) wrote: People in the field of e-learning began to realize that you simply cannot put information on the web without a learning strategy for the users.…In order for technology to improve learning, it must *fit* into students' lives…not the other way around. As a result, e-Learning was born. (p. 1)

The shift toward *network culture* (Galagan, 2010, p. 1) directly affects learning, as digital media are part of the redefinition and broadening of existing boundaries of learning practice and organizational understanding of what learning means. The term learning is utilized rather than education to emphasize settings both in and outside the classroom. Many of the more radical

challenges to existing learning agendas are happening in domains such as gaming, online networks, and amateur production that usually occur in informal and noninstitutional settings. Media literacy involves not only ways of understanding, interpreting, and critiquing media, but also the means for creative and social expression, online search and navigation, and a host of new technical skills, each of which directly affects how learning occurs.

Before there was widespread use of the Internet-based technology in learning environments, almost all formal training was conducted in a classroom setting. As computer use increased in the early 1990s, computer-based training (CBT) started to evolve, as companies utilized developing electronic media technology in information transmission to supplement classroom training. The format of this early CBT was very basic, usually using CD-ROMs, and the computers utilized did not connect to the Internet (Corporate Leadership Council, 2005).

The advantage this type of CBT training offered was the ability to provide training to people in remote locations as well as cost savings for many companies by eliminating the need to transport and house people for classroom training. However, learners often found this type of CBT difficult to utilize because of the technical nuances accompanying what was then cutting-edge technology (Corporate Leadership Council, 2005.

In response, improvements in the design and delivery of CBT were made, including adding interactive features, but many organizations were still hesitant to adopt fully the technology. Despite some advances, the delivery of training remained relatively consistent in nature, with minimal improvements to the design and usability of CBT systems. A Corporate Leadership Council (2005) study of CBT approaches implemented from 1994 to 1999 found, "CBT courses were simply 'page turners' with static content that failed to engage learners. As a result, classroom training continued to define learning strategies in this period" (p. 3).

As trainers addressed these problems, advances in technologies permitted additional changes to be made in training technologies, particularly utilization of web-based training enabled by widespread advancement and use of the Internet. In this period, CBT was rapidly replaced by curricula distributed over Internet channels, frequently called eLearning. From 1997 to 2003, "use of e-Learning technologies increased by approximately 155%" (Corporate Leadership Council, 2005, p. 4) as organizations adopted e-Learning to deliver training.

The flexibility of the Internet made it possible for instructional program designers to create Web-based training modules that were increasingly sophisticated. Technologies included streaming video at low bandwidth speeds, interactive exercises to keep learners engaged, quizzes to test understanding and retention of the course material, and, often, inclusion of databases to track the number of enrollments, average scores, and amount of individual feedback (Corporate Leadership Council, 2005).

As e-Learning use increased, systematic approaches to delivery of web-based information called LMS were developed and become a target of study in the field. According to Downes's (2004) study of educational structure, an LMS, "takes learning content and organizes it in a standard way, as a course divided into modules and lessons, supported with quizzes, tests, and discussions, and in many systems today, integrated into the college or university's student information systems" (p. 1). Using the LMS approach, large corporations organized and grouped e-Learning courses into curricula, training plans, and personal development plans. LMSs served as a central repository for various types of training courses employees could leverage for their own professional development.

The trend toward LMS-based learning in business was led by Internet companies, technology consultants, and Web programmers, who identified and promoted the Internet's

capabilities. The Internet as it developed shifted from being a medium by which information was transmitted and consumed into a platform on which content was created, shared, remixed, repurposed, and passed along. Web-based learning use grew from searching for and obtaining information to active dialogues and, increasingly, collaborative content creation and revision, made available through an LMS (Downes, 2004).

As Internet technology evolved, so did its users. A majority of the early adopters of collaborative Internet technologies were young. However, Hart (2008), a social media and learning advisor and founder of the Centre for Learning & Performance Technologies, noted, "As these younger user populations continued to grow and spread the technology in a variety of ways, members of older generations quickly began to realize that they had no choice but to also embrace this technology revolution" (p. 3). As people realized how important it was to adopt the new technology, large organizations became aware that their eLearning programs had to be changed. They were not only dealing with new technology, but also a new type of learner, and they had to adapt quickly in order to stay competitive.

As digital media networks have become embedded in everyday activities, there have been broad-based changes in methods of knowledge production, communication, and creative expression. Digital media are commonplace and pervasive, having been taken up by wide range of individuals and institutions. As a result, the technologies have been released from the boundaries of professional and formal practice and the academic, governmental, and industry groups that initially fostered their development, and been taken up by diverse populations with noninstitutionalized approaches, including the peer activities of youth (Hart, 2008).

The shift toward interactive media, peer-to-peer forms of media communication, and many-to-many forms of distribution has produced types of participation that are more bottom-up

and consumer driven. Audiences want, and have, the opportunity to talk back to organized media and create their own local media forms, rechanneling the flow of information, and changing how learners perceive the media they are using, other users, and themselves (Bozarth, 2011).

**Social Media in Learning and Task Performance**

Initially, Internet use did not require much specialized knowledge. Most use involved information acquisition channeled by increased browser capabilities and text communication, primarily through e-mail. There are more than a dozen Web browsers, and e-mail has been supplanted by text messaging and instant messaging. More important, as McLuhan might have observed, the Internet has higher adoption, with more interactive participation. Anyone with the necessary knowledge and skills has the ability to create and publish content to and through the Internet. Schlenker (2008), labeled this as eLearning 2.0, observing:

> When average computer users begin feeling comfortable doing these types of activities online, then we know we've reached a tipping point. This is the point at which we all stop using the Web to simply "Google" for information, and start consuming, creating, and collaborating online. eLearning 2.0 acknowledges these activities as powerful educational and learning tools accessible to every computer user, and to the mainstream population at large. (p. 3)

Hart (2010) explains, "Learning is not the end goal; but is a means to an end. It's about PERFORMANCE; people doing their jobs better. In fact it's all about working smarter. Thus working smarter is the key to sustainability and continuous improvement" (p. 5). Hart's working-smarter approach involves not just new tools but new thinking. A system model based on creating, delivering, and managing courses through social media enables and separates more efficient and effective learning.

Research and consultant work has identified a correlation between efficient intraorganization knowledge transfer and improved realization of organizational objectives and task performance. E-Learning facilitates realization of this type of benefit by increasing collaborative intraorganization and extraorganization data transfer, and socialization (Von Krogh, 1998). Socialization is a key factor in the sharing of tacit knowledge because it serves to expand one's network of resources and is a source of justification of an individual's beliefs (Von Krogh, 1998; Von Krogh, Kazuo, & Nonaka, 2000).

In most organizations, a major portion of available knowledge is found only in the minds of organization members who have already learned how to accomplish efficiently tasks in a way that meets objectives. The more efficiently this key knowledge is communicated and shared, the more productive the organization. It is rapidly becoming noticed that social media use promotes sharing of tacit knowledge among organization members. Because of the collaborative, social nature of these media, they are particularly conducive to opening up internal knowledge that is often diffusely spread among a large number of people who are often not used to communicating openly what they know to coworkers or colleagues (Von Krogh, 1998).

Research identifies why this occurs. The emphasis on collaborative conduct reinforces an environment conducive to peer-to-peer learning, including mental safety and caring (Von Krogh, 1998; Von Krogh et al., 2000). The transfer is further promoted such that managers-facilitators of learning are readily available within social networks, particularly controlled internal networks, to provide feedback and communication regularity (Ellinger et al., 1999), which permits cognitive tacit knowledge construction (Leonard & Sensiper, 1998).

Another key factor in sharing and relaying tacit knowledge is communication socialization (Busch, Richards, & Dampney, 2003; Haldin-Herrgard, 2000; Hauschild et al.,

2003) because it provides an outlet for knowledge transfer through an expanded network of contacts and justifies and reinforces individual beliefs (Von Krogh et al., 2000), encouraging more individuals with valuable knowledge to join the discussion, open up, and share what they know. Social media tools, properly used, strongly encourage tacit knowledge transfer within organizations. Social media availability has a close relationship to successful task performance in organizations because tacit knowledge is an important component of what is called practical intelligence (Sternberg et al., 2000), which strongly correlates to successful performance and adjustment to changes in work environments.

Chatti and Jarke (2007) identified a number of factors favoring social media use in learning. In addition to the benefits of socialization in facilitating transfer of tacit knowledge, Chatti and Jarke cited socialization's ability to create dynamic, *user-centric* (p.411) structures as an advantage in meeting what they see as the unique needs of learners and knowledge workers in modem organizations. Nonaka and Takeuchi (as cited in Chatti & Jarke) stated, "Tacit knowledge differs from information in that it resides in people and thus can only be created, sustained, emerged and shared through socialization" (p. 411).

Chatti and Jarke (2007), extending Siemen's work in development of a learning theory based on *connectivism* (p. 411), which "presents learning as a connection/network-forming process" (p. 412) that is "complex, multi-faceted and chaotic" (p. 411), identified nine *connectivism principles* (p. 411):

1. Learning and knowledge require diversity of opinions.
2. Learning is a network formation process of connecting specialised modes or information sources.
3. Knowledge rests in networks.

4. Knowledge may reside in non-human appliances and learning is enabled/facilitated by technology.
5. Capacity to know more is more critical than what is currently known.
6. Learning and knowing are constant, ongoing processes (not end states or products).
7. Ability to see connections and recognize patterns and make sense between fields, ideas, and concepts is the core skill for individuals today.
8. Currency (accurate, up-to-date knowledge) is the intent of all connectivist learning activities.
9. Decision-making is learning (pp. 411).

**Adaptation to learners.** The ongoing development of Internet-related learning technologies combined with generational and geographical differences make it difficult to implement new learning technologies in large organizations, let alone make the learner's experience meaningful. However, change is inevitable. According to Levy and Yupangco (2008), "Technology continues to evolve, along with how people connect and contribute to the creation of content within virtual communities. We either adapt or fall behind" (p. 4).

E-Learning, which readily allows users to create information and collaborate with others, requires them to have an entirely different skill set than what was necessary for less interactive participation. This presents organizational challenges. Hart (2008) pointed out, "Five generations are currently alive, and for the first time in history there are four in the workplace. Each generation's experience has impacted their outlook on life and learning" (p. 1).

Organizations adopting new learning technologies must be cognizant of the generational differences that currently exist in the workplace and align their strategy and technology with the varying skill sets of their users. Hart (2008) cited Prensky's work on differences in generational

use of technology, which contrasted digital natives with digital immigrants, who he described as members of the older generations, mainly Baby Boomers, Veterans, and to some extent, Gen Xers, who have learned to use Internet based media technology but did not grow up using it. Like all immigrants, they have adapted to a new environment, but always retain to some degree, their *accent* (p. 3), that is, a foot in the past. Conversely, "Digital natives grew up with the technology. They are 'native speakers' of the digital language of computers, video games, and the Internet" (p. 3). Hart stated that although,

> …digital immigrants may embrace computers, mobile devices, and the Internet, they have a different approach to using those technologies than do members of younger Y and Z generations, who grew up with the technologies, including, for many, using social media. (p. 3)

These generational differences influence which learning techniques are most effective. Bozarth (2011) published a study called "Social Media for Learning," which asked guild members the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement, "younger workers will demand we provide social media approaches to performance support" (p. 10). Of those who 792 responded, 69% either strongly agreed or somewhat agreed. Generational gaps are not the only differentiator when it comes to assessing a learner's technical skills. Bozarth (2011) wrote:

> The prevalent beliefs about adoption of social media for learning solutions were anticipated demand for social media from younger workers, the need to attract talent, concerns about remaining competitive, and the need to responds to worker requests for social media activities. (p. 10)

Design of e-learning materials should also take into account cultural differences in learning approaches. In Western culture, most learning places emphasis on me, while in many

parts of the Southern hemisphere and in some other cultures learning is more heavily based on community engagement (Hart, 2008). Developing countries are leaping into Web 2.0 to become engaged and acquire knowledge from others, and this needs to be taken into account if an LMS extends beyond a particular area. Bozarth (2011) also pointed out:

> The LMS does a fine job of handling what "training" has always wanted to handle, like tracking course completions and test scores and generating certificates. But training is changing. Where e-Learning once meant that learners could access content anytime, social media for learning means they can access other people and expertise any time. (p. 13)

**Advantages and limitations of social media–based learning.** Regardless of organization structure, use of social media tools for eLearning has both advantages and limitations. Researchers have identified important factors that organizations developing and implementing e-Learning systems should take into account prior to the integration and implementation of social media technologies in their training and learning functions.

***Advantages*.** A basic characteristic of social media networks is that they rely heavily on the human element—the end user community—actively contributing for a social media channel to be fully effective as a learning tool. The platform for effective social media use is a learner community that generates content, shares ideas, and identifies and distributes information. As Schlenker (2008) pointed out, "The human element is what makes the new Web work" (p. 1). Without user-generated content, the enhanced functionalities of social media technology have little utility; therefore, encouraging active collaboration among users is important to achieving the potential of the technology to enhance learning.

Within a social network, users generate and refine content. By connecting users, each link expands the network. Without active participation, the platform is ineffective, as collaboration among learners is a key component of increased personalness. Quinn (2009) pointed out in his article, *Social Networking: Bridging Formal and Informal Learning*, that "having people work together to craft a statement, document an approach, or generate a response can be a powerful tool for developing a shared understanding" (p. 2).

The initial focus of Internet use in organizations was to locate information. Martin and Parker (2008) pointed out in their article, *Why eLearning 2.0*, that, "In Web 1.0, the focus was on connecting people to content. In Web 2.0, the focus is on connecting people to content AND to other people" (p. 2), which permits a wider range of learning structures and presents opportunities for leverage not available with the older technology.

An important advantage of newly developed social media tools is that they readily lend themselves to collaboration among users, enabling them to work smarter, as the technology facilitates not just new tools but new relationships (Hart, 2010). The intuitiveness and flexibility of the new technology's platforms allows users to create easily and freely content, share ideas, and actively learn from one another. "Instead of inviting learners to be passive consumers of information, with interactions limited by those specified by the 'learning professionals,' social media tools empower learners to be much more actively involved in constructing their own learning" (Martin & Parker, 2008, p. 2). This increase in personalness leverages the channel.

Web 2.0 technology, by enabling users to play a more active role in their learning, decreases the overall time that it takes to disseminate new information, and other advantages have also been identified. Of 792 e-Learning Guild members surveyed study, "64.8% indicated improvement in the ability to accommodate learner-user needs, while 67% respectively cited

increased learner-user access and availability with increased speed of information dissemination, 32.3 % pointed to reduce costs, 41.7% claimed improvements in learner-user performance, and overall, 76% felt that social media for learning initiatives are worthwhile" (Bozarth, 2011, p. 24). A busy social media site quickly becomes a hub of cutting-edge information, surpassing other sources in presenting relevant content, up-to-date facts, and current opinions.

Based on years of study of instructional design, it appears that most online and classroom training structures and formats present information that is not relevant to certain learners, decreasing personalness and making them less effective (Bozarth, 2011; Schlenker, 2008). Most training courses cover too much information and detail without any customization to individual learner needs and wants, and lack measurable performance-based metrics for assessing levels of retention. In contrast, studies on e-Learning show that learning systems with well-integrated social media technologies allow users to create their own learning structures, permitting them to focus on relevant information and what is important to them in their work areas, making learning more relevant and effective (Bozarth, 2011).

Collaborative learning environments help maintain a balance between the learning that happens formally via classroom and on-the-job training, and that which occurs informally through interactions with one's peers and performing the job (Schlenker, 2008). "Informal 80/20 rule which holds that 80% of learning occurs outside formal structures" (p. 4). Traditional training courses generally offer little opportunity for interaction with others once the course has ended, thus ignoring the majority of learning that takes place outside the classroom.

Collaborative learning environments, particularly those effectively using social media, allow users to focus selectively only on the relevant information, thus enhancing the learning experience. Additionally, they provide the entire user community tools that foster engagement

and collaboration, which helps users to complete effectively the learning process once they have left the classroom, using web-based tools in peer-to-peer and forum formats. This allows collaborative processes to be used to develop shared understanding, address learner misconceptions, and clear up ambiguities (Quinn, 2009).

Another advantage of Web 2.0 technologies and collaborative environments is that the information is given in real time. In a global economy, it is imperative that organizations have their people not only work together but learn together, regardless of cultural differences or geographical separation. A flexible platform based on social media technology allows learning to be tailored to a wide variety of users, taking into account their particular needs and desires (Quinn, 2009).

Organizations with structured learning practices are starting to realize the value of breaking away from the silo approach, where learning or management systems are incapable of reciprocal operation, to those based on shared learning and collaboration. The eLearning Guild's survey, showed that of responding members, "83% felt social media for learning has value, and 71% indicated they planned to do more with social media learning" (as cited in Bozarth, 2011, p. 1). Almost half of the participants indicated that adoption of social media technology was being driven by the needs of functional areas in their organizations, including learning and development.

Another advantage is the ability to assimilate practices cutting-edge businesses develop, often with considerable application of resources. In 1999, GE launched a professional networking platform called GESupportCenter. With more than 400,000 users to date, this networking platform provides users with a central place where they can collaborate, research, and share ideas together on a very large scale. "GE Support Central gets approximately 25

million web hits a day. Users have created more than 50,000 communities, with over 100,000 experts signed up to answer questions and manage information" (Martin & Parker, 2008, p. 2).

The GE social networking system utilizes standard social media such as blogs, wikis, and discussion forums, but also has unique configurations that are people-centric, community-centric, discussion-centric, document-centric, and process-centric where people can engage the system in whatever mode is most comfortable to them. With a technical support staff of more than 100 and more employee traffic than internal systems of Yahoo and Google combined, the GE system demonstrates how social media networking employing Web 2.0 technology can be implemented in a large organization (Martin & Parker, 2008).

Cisco, another organization in the forefront of the rollout of internal focused social media network technology, has explored a number of corporate uses for social media, including opening up internal access and offering social media solutions to allow employees to work from home. It also allows use of work-issued mobile devices for personal purposes and permits connection to social networks during work hours. Programs of this sort recognize that having access to social media or the right smartphone in the workplace can be more important to tech-savvy young professionals than earning a high salary (Carr, 2011). IBM is also moving to replace e-mail with more asynchronous work tools to facilitate collaborative action among member of work teams that are geographically dispersed (Greenfield, 2011).

Another program showing the benefits of social media technology has been developed at Sempra Energy Corporation, a *Fortune* 200 energy services company based in San Diego, CA. Sempra uses a sophisticated social media structure to leverage information technology and provide innovative services, streamline business processes, and address the needs of its mobile workforce. The approach uses social network analysis, including the behaviorally based mapping

and measuring of network connections, to provide network maps and metrics, metrics, facilitating analysis of how the social media channel use affects its workers and customers. These techniques have applications in economics, marketing, organizational development, and facility planning (Chen, 2007).

Social media technology effects higher quality of information transfer within an organization, facilitates open communication, and allows users to discuss readily ideas, post news, and share links in a wide range of situations at relatively low cost, providing considerable advantages over the media it supplants. This has resulted in recognition that utilization of the technology incorporated as e-Learning 2.0 has positive impacts. These attributes, as well as increased acceptance of the new technology as a productivity tools, internal and external competitiveness, and user enthusiasm have intensified social media for learning applications (Bozarth, 2011).

The biggest drivers of the technology are learning professionals who have become familiar with the technology and are pushing their organizations to use social media to improve learning (Bozarth, 2011; Martin & Parker, 2008). An additional push comes from users whose personal familiarity with the tools has established their value. Management, especially senior management, is not currently in the forefront and the adoption push is from the grassroots (Bozarth, 2011).

Recent research shows that effective use of information technology and social media has positive effects on organizational performance. Martin and Parker (2008), citing Harvard Business School Professor Andrew McAfee and several coauthors, state that social media, "shows an increasingly large performance gap between those organizations that have learned how to use technology to spread ideas and innovation, and those that haven't" (p.7). They assert,

"The more a company uses IT to spread innovation and continues to learn from it, the more likely it is to be a competitive winner within its industry" (p. 7). This is because social media use spreads employee ideas, skills, and expertise. Martin and Parker wrote:

> In an organization that does not make effective use of IT innovations, the knowledge and learning of organizational superstars is either undiscovered or undocumented. With social media, however, good ideas work their way to the surface, where you can harness them for knowledge and insight in an easily transferable format. (p. 7)

Of e-Learning Guild members who were using e-Learning 2.0 for social learning, 66% reported that social media use increased the speed of information dissemination in their organizations and almost identical result (67%) of survey respondents were reported in the e-Learning Guild's 2011 survey (Bozarth, 2011).

***Limitations*.** While active collaboration and sharing of information among users are viewed as social media benefits, research in the area recognizes that these attributes can limit the technology's uses and beneficial effects. Allowing people to post information at will, without formal review or audit, can result in inaccurate data and information to disseminate. To prevent users from posting or accessing inaccurate data and information, it is important for online communities or forums to be moderated or otherwise controlled, such as by community-driven controls. In their article "Overcoming Challenges of Social Learning in the Workplace," Levy and Yupangco (2008) pointed to IBM's Social Computing Guidelines, which set up safe zones, delineate controlled and uncontrolled areas, and restrict anonymous authoring and editing, as a example of how potential problems can be addressed in an organizational context. Bozarth (2011) also pointed to Ford Motor Company's social media guidelines, which offer a,

> …five points model: (1) honesty about who you are, (2) clarity that your opinions are your own, (3) honesty and respect in all communication, (4) good judgment in sharing public information, including financial data, and (5) awareness that what you say is permanent. (p. 21)

A company's technical infrastructure must also be surveyed prior to implementing social media based e-Learning; a detailed analysis of the infrastructure required is of utmost importance. At a bare minimum, technical due diligence should access the Web site traffic projections (potential users), bandwidth capacity, operating systems of end users, types of supported browsers, type of content being accessed (for example: video, audio, external web pages), average hosted file size, peak times of use, required browser plug-ins, performance scripts-graphs and trend analysis, Internet security policies, technical support model, and other key factors for the elected e-Learning approach.

Without considering limitations on social media use prior to implementation, it is difficult for an organization to develop a strategy for overcoming issues arising from these factors. The more issues that develop as the technology is implemented, are dealt with, and resolved quickly and effectively, the less frustrated end users will get, thus increasing their trust and confidence in the new learning technologies, which in turn enhances their effectiveness and reduces the cost for rework and testing. Additional considerations are the opening up of access to organizational and personal information in highly transparent formats, with attendant privacy and security considerations, potential broadcasting and publicizing of negative information, strain on resources to implement and manage a complex system and supporting infrastructure, and negative effects on worker resources and productivity if the access is not used efficiently (Lise, 2001).

**Social Media Implementation Considerations**

The literature highlights approaches to follow once a social media platform has evolved sufficiently to be implemented. One of the effects of the accelerated shift to social media has been a proliferation of studies on the best practices for implementation of social media technology, including a number focusing on implementation in organizational settings. In fact, "Web 2.0 has led to a resurgent focus on how organizations can once again leverage technology within the organization for virtual and mass collaboration" (Cummings et al., 2009, p. 1). The literature provides important insight into how to develop successfully an e-Learning program with social media components. The successful integration of social media technology into existing learning and development programs arises from targeting of instructional design strategies and the tools used in the programs. Careful planning, communication, and execution can make the integration seamless, improving acceptance and use and producing projected benefits in a short time window.

Because proper utilization of social media tools is important to organization functions' efficiency, more organizations than ever are either planning on adopting and integrating the technology, or are already in the process of doing so. The existing literature in the field provides a good deal of information on what should be considered in the implementation process, and in what way (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

It is initially important to develop a media implementation plan addressing the implementing organization's principal considerations. Those responsible for structuring the plan should determine and delineate objectives for the technology to be implemented, such as groups to be reached, purpose of the platform, and control-security considerations that need to be met.

Infrastructure, including both existing electronic platforms such as computer networks, servers, web access points, and security structures, should be surveyed to assess what tools can be supported. In addition to the traditional issues such as network flexibility and adaptability factors, existing utilization of tools such as internal blogs or applications where there is already widespread organizational use should be taken into account. Research shows that learners who are already familiar with a social media tool are more receptive to its implementation in workplace settings; learner focused inquiry is important in developing necessary data for the plan. Since successful implementation of social media tools is more dependent on user acceptance and participation in collaborative processes, receptivity factors are particularly important (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

The plan should also set a timeframe for acquisition of technology, installation, and rollout. Depending on the organization's needs and objectives, different approaches can be taken (Belleghem, 2011; Bozarth, 2011; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

With objectives and a timeline delineated, the implementation process can then properly address selection, acquisition, and installation of necessary social media tools and related technology. This can, and frequently should, include integration of existing structures and tools already in use, both because they can be adapted and leveraged in conjunction with newly acquired technology and applications, and to leverage user familiarity. To the extent new tools are needed, they can be purchased or licensed, or built to address particular organizational specifications if the build-test delay can be fitted into the plan's timeline (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Another key consideration is that public social media properties assert ownership over the content that their users create. This presents a real challenge for organizations that allow

employees to leverage these networks, exposing the corporation's intellectual property to claims of ownership that are nonproprietary.

**Leverage traditional formats.** In integrating social media technology into an existing learning or other system in an organization, it is important to adopt familiar structures and formats for information presentation. This enables those less experienced with social media tools to feel more comfortable utilizing the technology. For example, one might have a collaborative online training environment with various types of wikis, blogs, and podcasts, and parallel information in e-mail, text pages, and PowerPoint presentations, but with the same information available in a traditional format that can be referenced to established the trustworthiness and validity of the new channel (Hart, 2008).

**Stepped introduction.** Traditional learners want something that is very close to their own method of learning or working. Slowly introducing technology to users by easing them into a new learning environment makes them more receptive and less resistant to using a new medium for learning. Hart (2010) wrote:

> Don't silo learning. It needs to be as close to the workflow as possible. Learning needs to be integrated in workflow systems, where individuals can make use of the tools they have for working—they don't need (or want) different tools for learning. (p. 9)

Learner engagement doesn't necessarily require that users actively create content, moderate discussion boards or draft their own wiki entries. Simply engaging users in discussion about the technology and how collaboration occurs causes engagement, albeit at a low level; gives learners the opportunity to express their feelings; and affords a level of comfort with the new technology. Furthermore, encouraging learners to start with very simple technologies such

as subscribing to a Really-Simple-Syndication feed from their favorite Web site or watching a podcast is often a way to gain interest among new users (Hart, 2008).

The pace of adoption and integration often hinges upon corporate culture and market conditions, with organizations facing competitive pressure more likely to utilize aggressive strategies and techniques for which the time from planning to launch is cut down and the application is upgraded during operation. An example is Agile development, a group of development methodologies that incorporate interactive strategies to speed targeted development. This learn on the job approach is particularly important in organization learning since operations and user management input can be obtained and utilized (McCarty, 2012).

Social media integration often appears to be an evolutionary process, happening in stages. In the initial stage, users tend to listen and observe what is going on with the technology before sampling what is available from using social media tools. The next stage is the proverbial step toward *joining the conversation* often with an eye to whether feedback is positive or negative. As participation grows, both numerically and with regard to levels of involvement, the content generated in the process rapidly begins to shape the restructuring of teams and workflow, ultimately transforming the organization. As multiple disciplines and departments socialize, a whole new infrastructure is required to streamline and manage social workflow (Solis, 2011). In addition, in any organization where measuring productivity is important, a metric for evaluating the true effects of social media use must be developed. In order to do this, the numbers behind the activity are needed—at every level. Monitoring the volume and nature of social media interaction is an important part of managing the technology.

Another important step in implementation of social media technology is understanding the possible uses of social media tools to enable and facilitate social learning. In this regard, it is

important to realize that social learning already naturally occurs in many areas of an organization and is part of learners' workflow. (Solis, 2011).

Those involved in learning instruction are already using social media tools as a means of delivering instructional content. Bozarth (2011) identifies examples of social media use in the context of information delivery and contrasts uses for social learning:

- Publishing the training department newsletter on a blog.
- Auto-scheduling tweets about class assignments from a Twitter account that does not otherwise engage with the learners or ask them to engage with each other.
- Hosting a software application development course, in tutorial format, on a wiki.
- Setting up a wiki for those in a new-hire induction program to work together to edit a FAQs page for use by the next group coming to the program.
- Having managers-in-training use a micro-blogging tool for a leadership book-club discussion.
- Helping to support and participating in a community of the organization's customer service reps, to give them a place to share war stories and strategies for dealing with challenges. (p. 2)

Bozarth (2011) argues that social learning happens when available social media tools are used not just to deliver content, but to invite interaction from and between learners, "It's about social, not media, and it's about shared learning, not just pushing content" (p. 3). Understanding use also involves appreciation of the range and adaptability possible through the multiple technological channels that have opened. Martin and Parker(2008) state:

> Because of the rapid pace of information change and the competitive pressures of a global economy, it is no longer reasonable for learning to take place through structured

> courses or e-learning modules. By the time formal courses are developed much of the content is outdated, and most workers don't have time for a full course. (p. 2)

Learning involves having access to the right people at the right time and is not so much content related.

**Pilot project approach.** Piloting new technology prior to organization-wide roll out using a selected discrete group to test the application is also advantageous. A piloting approach is not only a good way to test usability and functionality, but also provides the opportunity to catch issues that have been not accounted for before the technology is fully deployed. It also allows for open and candid discussions with pilot users about their likes and dislikes with the use experience. With this input, the platform or individual tools can then be modified to suit better the needs and likes of the user community. (Belleghem, 2011).

Pilots are also a good way to identify and develop successful users as champions of the new technology. Strategically publicizing pilot successes and positive reactions from initial users can often be a way of getting others in an organization to adopt quickly and implement new technology. If people see their peers using and enjoying a new application or technology channel, they will be more likely to want to become part of the experience. Pilot introductions or pilot projects involving social media applications also allow demonstration of added value from use of the technology, identify leaders for the rollout, and begin preparation of infrastructure for the data flow to be generated (Belleghem, 2011).

## Summary

This chapter discusses relevant literature on the development of social media theories as a basis for analysis of the research data; the ongoing shift from traditional to social media showing the pervasive penetration of the technology in personal, business, and academic activities; and

highlights areas such as public relations and political campaigning where social media use has already significantly altered the landscape. This chapter covers research on how and at what level social media technology is being used to facilitate learning, particularly organizational learning, and the advantages and disadvantage of this trend. Finally, the techniques identified for implementing social media and advantages and limitations identified in completed research are discussed.

## Chapter 3: Research Framework and Methodology

> *Young people may be newcomers to the world of work, but it's their bosses who are immigrants into the digital world* (Lee, 2006, p.1)

As stated in Chapter 1, the rapid development and use of social media has changed the way people discover, consume, and share information. This shift in how communication is effected presents challenges to organizations. As Internet, networking, and communication technologies have been embraced by individuals and embedded in their activities, technologically enabled social structures are emerging that change the way individuals interact and communicate, causing what are seen as fundamental changes in communication practices (Vannoy & Palvia, 2010). Ongoing development of advanced technology products means that to use effectively social media technology, organizations must be more adaptive and receptive to new approaches and changes in their operating environment than in the past.

Organizations have begun to leverage new social media tools to improve communication and productivity by disseminating information in a more efficient manner, increasing access and collaboration, and accommodating learn needs, resulting in increased productivity (Bozarth, 2011). As shown in the literature discussed in Chapter 2, the increased use of social media technology makes it important that organizations create environments where learners are empowered to structure their own learning experiences.

With the growth of the social media phenomenon, many organizations have shown increased interest in utilizing social media tools to enhance learning experiences for users and learners with the objective of improving performance. Despite that organizations are enthusiastic about and confident in these approaches' effectiveness, many are still hesitant to move forward because of issues regarding strategy, implementation knowledge, need for management support, need to become more fluent at facilitating learning in the workflow, and resistance to change.

The research undertaken for this study is intended to ascertain and gauge levels of use of social media tools in selected organizations to develop information on the types of social media tools utilized, levels of penetration of social media–based technologies, and how they are leveraged for learning and performance improvements. This is based on the perceptions and beliefs of a selected sample of those currently involved in the implementation and use of the technology, which assist in the development of improved practices and techniques in this rapidly growing area.

Rossett (1999) stated that research analysis's objective is to "identify needs and define solutions" (p. 142). Descriptive research is designed to "describe, rather than explain a set of conditions, characteristics, or attributes of a population based on measurement of a sample" (Alreck& Settle, 1995, p. 408). Isaac and Michael (1981) indicated that survey research is frequently used to describe existing phenomena, identify problems, or justify current conditions and practices. According to Babbie (1990), descriptive research "is probably the best method available to the social scientist interested in collecting original data from a population too large to observe directly" (p. 257).

Tuckman (1999) recommends survey methodology for educational research. Babbie (1990) considered survey research to be the most appropriate method of data collection for the purpose of obtaining foundational information. Fink (1995) defined a survey as "a system for collecting information to describe, compare, or explain knowledge, attitudes, and behavior" (p. 1). In this study, the survey's design is directed at effectively obtaining data regarding use of social media–based technology in learning functions in the survey participants' organizations. The questionnaire data facilitated the follow-up verbal interviews with the survey participants, allowing a more developed focus on their attitudes and preferences regarding the use of social

media technology in their organizations. The results of the analysis were then used to develop objectives that result in improved learning and performance (Rossett, 1999; Tuckman, 1999).

**Research Questions**

The goal of the research is to develop data to understand better how social media integrated into work environments can be leveraged to promote learning and improve productivity. The research focused on key questions facing organizations with regard to implementing social media technology for learning and performance improvement. The research questions detailed in Appendix A cover the following areas:

1. What social media tools are being utilized?
2. How are organizations leveraging social media technologies to enhance learning and improve performance?
3. What challenges do companies face in implementing and utilizing social media technologies in their learning environments?
4. What are best practices for the use of social media technologies in organizational learning?

**Research Design and Methodology**

The study's focus is on the adoption and utilization of social media technologies in learning organizations. The success of integration, utilization, adoption, and measurement of social media–based learning practices rests heavily on learner participation as well as manager support. The research is designed to examine the study subjects' involvement in the integration and use of social media in their organization to assess how best to leverage the power of social media tools to maximize learning, which correlates with improved organizational performance.

**Qualitative versus quantitative analysis.** Quantitative and qualitative research designs are two well-known and commonly used design strategies. Researchers contend that the defining differences between the two approaches involve the consideration of detail and the ability to capture subject perspectives (Silverman, 2000). Quantitative studies emphasize the measurement and analysis of apparently causal relationships between variables, with the objective of establishing aspects of the correlation for analysis (Richards & Morse, 2007). Qualitative research details the particulars of people's understandings and interactions, focusing on the perspectives of subjects by using techniques such as interviewing and observation, which allow for a particular closeness to the subjects (Tuckman, 1999).

Quantitative researchers rely on more remote inferential empirical methods and materials that lack the same subject intimacy. Quantitative designs are best used for studies that focus on systematic or numerical comparisons for testing variances, while qualitative designs are best used to explore and understand data that would lose its full meaning if reduced to numbers (Silverman, 2000). Creswell (2003) explained that quantitative methods are used chiefly to test or verify theories or explanations, identify variables to study, relate variables in questions or hypotheses, use statistical standards of validity and reliability, and employ statistical procedures for analysis.

The study's research methodology follows one of the qualitative strategies described in Table 1. An ethnographic perspective (Morse, 1994; Patton, 2002) was selected as the most appropriate approach for this study, as the intent is to provide a detailed description of the experiences of individuals who had or were currently involved with implementing and using social media–based tools in learning applications in their organizations.

Table 1

*Comparison of the Major Types of Qualitative Strategies*

| Type of Research Question | Strategy | Paradigm | Method | Other Data Sources |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Meaning questions eliciting the essence of experience | Phenomenology | Philosophy (phenomenology) | Audiotaped conversations; written anecdotes of personal experiences | Phenomeno-logical literature, philosophical reflections, poetry, art |
| Descriptive questions of values, beliefs, practices of cultural group | Ethnography | Anthropology | Unstructured interviews, participant observations, field notes | Documents, records, photography maps, genealogies, social network, diagrams |
| 'Process' questions – experience over time of change | Grounded theory | Sociology (symbolic interactionism) | Interviews (tape-recorded) | Participant observation, memoing, diary |
| Questions regarding verbal interactions and dialogue | Ethnomethodology, discourse analysis | Semiotics | Dialogue (audio/ video recording) | Observation field notes |
| Behavioral questions | Marco<br>Participant observation | Anthropology | Observation, field notes | Interviews, photography |
| | Micro<br>Qualitative ethology | Zoology | Observation | Videotaped, note taking |

*Note.* Adapted from "Designing funded qualitative research," by J. Morse. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 220–236). Copyright 1994 by Sage Publications.

The study's focus on individuals' perspectives of social media use directed qualitative methodology's selection. Qualitative research provides a more holistic examination, based on interviews, observations, and focus groups, to gather data on life experiences, social processes, and organizational structures and settings (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

For this study, qualitative data was collected through a series of interviews and focus groups conducted with individuals from selected organizations willing to participate in the

research. The data developed permitted in-depth analysis of the thoughts, reactions, opinions, and feelings of those who participated in the study to show trends as well as compare multiple data sets across several organizations.

**Data Collection Methods**

The research is structured to investigate the effects of social media use in medium-sized or larger organizations, defined as those with more than 25 members. Interview questions (Appendix A) were created to develop primary research data, divided by category. Each question seeks to help the researcher to understand better how individuals operate in organizations currently using social media in their work environment. Survey questionnaires were used to establish basic qualifications and identify interview subjects, primarily persons working with social media tools in learning environments. Interviews were recorded and transcribed.

According to Morse (1994), Tuckman (1999), and Patton (2002), qualitative interviews should include open-ended questions to encourage detailed responses that will permit the researcher to gather data about the perspective of the respondent, getting the subjects' points of view in their own terms and through their own language. Interview questions developed for the study are semistructured, with the primary focus on individuals who are currently involved in the implementation or use of social media in their organization in a learning directed environment. This differentiated the data field from what might be developed by surveying learners or those using the technology in areas such as marketing or support. The selected participants' organizations were at different stages of social media utilization, varying from recent implementation to more complete integration into learning and training programs.

The sampling size was intentionally limited to no more than 20 qualified participants. This type of sampling was determined to be appropriate for qualitative ethnographic research, as

insights generated from qualitative inquiry depend more on information richness and researcher analysis than on sample size (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006).

A snowballing sampling approach was used to obtain study participants. Each study participant identified was asked to recommend others to be invited to participate. The sampling strategy is intended to produce a relatively narrow range of respondents to aid identification of common patterns of experience in the field (Patton, 2002). Written and verbal questions were designed to maintain the study's qualitative focus, to elicit subject reactions to implementation and use of social media technology in their direct activities, gauge levels of support from leaders, and examine whether social media use is felt to enhance new or existing learning programs and improve productivity within the organization.

**Data Analysis and Measurements**

A properly structured qualitative research study addresses design validity, reflexivity, and extension of findings with the purpose of producing data and conclusions that are valid and reliable (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). Guba and Lincoln's work identified four aspects of research trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Establishing reliability and validity is important to finding plausible and credible outcome explanations (as cited in Krefting, 1991).

To ensure both reliability and validity of data methodological coherence, sampling sufficiency, and develop dynamic relationships among sampling, data collection and analysis, thinking theoretically, and theory development, the research was structured to follow five strategies Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, and Spiers (2002) recommended in their article *Verification Strategies for Establishing Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research*.

**Methodological coherence.** The most common methods used to conduct qualitative research studies are ethnography, grounded theory, and phenomenology. Ethnography (Gellner & Hirsch, 2001; Morse, 1994; Patton, 2002) was selected, as the intent of the study is to provide a detailed, in-depth description of current techniques and practices for implementing social media in learning structures inside organizations large enough to have a formal environment.

**Appropriateness of sample.** Purposeful sampling was used to gather data regarding social media technology involvement levels among selected organizations' participants. This captured quantitative and qualitative data from each organization, which assessed levels of adoption-use, leadership support, implementation success and/or challenges, overall learner-user acceptance of different social media tools, and beliefs about impact of social media tools in job performance. Sampling size was limited to no more than 20 participants and no less than 10. Small sample size is common to qualitative studies and indicative of qualitative ethnographic research's nature in which qualitative inquiry insights depend more on information richness and the researcher's analytical capabilities than sample size (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006).

**Collecting and analyzing data.** The qualitative research design permits the researcher's direct involvement in data development, allowing an analytical focus to be used. Survey questionnaires were used to establish basic qualifications and identify interview subjects, primarily persons working with social media tools in learning environments. Interviews were recorded and transcribed. The data were gathered to compare multiple data sets across several organizations. This facilitated more in-depth analysis of the thoughts, reactions, opinions, and feelings of those who participate in the study.

Data analysis was done using an approach that anticipates researcher interpretation of the survey data as it is developed, categorized as *interpretive-descriptive* (Maykut & Morehouse,

1994, p. 122) in the literature on research structures. The goal of this approach is "to understand more about the phenomenon we are investigating and to describe what we learn with a minimum of interpretation" (p. 126). This strategy permits the production of three data fields as the survey is conducted: the written questionnaire data, notes taken by the interviewer during the study participants' oral interviews, and the transcribed interviews, to be integrated in the analysis.

The survey documents were scanned to permit utilization of software that allows correlation of multiple data fields, such as Microsoft Office Excel or Visio. The responses from the written questionnaires were spread to show percentage responses to the questions. The oral interview data were grouped by category using the descriptions identified in section two of Appendix D. Additional categories were created if response data did not fit into those categories.

The qualitative approach utilized was implemented as the researcher identified and interpreted patterns in the data. As patterns were initially noticed and grouped together, an effort was made to separate the more significant data groups so that the groupings could be carried forward. This was accomplished by labeling pattern groups, either separately or through use of category and subcategory headings. This coding approach is recognized as a useful focusing method for correlation of initially disparate data (Seidel & Kelle,1995). As the collected data were categorized, further analysis was directed at the pattern groups with the ultimate objective of assembling the data to support research conclusions.

**Thinking theoretically.** Ideas that emerged from the data could be reconfirmed in new data. This allowed a theoretical focus to be maintained without making cognitive leaps by constantly checking and rechecking, building a solid foundation for the study findings.

**Theory development.** The study moved from a micro perspective of the data to a macro conceptual-theoretical understanding developed through two mechanisms: (a) conclusions

developed as an outcome of the research process, rather than being adopted as a framework to move the analysis along; and (b) use of the data-dictated conclusions as a template for comparison and further development of the analysis. Use of developed verification strategies is intended to build reliability and validity, thus ensuring rigor. This provided pragmatic scientific evidence that can be integrated into the developing knowledge base as a platform for further research and analysis of the identified social media trends and best practices.

**Participant Recruitment for the Study**

The participant field for the study was set up, taking into consideration previous research on assessment of implementation of new technology and inviting them to participate or recommend others using e-mail as well as social networking tools to solicit other potential participants. For those who showed interest, an introduction letter was sent and a follow-up telephone call or e-mail made to schedule an interview appointment at a date, time, and location convenient for each participant.

The letter to participants (Appendix B) confirmed that personal information such as names and employers will not be disclosed. Prior to the interview process, all participants signed a Letter of Informed Consent (Appendix C) providing information on the purpose of the study.

**Protection of Participants**

This study was designed under provisions mandated by Pepperdine University's Institutional Review Board Manual. An application was submitted to Pepperdine's Institutional Review Board requesting (a) that this study be classified as exempt research, and (b) a waiver of the informed consent process. Federal regulations allow for waiver of consent requirements if the research involves no more than minimal risk and the waiver will not adversely affect the rights

and welfare of the subjects. The application for exempt research was made based on the study not presenting more than a minimal risk to its subjects.

Before research for the study started, the research design was approved by Pepperdine University's Institutional Review Board. All participants in the study signed an Informed Consent Form that addressed anonymity, identifying the nature and purpose of the project and the process for capturing data through survey questionnaires and tape recorded interviews.

To protect personal information and anonymity, participants were assigned a number that was used to identify responses on the written questionnaires and the interview transcripts. Study participants' names, their organizations, and all other personal information, were kept separate from the data compiled for the study and were not used in this research's publication.

Verbal interviews were conducted after study participants completed written questionnaires to set up the interviews. The researcher contacted each participant to confirm willingness to be interviewed, verify consent under the consent form, and arrange for the interview to be conduct at a time and place convenient for the participant. All information collected will be kept confidential. Data will be stored in a secure manner and not shared inappropriately. The interview structure (Appendix D) describes the interview format.

**Summary**

This chapter discusses the research methodology utilized in gathering data for the study, provides detail on the question format and approach, and identifies the qualitative research design, ethnographic methodology, which was used to conduct the study. This chapter explains techniques for validation and reliability, and describes the protection of participants, sampling methodology, instrument design, and data analysis procedures used in the study.

## Chapter 4: Research Results

The goal of this qualitative research study was to determine the effects of social media use on internal learning in medium- and large-sized organizations. The data analyzed and discussed was developed from a questionnaire, with 30 questions answered by each of the 15 individuals who agreed to provide data for the survey. This chapter summarizes the survey results and presents key themes from the data from the survey participants.

As outlined in Chapter 3, the research was structured to produce survey data from a field of between 10 and 20 people of working age without consideration of gender, geographic, or cultural factors. The participants in the study were selected and invited to participate based on their involvement with the assessment or implementation of social media technology in their organizations. Those invited to participate were asked to recommend others, and often used e-mail and social networking tools to solicit potential participants. In keeping with research parameters structured to preserve the participants' privacy, the survey did not solicit information that would directly identify the participants. All participants were asked the same questions and the survey data were correlated using identifiers. The results are presented here broken down by question from the survey questionaires.

Q1. Which best describes the principal functional area you work in?

The correspondents were asked to describes the principle functional area of their work. Figure 2, illustrates the breakdown of survey subjects by functional work area as follows: three executive leaders, one human resources manager, three sales-marketing-product management managers, four social media specialists, two training-support managers, one IT director, and one operations manager.

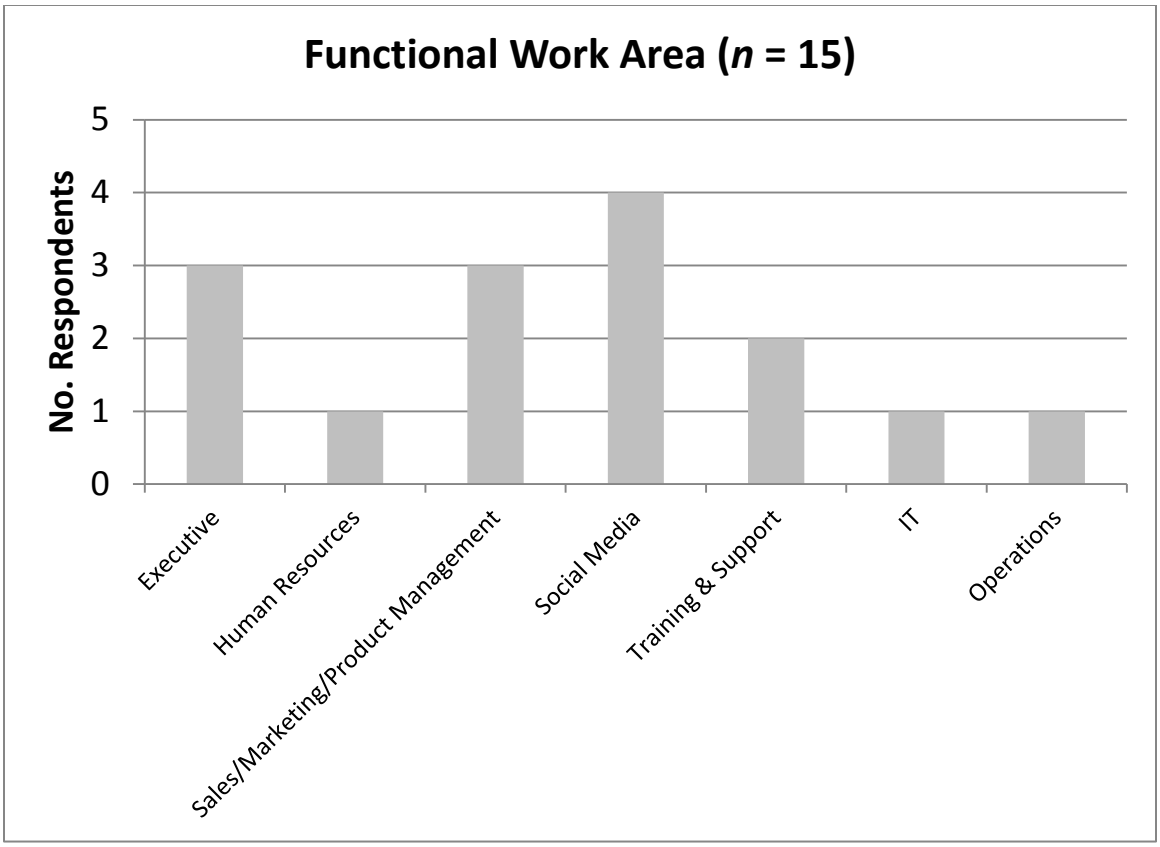


*Figure 2*. Breakdown by functional work area.

Q2. Were you involved in the initial setup and use of the technology?

The participations were asked to describe their level of involvement with social media technology. Of the 15 respondents, 11 (74%) said they were heavily involved in the initial setup of the social media technology structure in their organizations and the remaining four (26%) were consistent technology users.

**Participant Key Themes**

The survey sought to develop insights into how individuals currently operate in organizations using social media in their work environments. Responses to survey questions varied widely as expected given the relatively diverse survey population. Although the survey participants had varying responses, concerns, and areas of interest, they all confirmed support for integrating and leveraging social media tools for learning and performance improvement. Key

interests identified in their survey responses included business drivers, plans for social media, integration challenges, adoption, sustainability, data security, return on investment, and best practices for adoption and use of social media.

**Category 1: Research participants' and organizations' assessment.** The five key categories or themes related to the research participants and organizations assessments are: (a) Research Participants and Organizations Assessment, (b) Leveraging Social Media in Organizations, (c) Implementation and Utilization of Social Media, (d) Measurement of effectiveness and best practices, and (e) Sustaining implementation of Social Media.

Respondents were primarily, but not exclusively, from organizations in the United States with more than 25 employees. Per the study parameters, Figure 2 shows the areas from which respondents were drawn. A majority of the survey participants were in the corporate sector in information technology and real estate businesses.

Q3. What is your organization's industry?

The correspondents were asked to identify the area in which their organization functioned. Figure 3 illustrates the breakdown of survey subjects by industry: four in computer hardware-software, three in real estate, three in social media, two in retail, one in education, one in hospitality, and one in government.

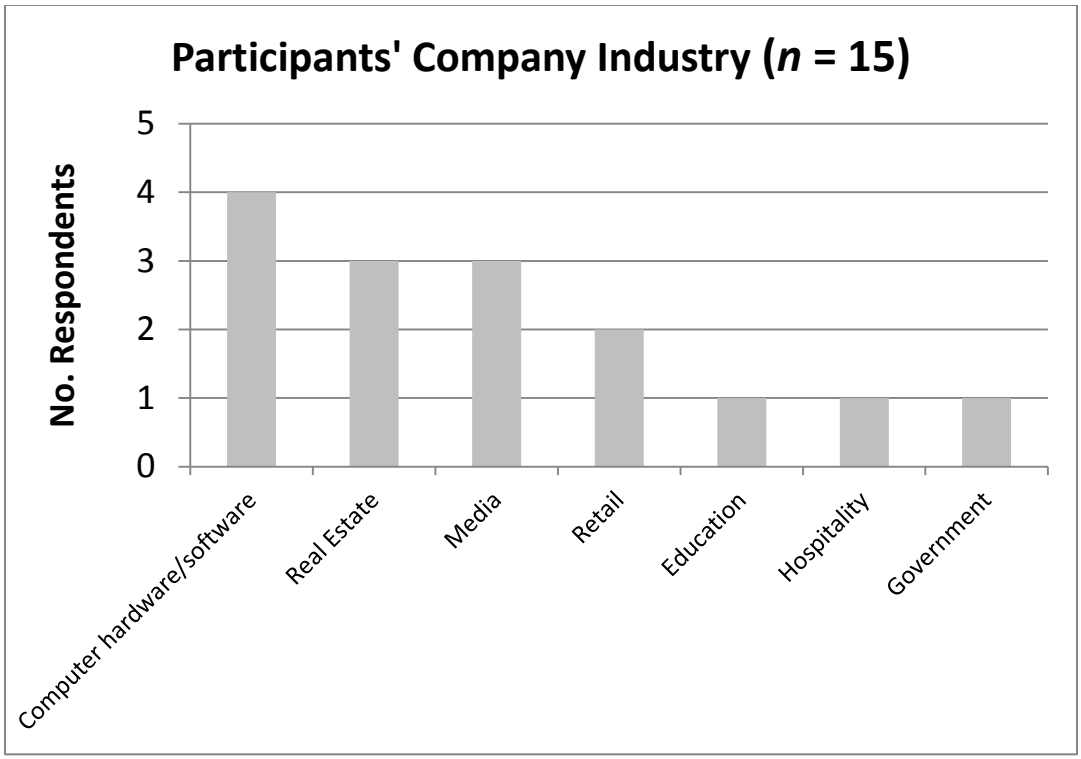


*Figure 3*. Participant's company industry.

Q4. How many workers in your organization?

The participants were asked to calculate the number of workers in their organization. As seen in Figure 4, eight of the 15 respondents indicated their business is a medium-sized organization with fewer than 250 employees.


*Figure 4*. How many workers in your organization?

Q5. What is the annual revenue of your organization?

The correspondents were asked to calculate their organization's annual revenue. As seen in Figure 5, the respondents came from organizations with annual revenues of less than $25 million or more than $100 million.

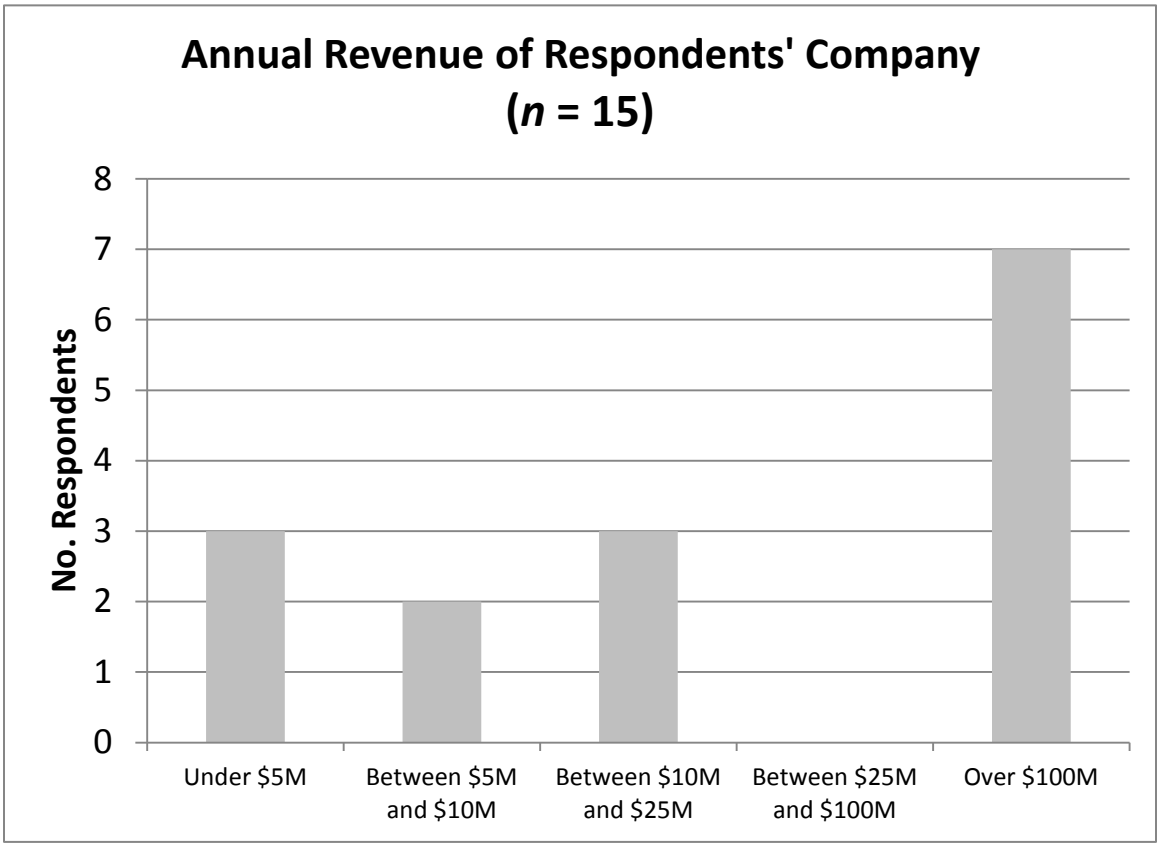


*Figure 5*. What is the annual revenue of your organization?

Q6. What social media tools are currently being ultilized?

The respondents were asked to indicate their preferences and level of use of social media tools in their work and personal lives. As can be seen in Figure 5, the most popular tools for both work and personal use were professional networking sites such as Twitter, Facebook, Linked-In, and Internet video calls-conference sites. Less popular were the internal custom social networking tools, enterprise social networking, wikis, and social bookmarking.

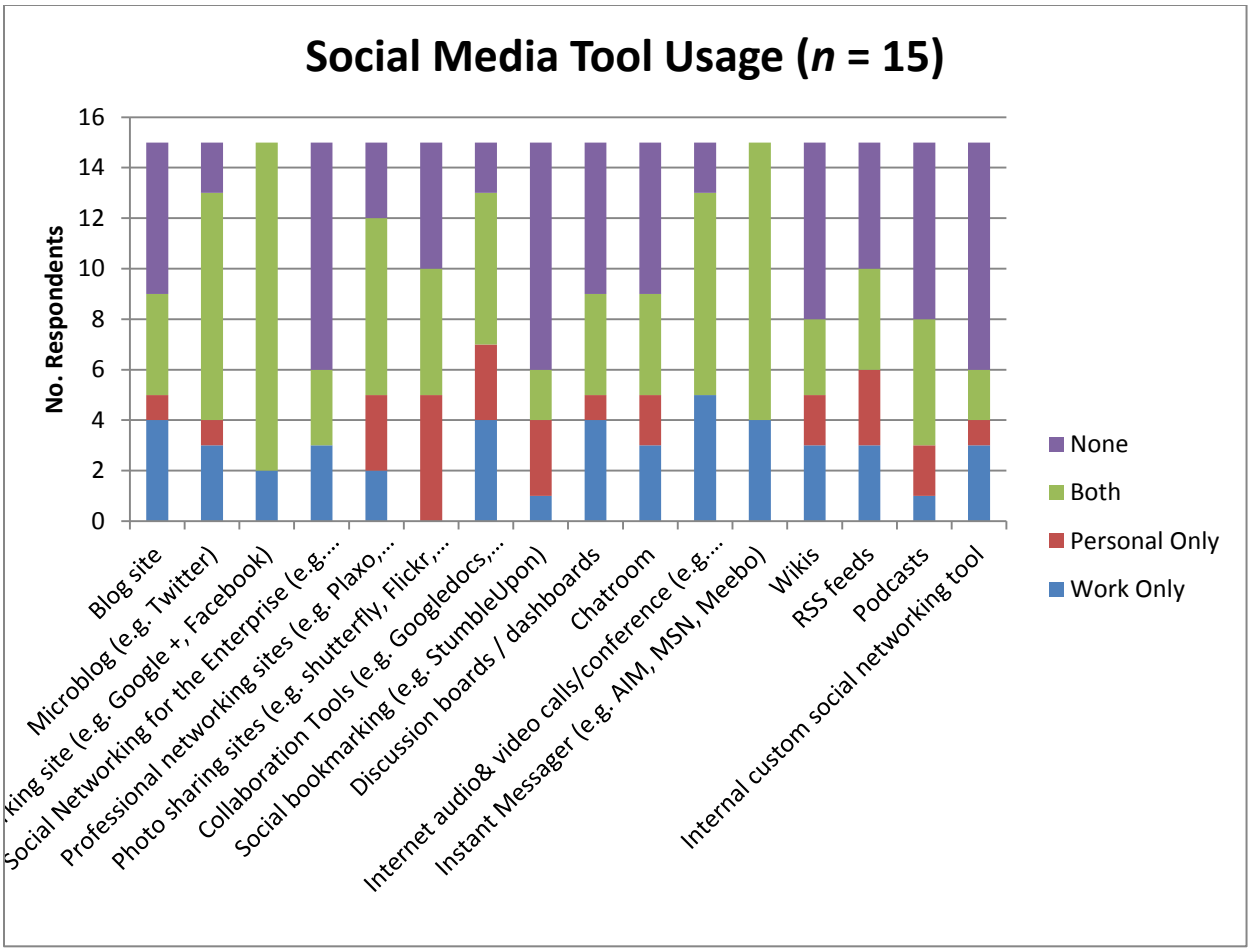


*Figure 6*. What social media tools are currently being utilized?

Q7. How long has your organization been using these tools?

The respondents were asked to indicate how long the organization had ultilized the identified social media tools. As seen in Figure 7, only three of the respondents were new to the social media space (less than 2 years) while the remaining 12 respondents had ultilized social media tools for learning in their organizations setting for more than 2 years.

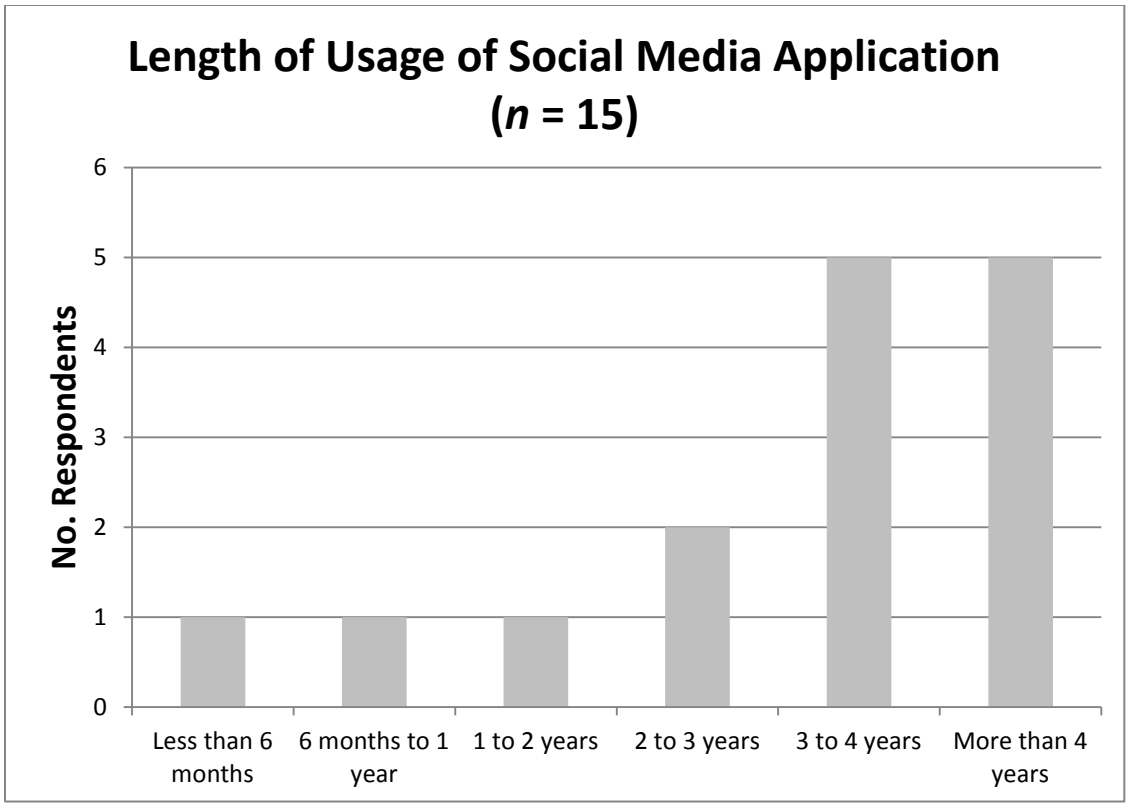


*Figure 7*. Length of use of social media tools

**Category 2: Leveraging social media in organizations.** This section was intended to gauge the current stage of social media for learning functions in the respondents' organizations. The resulting data were used to analyze how social media tools were utilized with regard to user age groups and anticipated affected success in technology implementation-utilization?

Q8. How are social media tools being ultilized?

The respondents were asked to identify the task areas where social media tools were utilized in their organization. As illustrated in Figure 8, the highest level of use was found in facilitating and delivering information to learner communities. Surprisingly, the lower level of social tools use was reported in promotion and marketing and performance support. According to a recent SIIA Marketing Survey (as cited in Collier, 2013), there has been a significant jump in the use of social media marketing, with more than 74% of survey participants noting a positive

impact on their businesses (66% in the 2013 survey versus 54.5% in the 2012 report). This would suggest an even higher level of utilization of social media in internal learning functions.

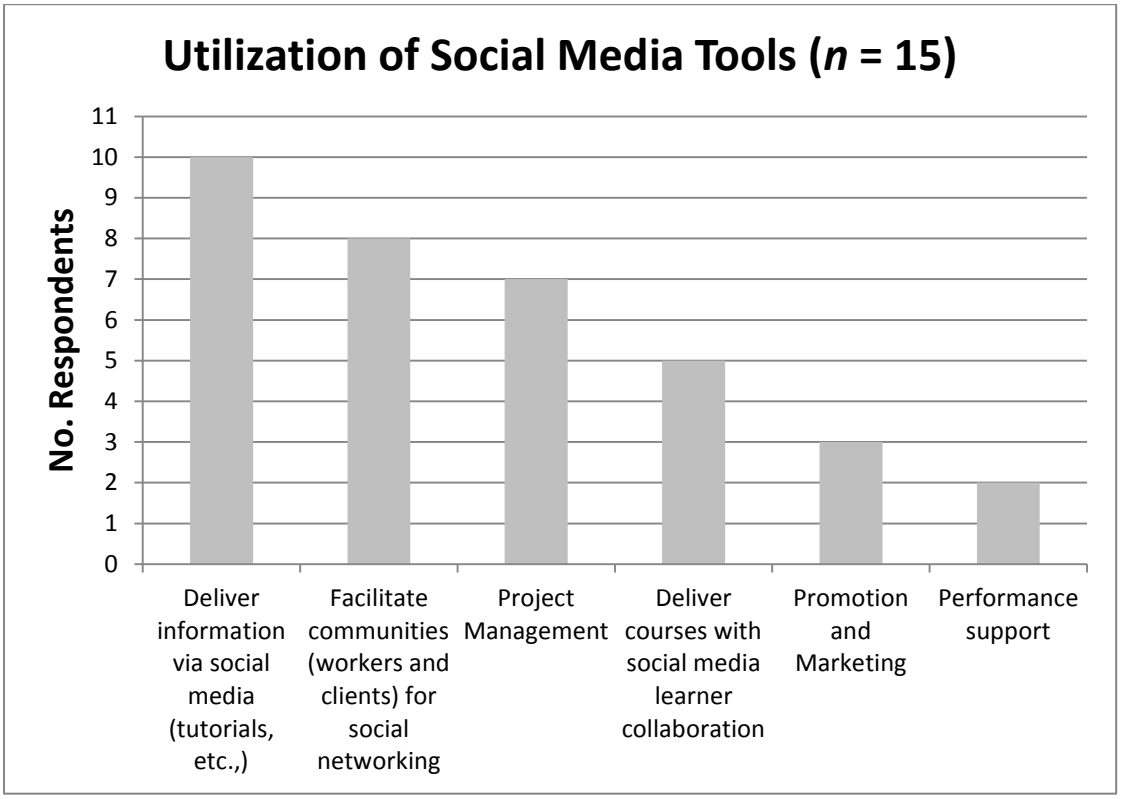


*Figure 8*. Stage of social media tools for learning in their organizations

Q9. What were the reasons that your organization selected particular social media tools?

The respondents were asked to identify the initiator for the use of social media in their organizations. As shown in Figure 9, the survey results show that the primary driver of social media usage is learner and user familiarity. A secondary driver is extraorganization requests. From this, it appears that how initiators ultilize tools on their own directs acceptance of and comfort with social media technologies in their organizations.

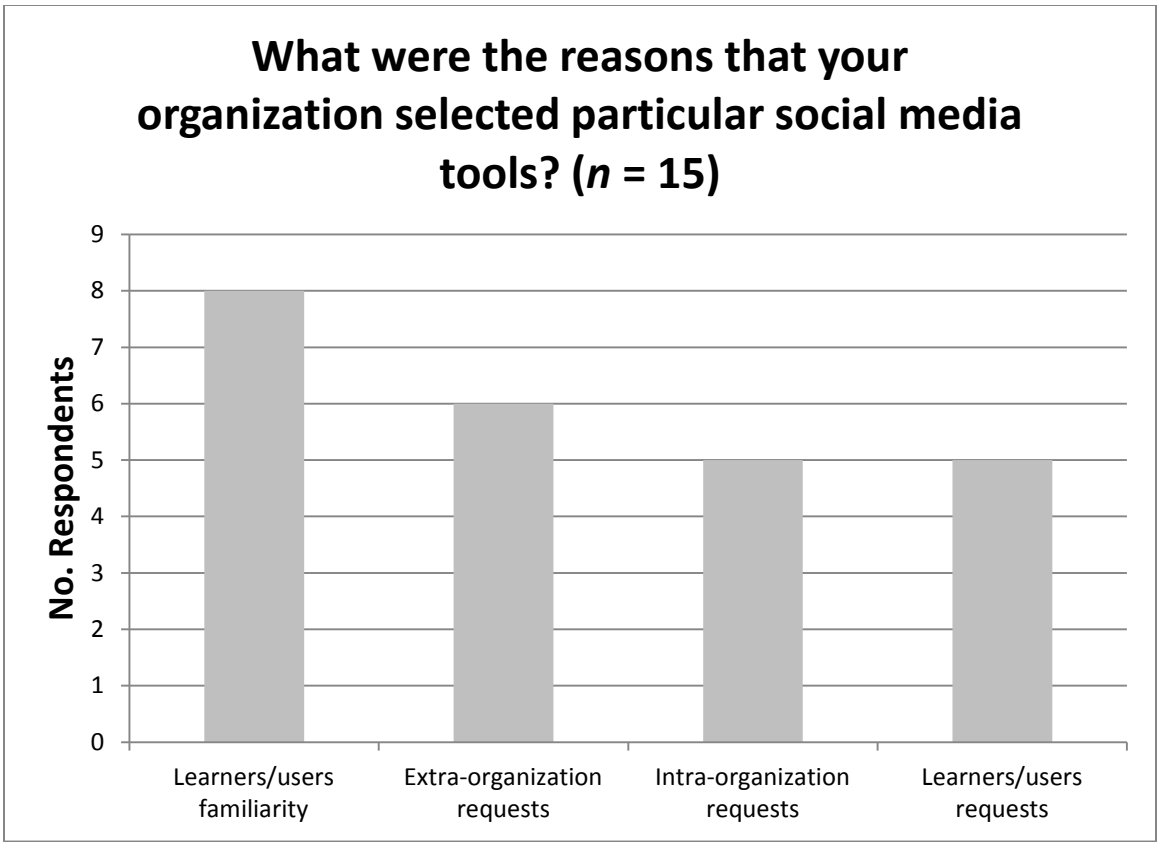


*Figure 9*. What were the reasons that your organization selected a particular social media tool?

Q10. What occurred after the technology was implemented?

The respondents were ask to identify effects from social media techology implemention. As shown in Figure 10, the top favorable results from social media technology implementation identified in the survey were: (a) Increased speed of information dissemination, (b) Improved collaboration, (c) Reduced costs, (d) Sharing of best practices, and (e) Improved learner-user performance.

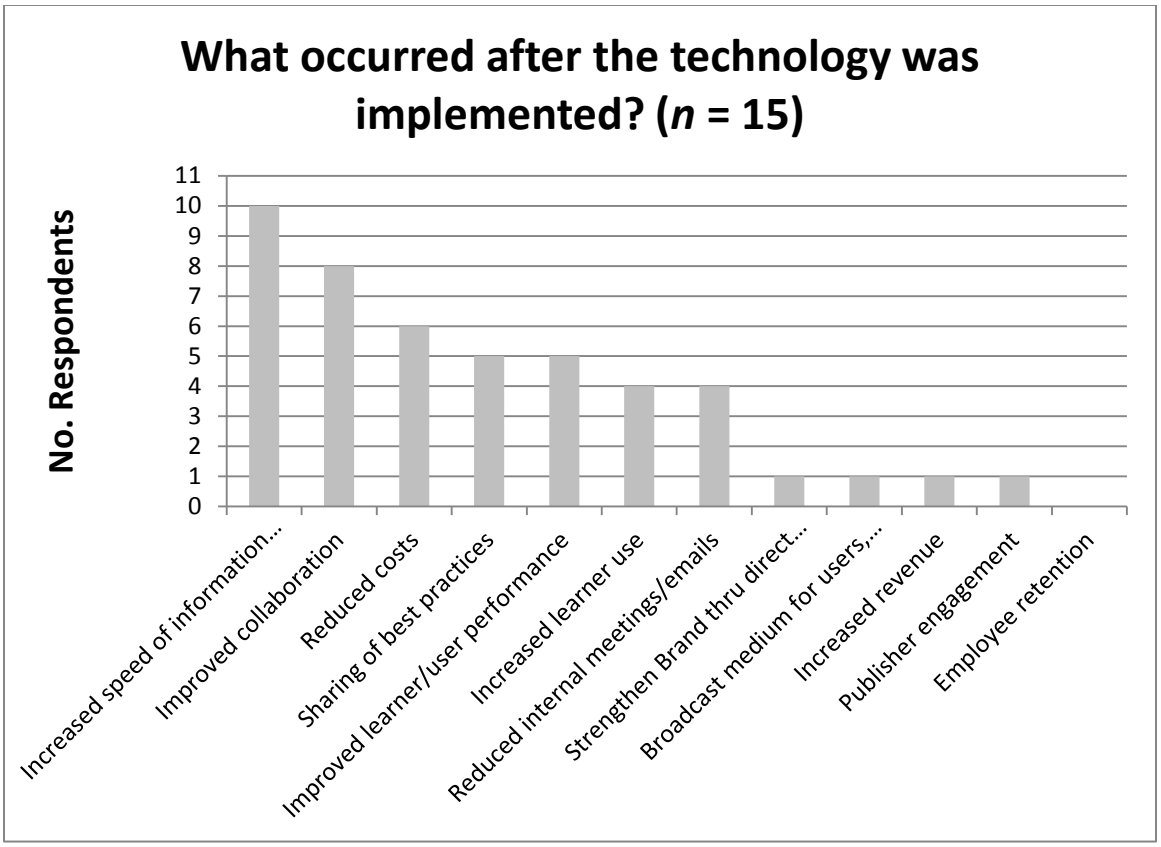


*Figure 10*. What occurred after the technology was implemented?

**Category 3: Implementation and utilization of social media.** Q11. Who in your organization supported-initiated the implementation of social media technologies?

The repondents were asked to identify the key individuals who drove the implementation of social media technology in their organization. As shown in Figure 11, trainers were less active while both executive and departmental manager were the key drivers for the use social media in the learning area. As workers at the management level embrace these new social technologies, this data predicts adoption for the wider use in organizations once initial implementation occurs.

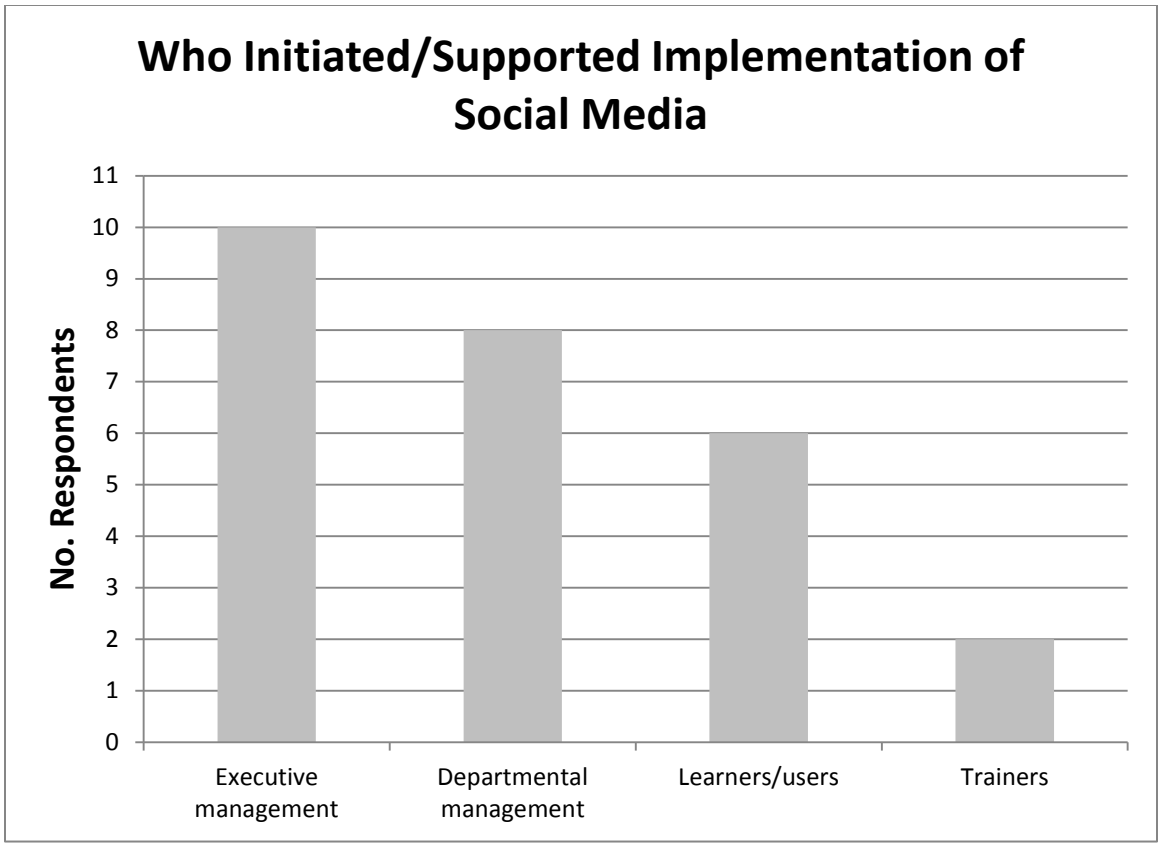


*Figure 11*. Who in your organization supported-initiated the implementation of social media technologies?

Q12. What preparation was done prior to introducing-implementing this technology in your organization?

The respondents were asked to identify what preparation plans were done prior to the implementation of social media in their organization. As can be seen in Figure 12, the majority indicated that they undertook actions to roll this new technology out to the organization such as development of an implemenation plan, designation, and/or development of internal leaders and research and pilot testing. The results show most respondents' organizations did not use outside consultants and handled the selection-implemention process as an internal matter. This indicates that successful social media can be accompllished without an elaborate or expensive process.

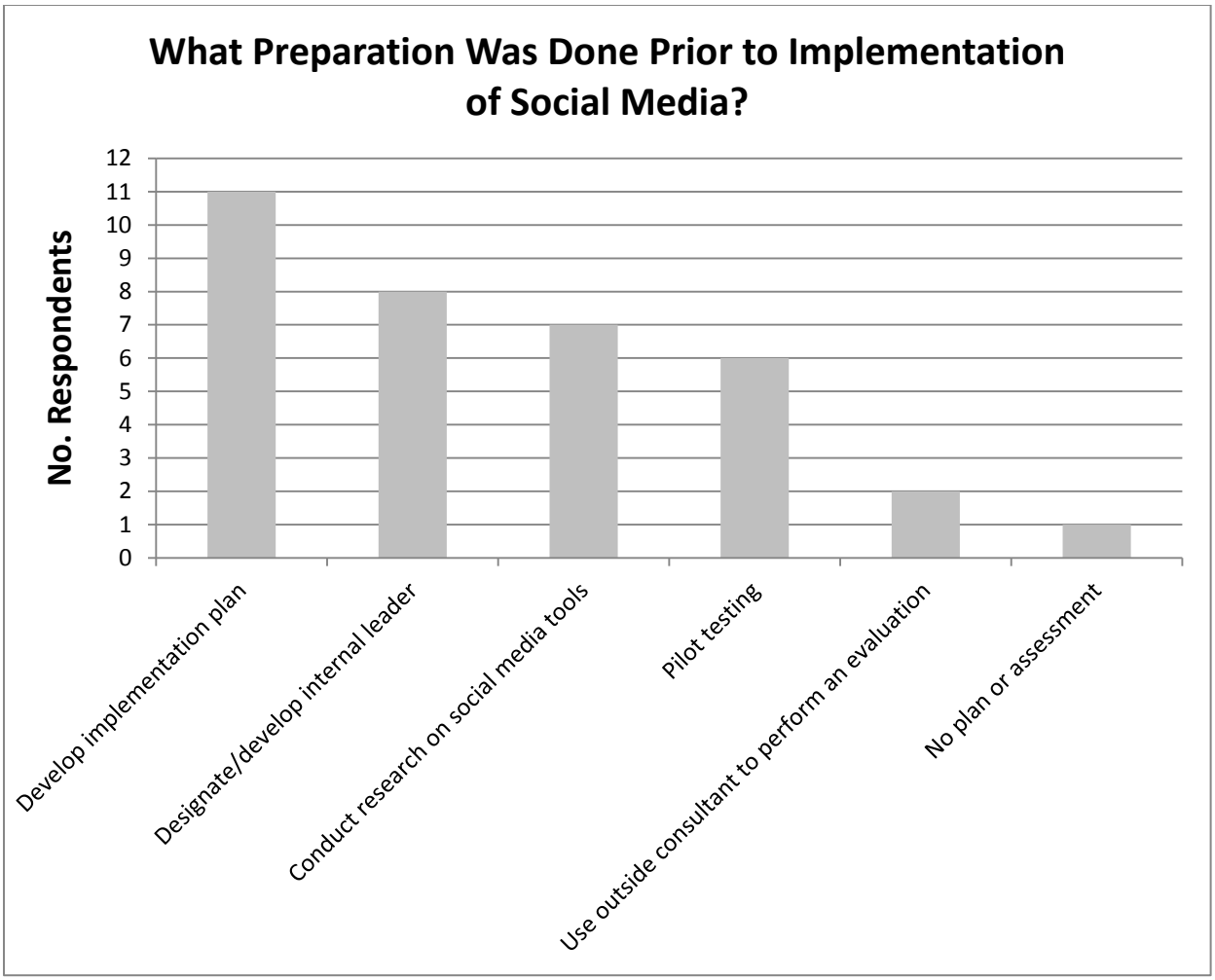


*Figure 12*. What preparation was done prior to implementation of social media?

Q13. How effective was this preparation?

The respondents were asked to identify the level of effectiveness in having a plan in place prior to the implementation of the social tools in their organziations. As shown in Figure 13, all respondents agree that it is effective with adequate preparation.

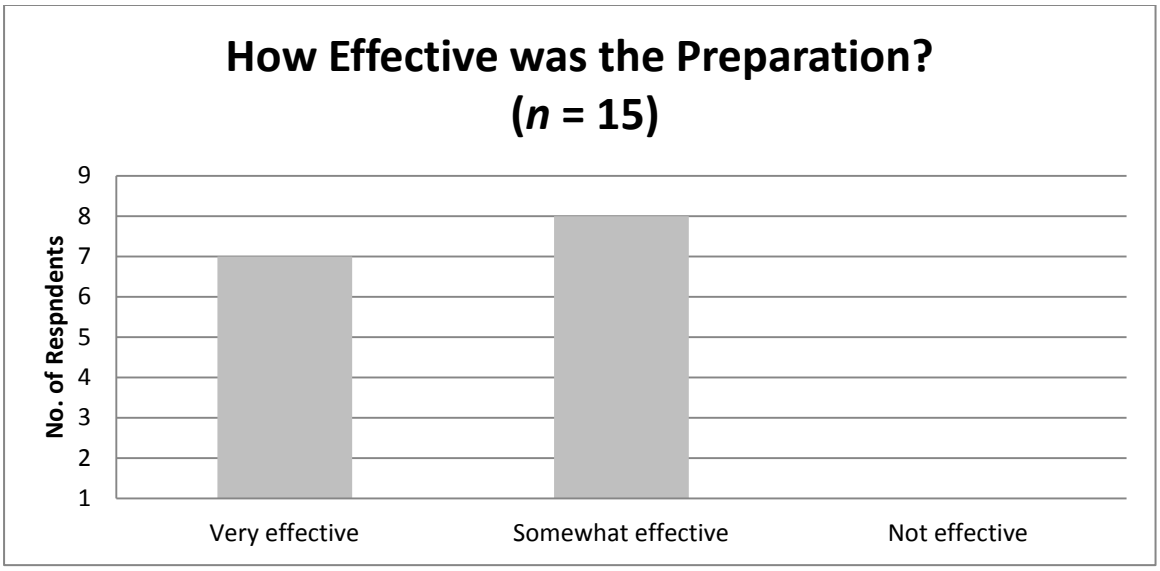


*Figure 13*. How effective was this preparation?

Q14. To what extent, if any, was the technology piloted or tested prior to implementation?

The respondents were asked to identify the levels of testing prior to implemenation of the social media technologies. As shown in Figure 14, six of the15 respondents indicated there was very little testing done while the remaining indicated that extensive testing was carried out to ensure a seamless integration.

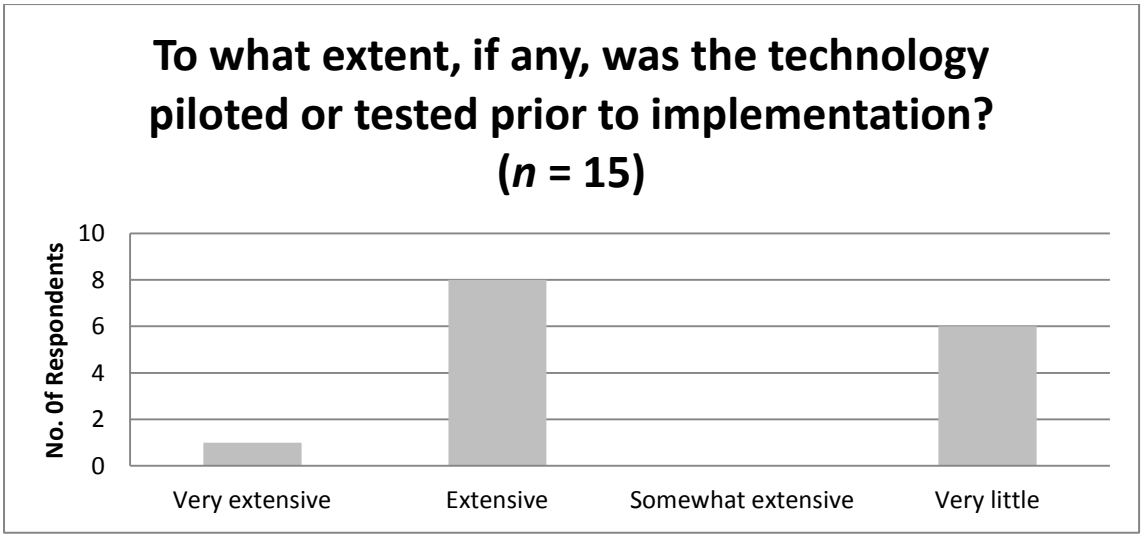


Figure 14. To what extent, if any, was the technology piloted or tested prior to implementation?

Q15. Did you use the technology to replace or enhance-complement existing learning and development tools-programs?

The respondents were asked to indicate if the use of social media technology replaced or enhanced their existing learning and development tools-programs. As shown in Figure 15, 13 (86%) replied effectively. This shows both a high level of utilization of social media and social media tools are being ultilized to replace or enhance their existing learning programs.

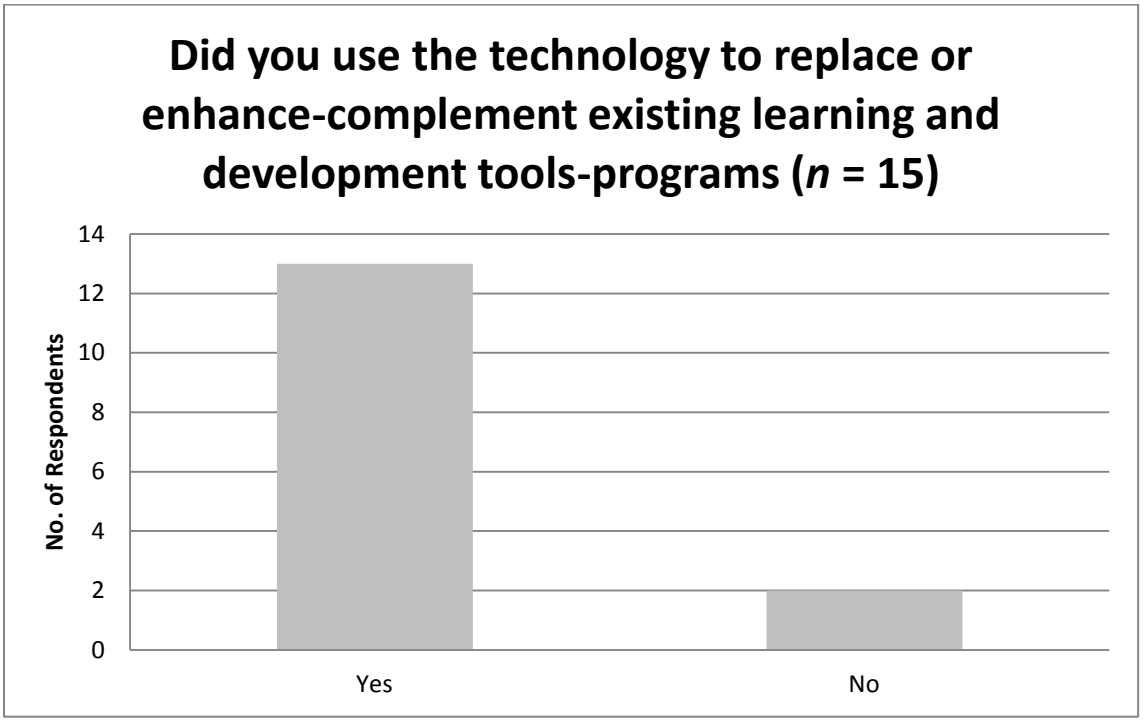


*Figure 15*. Did you use the technology to replace or enhance/complement existing learning and development tools/programs?

Q16. What worked well? What didn't work so well?

Respondents were asked what worked well and what did not in the overall implemention initiative. As shown in Figure 16, the most prevelant belief was that the progression from strategy to intregration, testing, deployment, adoption, and to some extent, use went well. One concern that was identified fell under the legal and confidentiality issues heading. One respondent voiced concern during the interview about the policies on employee-generated

content, sharing company information via personal social media tools, and blocking of certain social media sites. These concerns appear to arise from fear that learners-users do not have the skills to participate properly in social media use. However, the industry is developing a variety of social media experts offering support for constructing social media use policies that should allow these issues to be addressed and resolved.

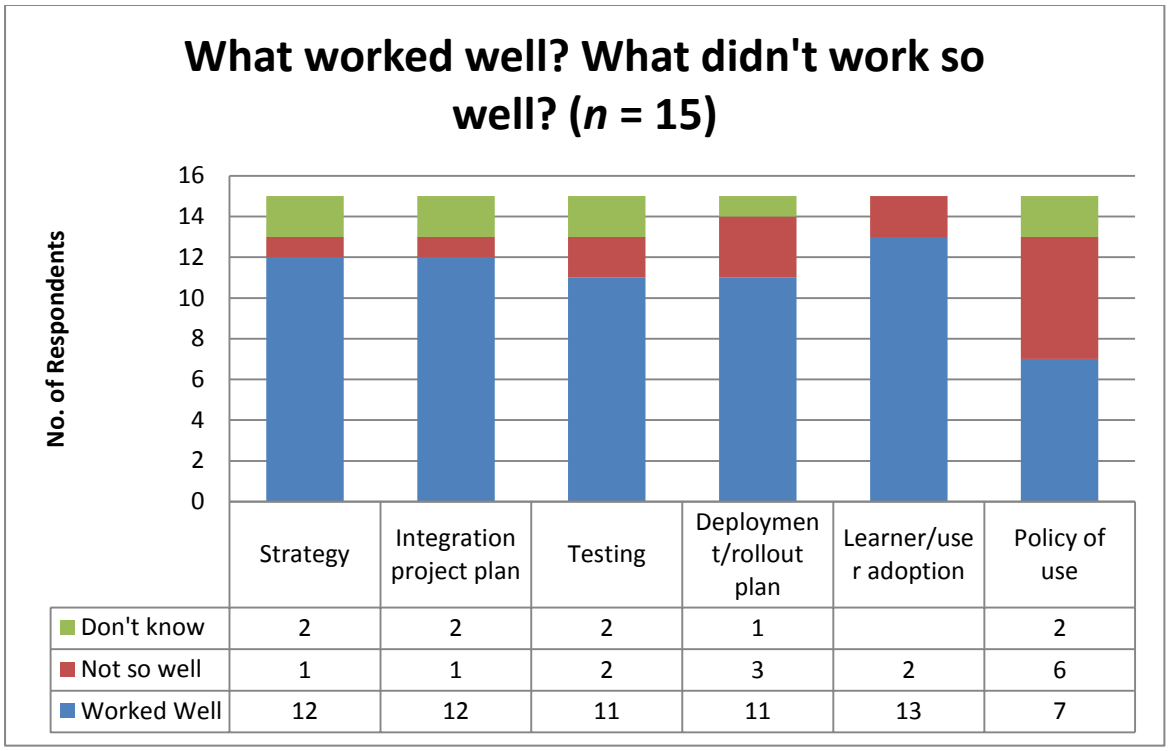


*Figure 16*. What worked well? What didn't work so well?

Q17. How do learners-users in your organization feel about the implementation of the technology?

The repondents were asked to gauge how learners-users in their organizaton felt about the implementation of the technology. As can be seen in Figure 17, every survey respondent expressed support for the implementation and use of social media tools in their organization. This indicates strong support for leveraging the social media tools for learning rather than maintaining a more traditional approach to learning.

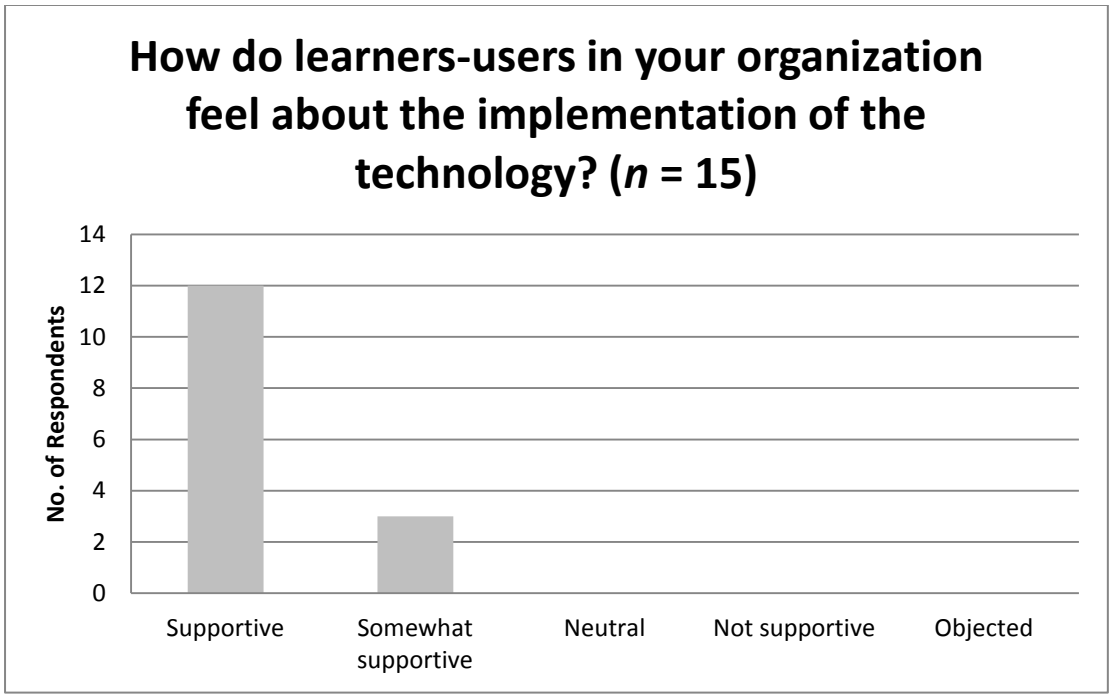


*Figure 17*. How do learners-users in your organization feel about the implementation of the technology?

Q18. Does learner-user age groups (generational differences) affect success in implementation?

The respondents were asked to specify the extent to which they felt that the worker age affected the success of social media implementation. As shown in Figure 18, from an organizational perspective, there is a widely held belief that adoption of social media for learning was affected by younger workers and the need to respond to learner-user requests.

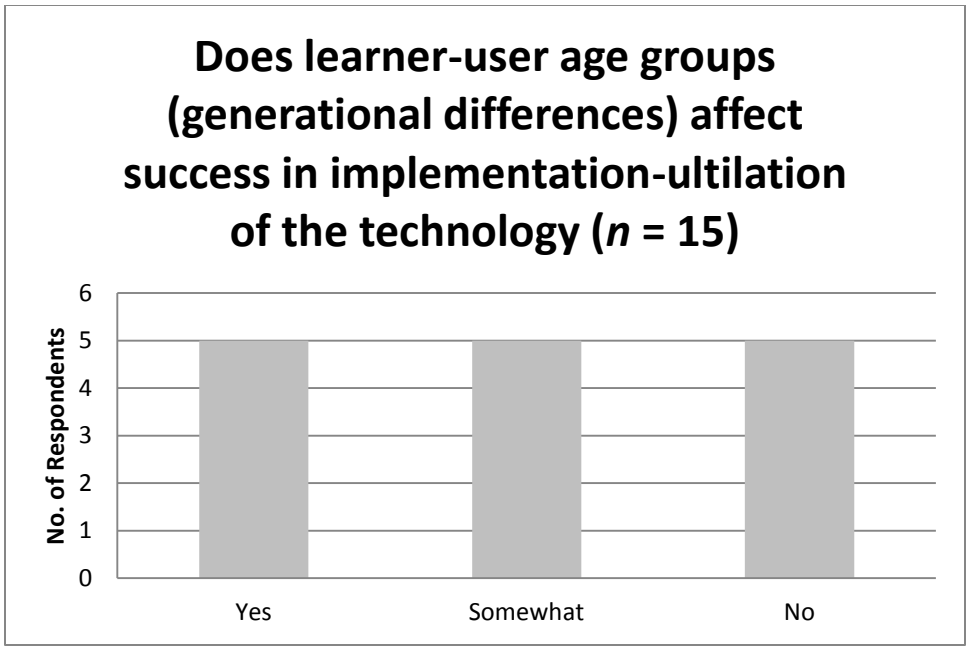


*Figure 18*. Does learner-user age groups (generational differences) affect success in implementation-utilization of the technology?

**Category 4: Measurement of effectiveness and best practices.**

Q19. Do you measure the level of social media learning engagements?

The respondents were asked whether their organization measured the participation in social media learning program. As shown in Figure 19, 10 (67%) repondents indicated that their organizantions measured the the level of learner-user engagement in the new social media tools. The remaining respondents indicated their organizations did not seem to measure who invests heavily in social media tools. Their organiziations seem to employ a see-what-happens attitude.

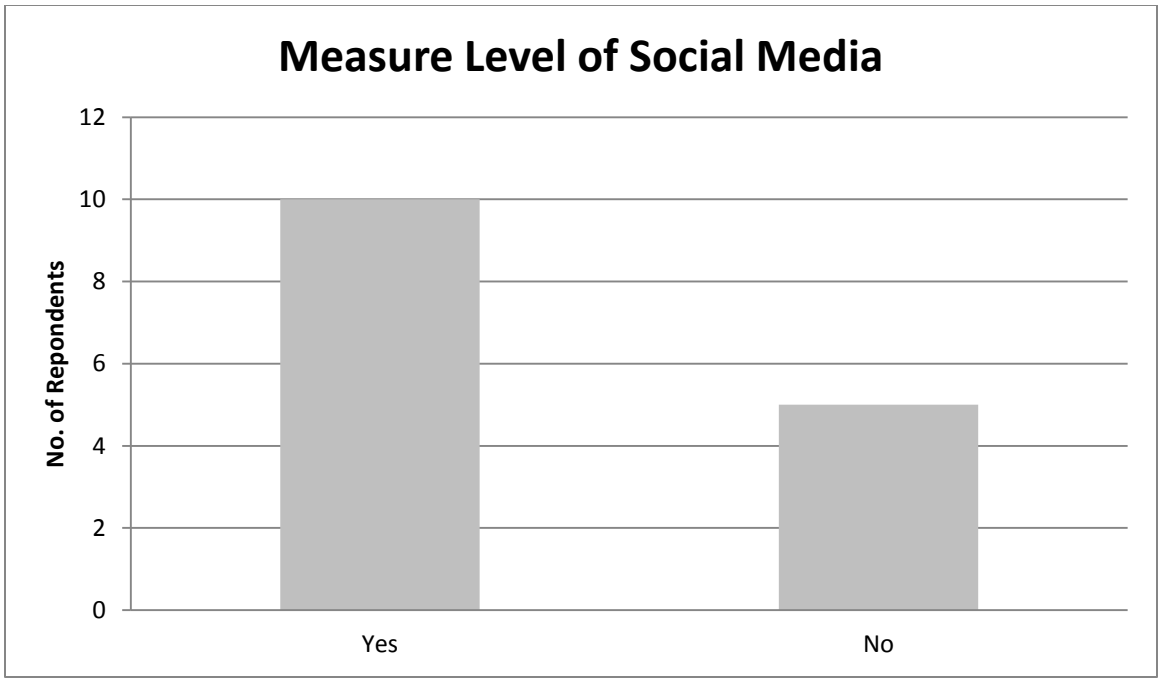


*Figure 19.* Do you measure the level of social media learning engagements?

Q20. How is the measurement being done?

The respondents were ask to select multiple choices on how their organizations' gauged the level of social learning engagement after social media tools were implemented. As shown in Figure 20, 66% said feedback was offered directly from the learners-users. Among the participants, 53% indicated their organizations offered information by tracking levels of social media tool use.

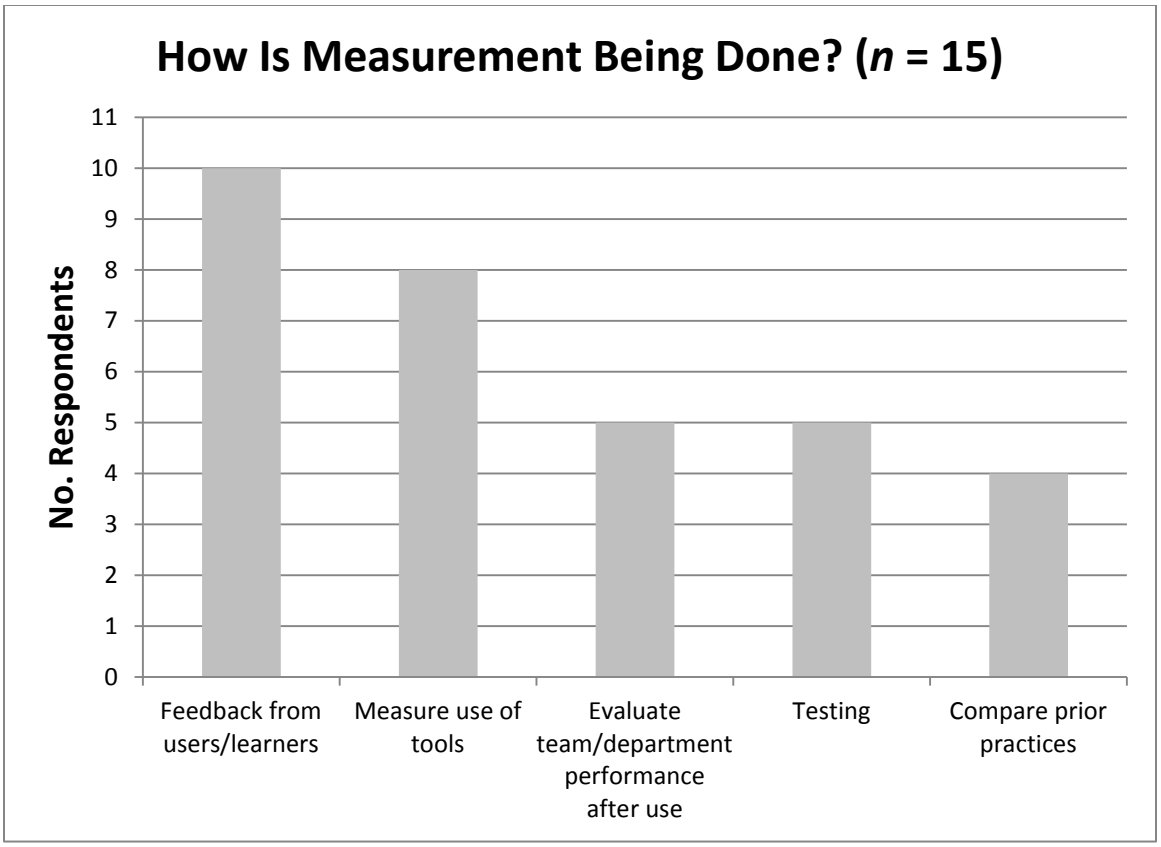


*Figure 20*. How is measurement being done?

Q21. What level of impact have social media tools had on your organization's learning practices?

The respondents were asked to gauge the level of impact implementation social media tools had on their organizations' learning practices. As shown in Figure 21, most respondents felt that the social media tools were having a positive impact in their organization. A majority of the respondents, 11 of 15, reported positive impact, four were neutral, and three were no responses.

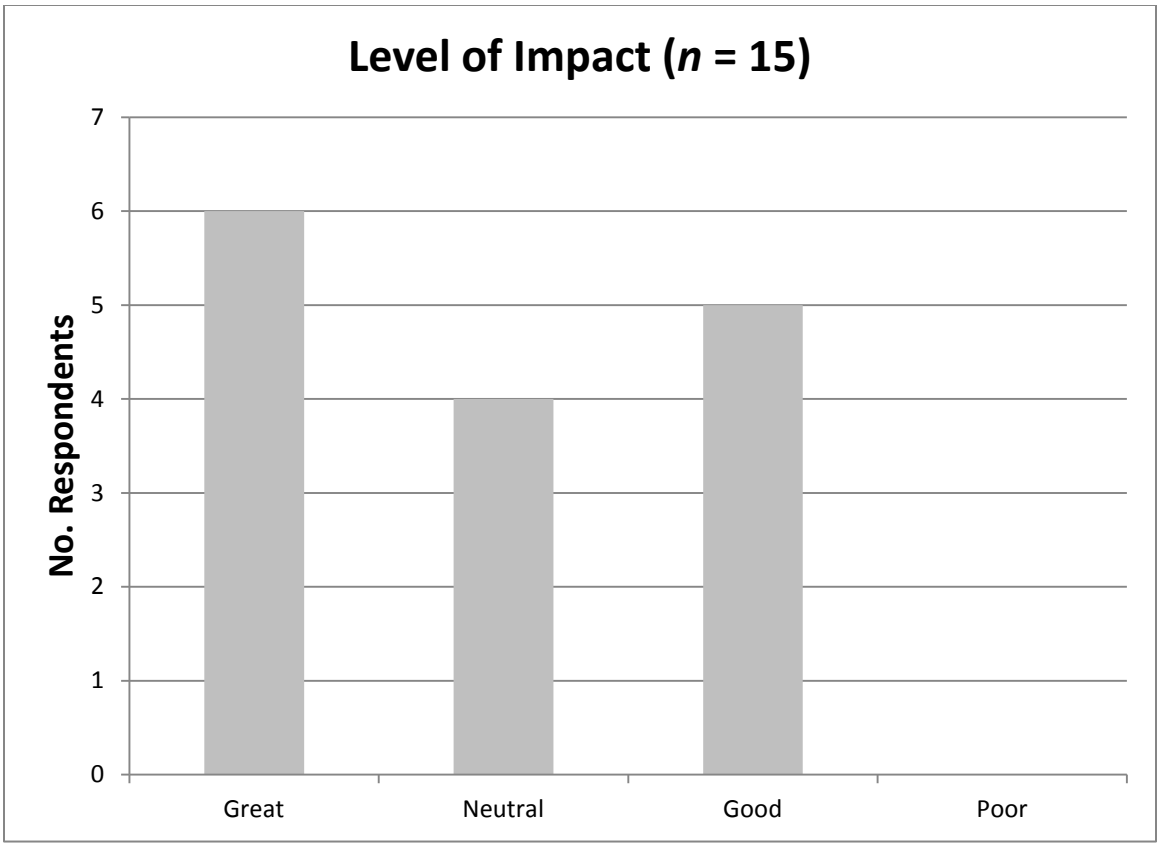


*Figure 21*. Level of impact

Q22. Does your organization have formal policies regarding the use of social media tools?

Respondents were asked to indicate whether their organizations had formal policies regarding the use of social media tools. As shown in Figure 22, a majority of respondents said there were policies in place in their organizations, but they were very loosely defined since the communications were not monitored.

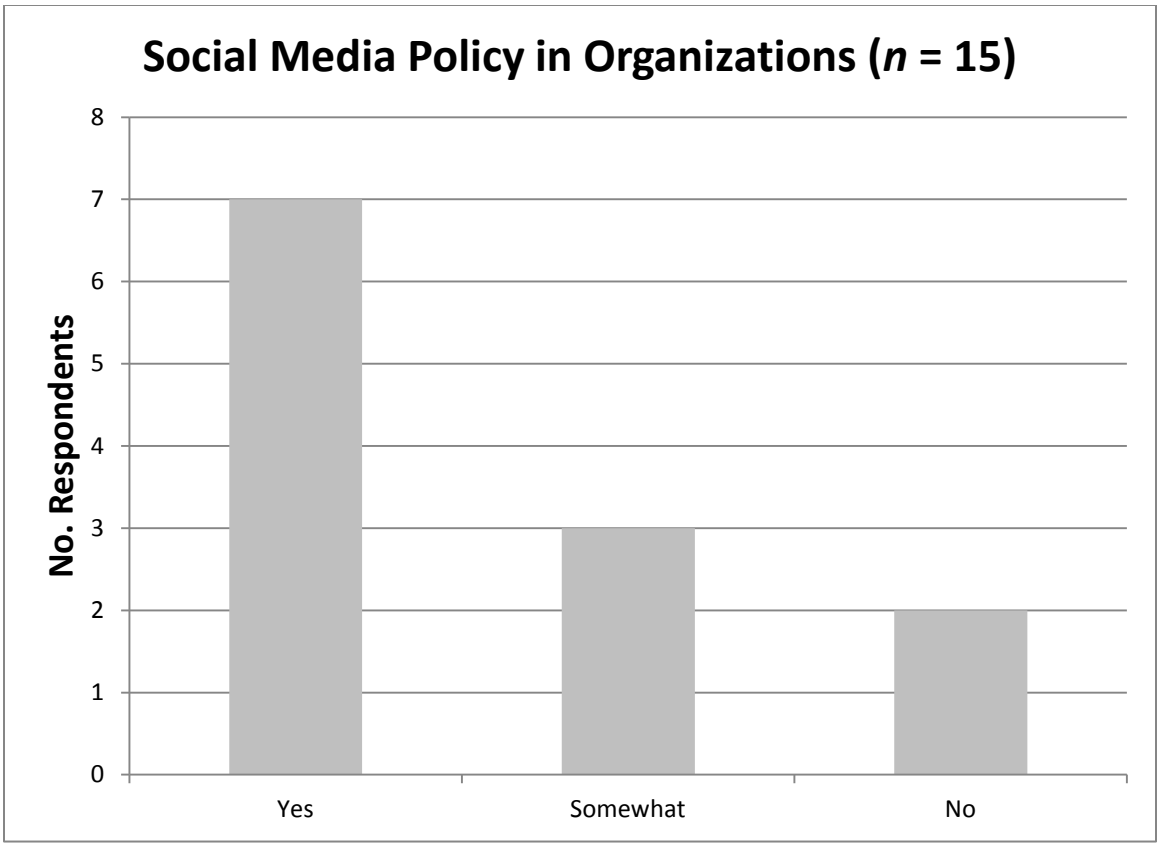


*Figure 22*. Does your organization have formal policies regarding use of social media?

Q23. Which security practices are used?

The respondents were asked what security practices were used after the implementation of the social media tools. As shown in Figure 23, the majority indicated that the communications were not monitored or randomly monitored. There is some indication that monitoring practices vary depending on the size of the company and the level of investment in social media tools.

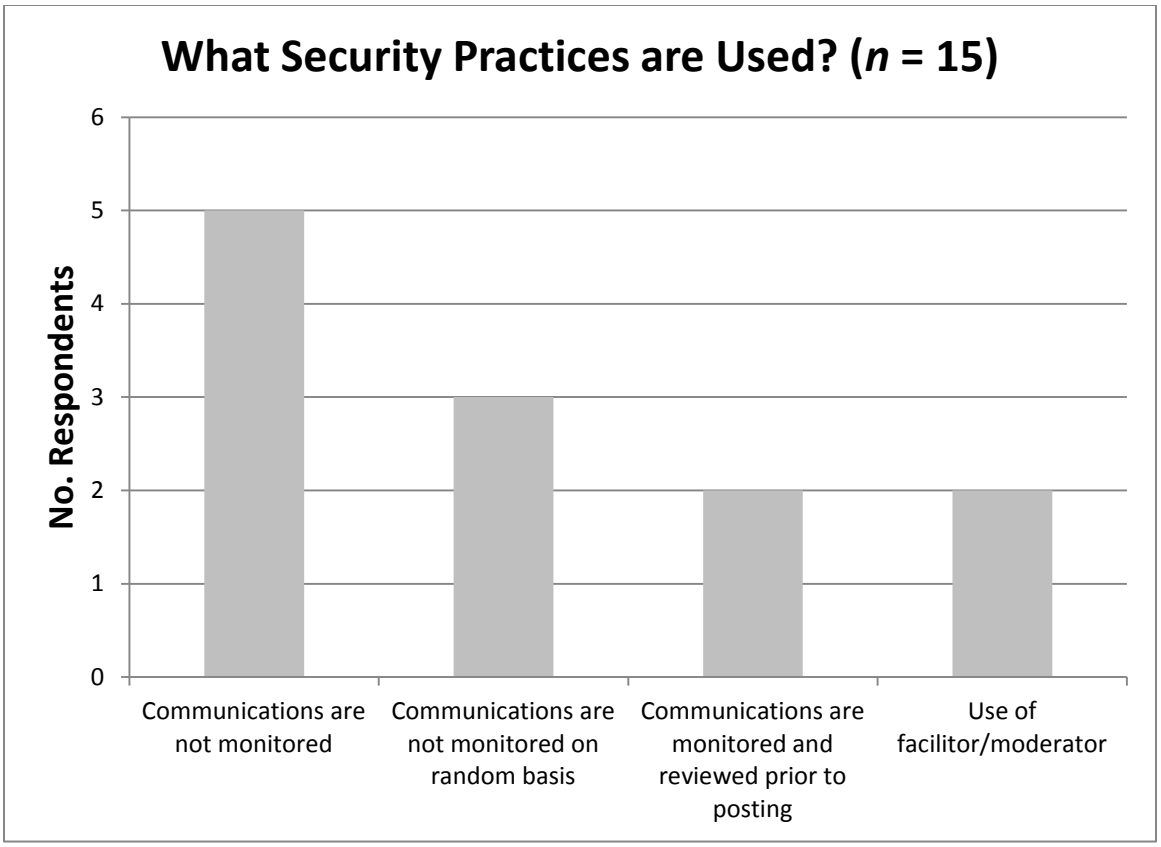


*Figure 23*. What security practices are used?

Q24. How much did your organization spend on the implementation of social media tools for learning?

The respondents were asked about the level of spending for implemenation of social media learning tools in their organizations. As shown in Figure 24, it ranged from zero to more than $500,000 in the sampled organizations. A majority of the responses showed investment less than $10,000. This indicates that many organizations are still hestitant about fully implementing social media tools in learning.

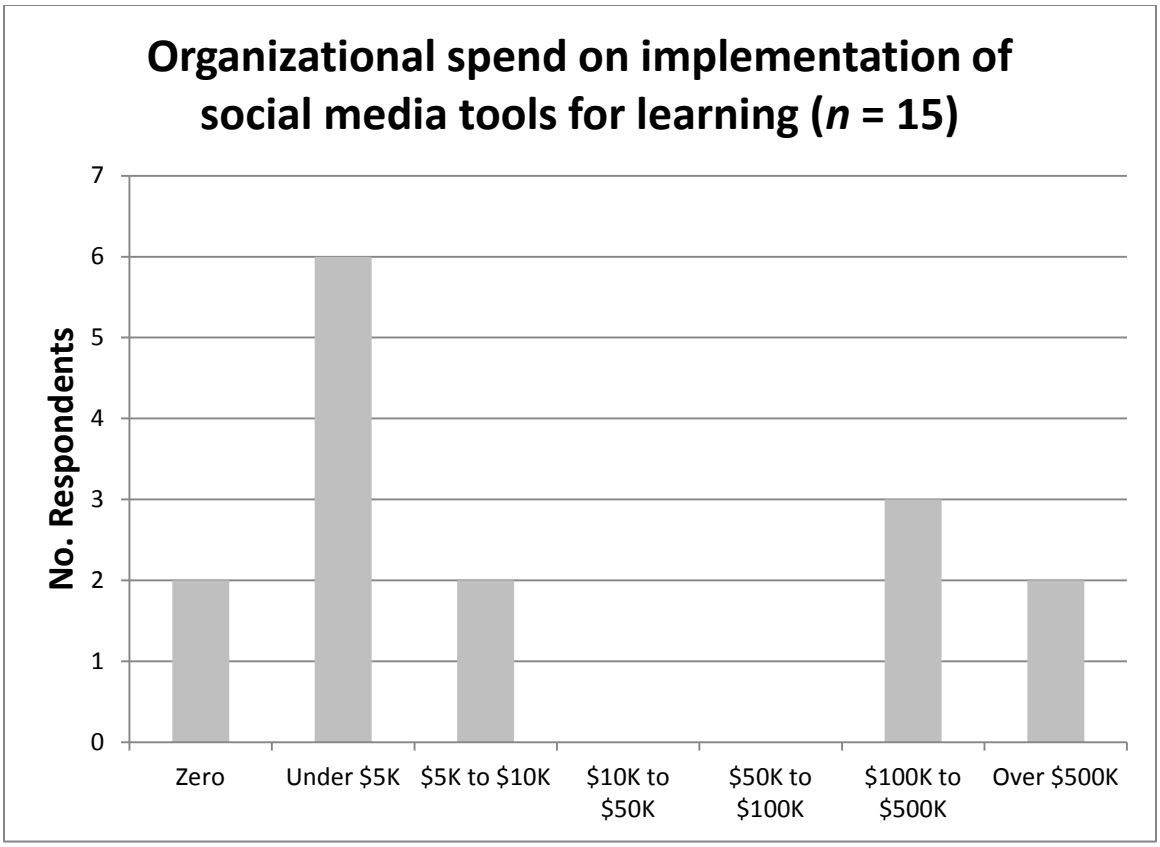


*Figure 24*. How much did your organization spend on implementation of social media tools for learning?

Q25. Have you received a return from the technology investment?

The respondents were asked whether their organizations received a return from the investment in social media technology. Among the respondents, 12 (80%) indicated that their organizations were receiving a return on their investments in these new social media tools. As can be seen from the subjects responses regarding the impact of use of social media tools in Figure 25, their experiences validate their belief that their organizations are receiving a return on investment in social media tools.

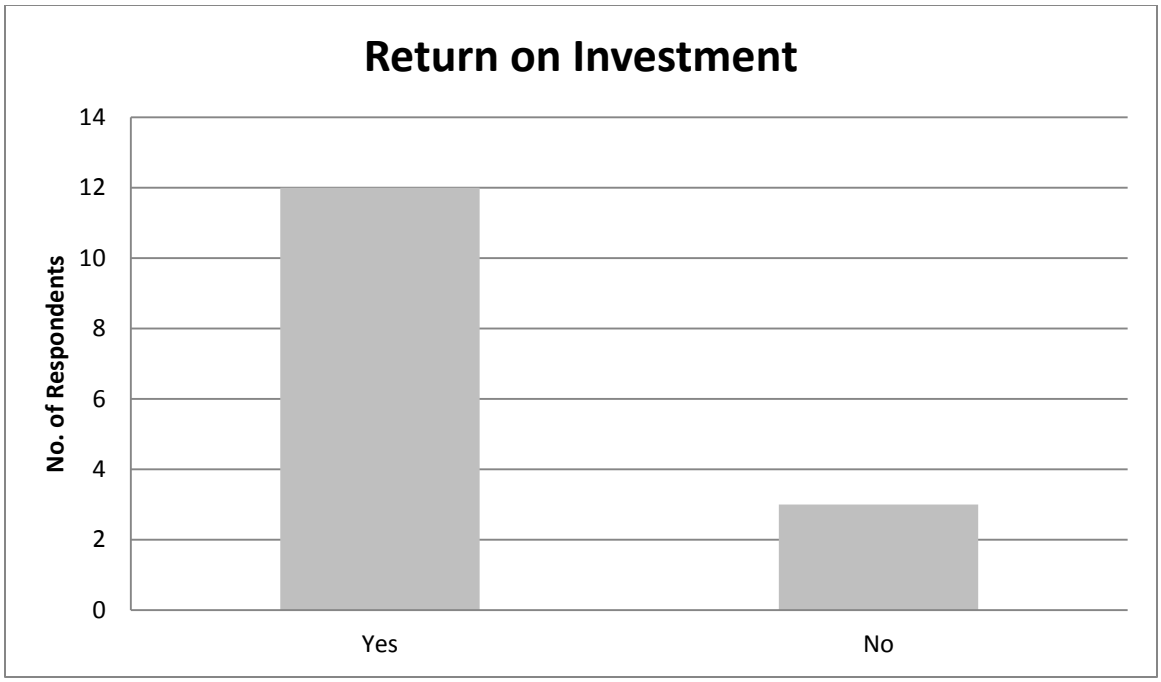


*Figure 25*. Have you received a return from the technology investment?

Q26. How do you measure the impact of use of social media tools?

The respondents were asked if their organizations measured the impact of use of social media tools in a number of catagories. As shown in Figure 26, the respondents answers show that they believed impact was occuring in many areas. The most common methods of measuring impact used were tracking the frequency of site visits and learner-user feedback. Impact also was seen in increased speed of information dissemination as well as learn-user performance, which appears to corrilate with reduction in overhead costs.

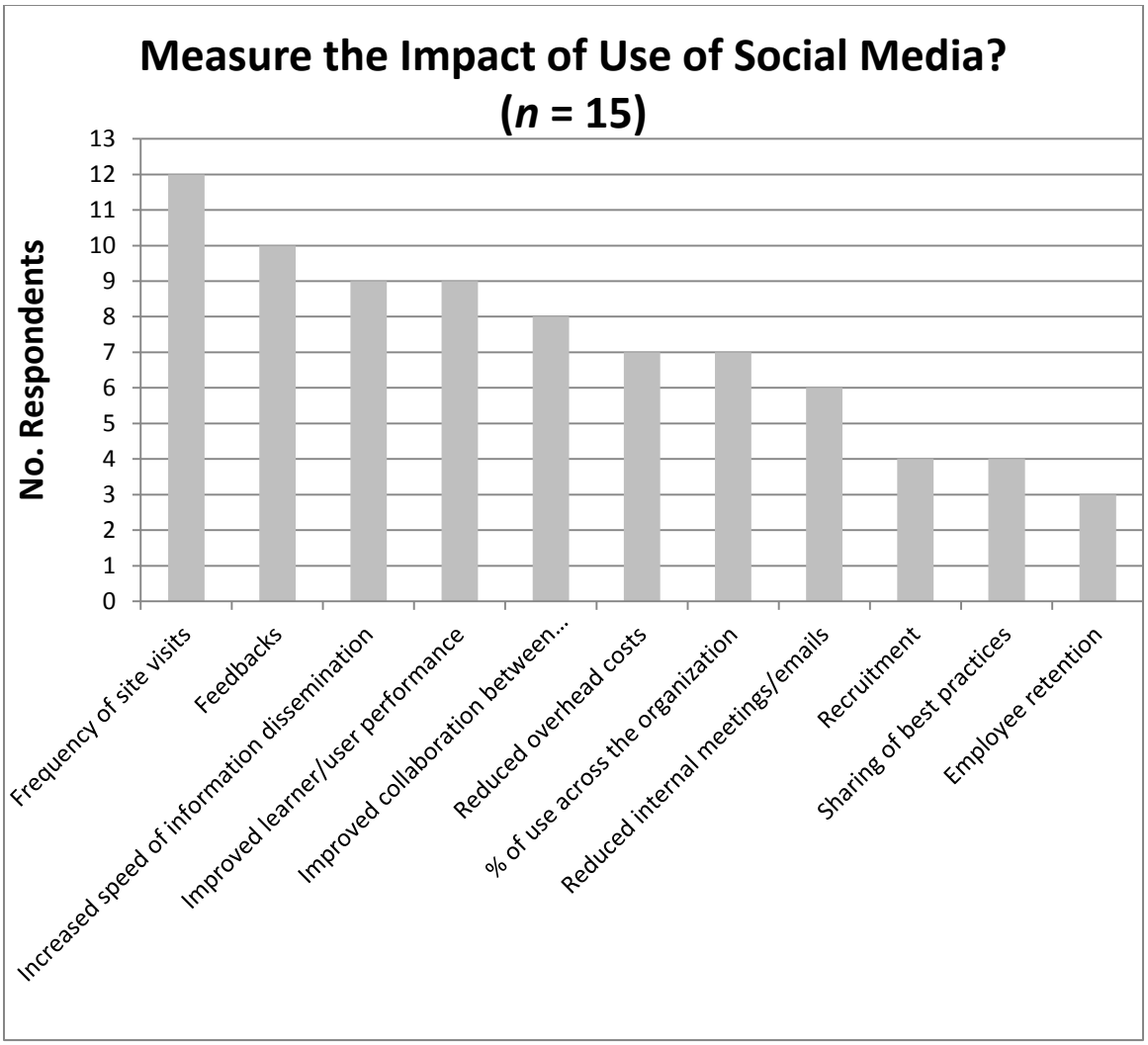


*Figure 26*. How do you measure the impact of use of social media tools?

Q27. Did your existing content or delivery practices have to be modified or reworked to accommodate the social media tools you ultilize?

The respondents were asked to indicate whether the existing content or delivery practices needed to be modified or reworked to accomodat the implementation of social media in their learning organizations. As can be seen in Figure 27, almost half of the respondents indicated that they didn't need to modify the existing practices, while the remaining claimed that they needed to make adjustments in order to integrate effectively the new social media tools into their existing processes.

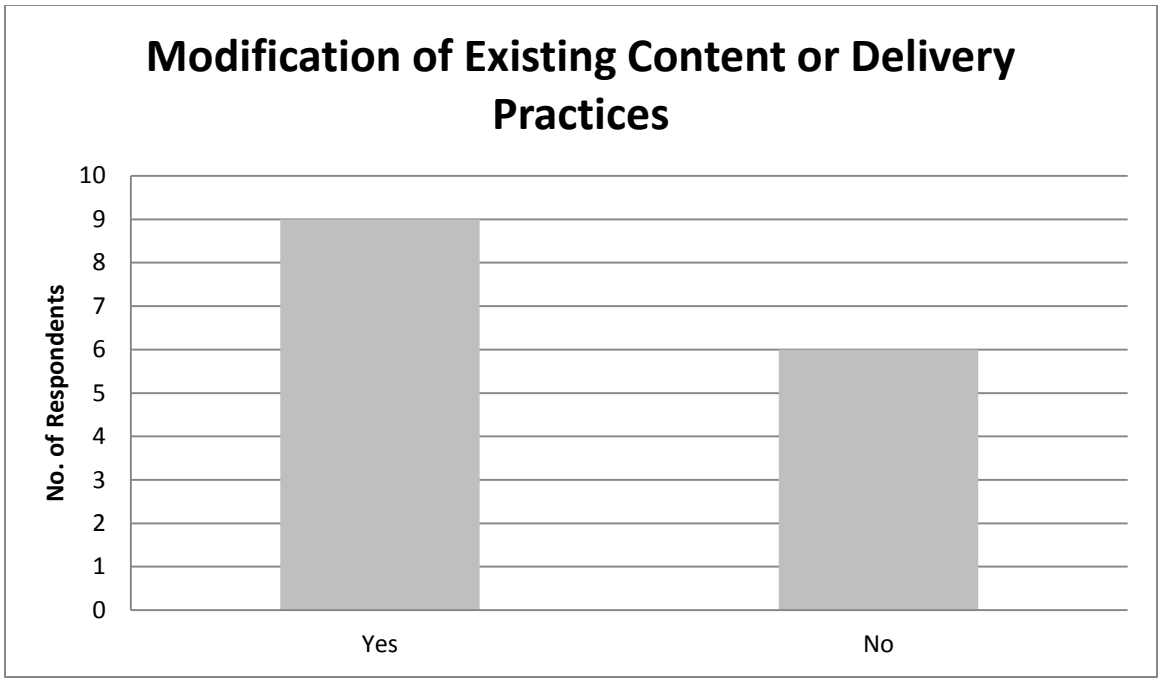


*Figure 27*. Did your existing content or deliver practices have to be modified or reworked to accommodate the social media tools you utilized?

**Category 5: Sustaining implementation of social media**.

Q28. How likely is it that your organization's use of social media tools in learning functions, will increase in the next year?

The respondents were asked to gauge the likelihood of increasing the usage of social media tools for learning in their organizations. As can be seen in Figure 28, 12 of 15 (80%) respondents reported interest or likelihood in increasing their engagement with social media in the future.

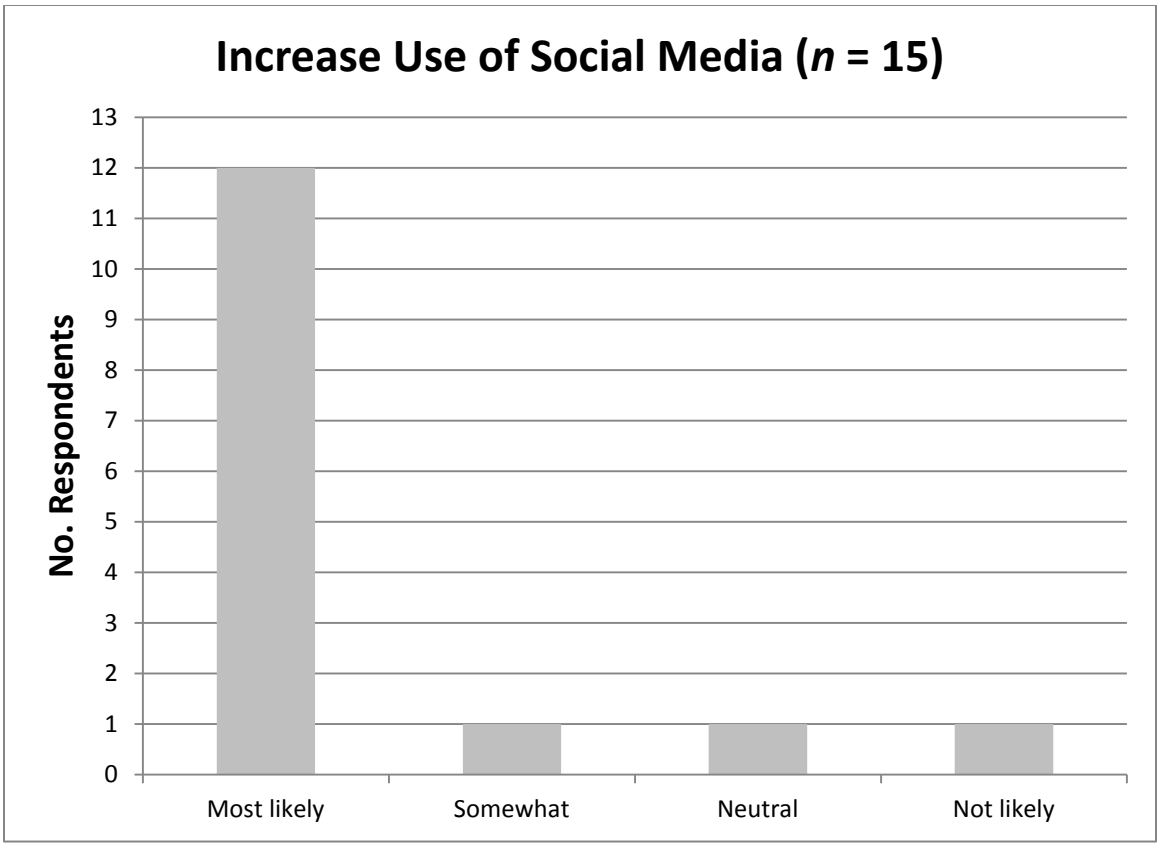


*Figure 28*. How likely is it that your organization's use of social media tools in learning functions, will it increase in the next year?

Q29. Describe your organization's future social media implementation plans?

The respondents were asked to describe their organizations' future social media implementation plans. As can be seen in Figure 29, the highest-rated items for continuing the use of social media were in the categories of sale-marketing, helpdesk-support, and for rewards for participation functions. Overall, more than 90% of respondents felt their organizations would continue to invest and leverage these social tools for a variety of job functions, not just learning.

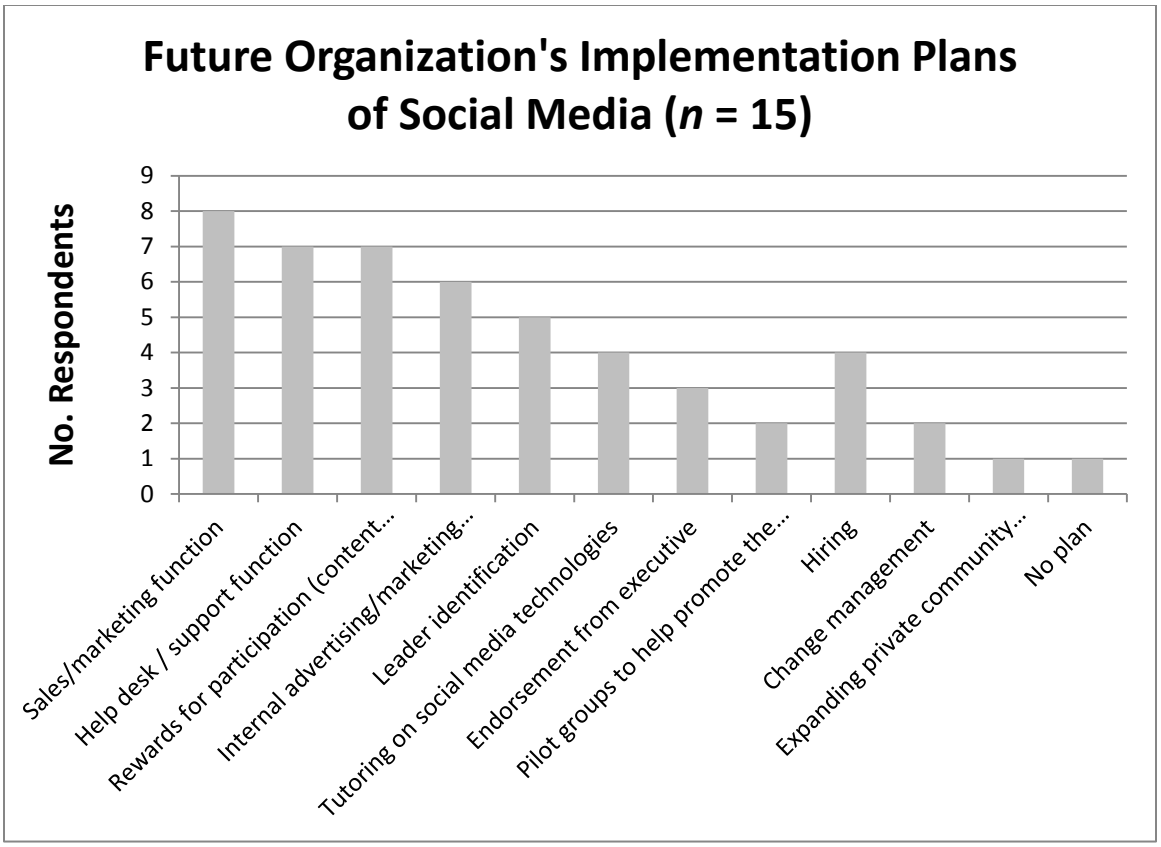


*Figure 29*. Describe your organization's future social media implementation plans?

Q30. Identify any problems or limitations that affect further implementaiton of social media?

The respondents were asked to indicate if there were any foreseen problems or limitations that affected further implementation of social media tools in their organizations. As can be seen in Figure 30, the significant challenge comes from resistance to change among the learners-users. Additional challenges come from setting a clear organizational strategy, management support, and infrastructure. Surprisingly, the least of their organization worries were with the policy of use or the knowledge of the tools. This indicates that organizations are confident, comfortable, and believe that social media for learning has value.

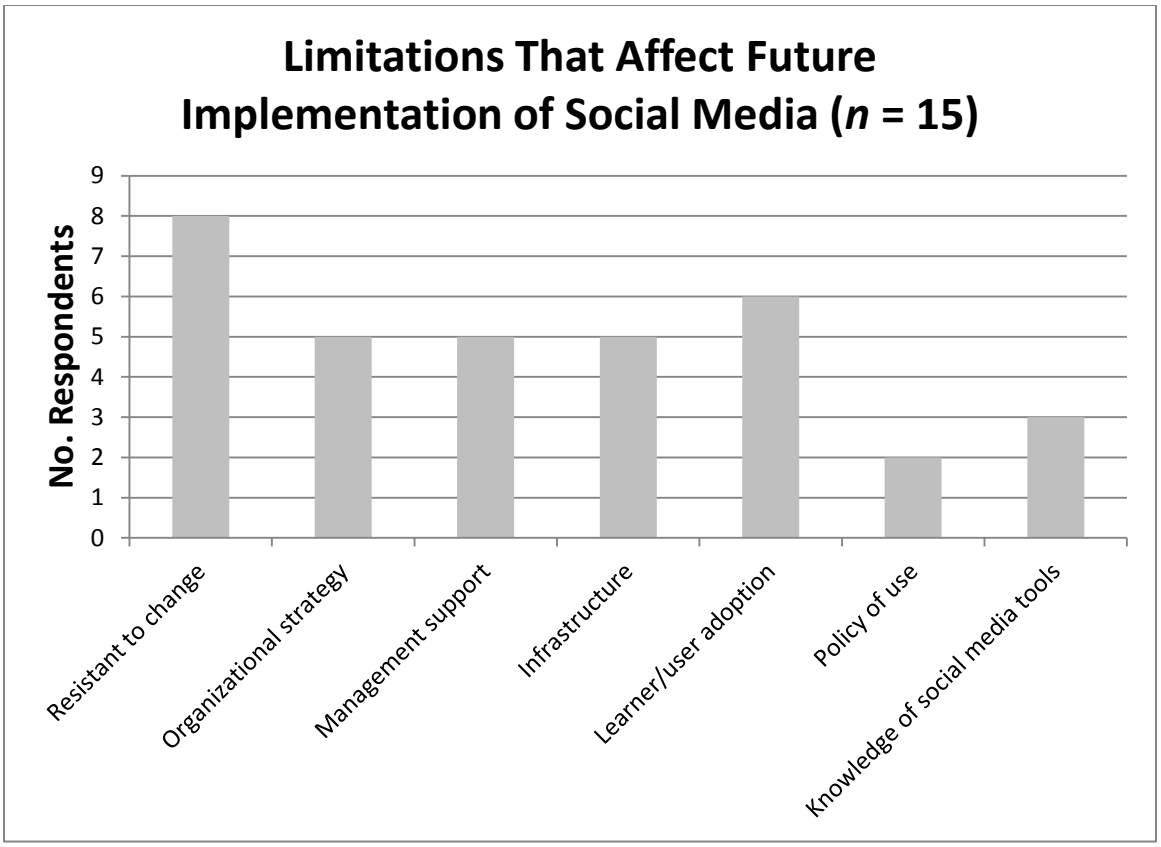


*Figure 30*. Identify any problems or limitations that affect further implementation of social media?

**Additional Comments From Subjects**

Several respondents offered narrative comments expressing both negative and positive concerns about the infant stage of social media technologies as well as rolling it out to a wider audience and t. Comment 1:

> We use social media tools heavily in our organization from internal tools like Salesforce chatter to external tools like Hootsuit, Radian 6, and many others; social media technology is a very important part of our business. We plan to continue testing and implementing new social media technology until we feel that our organization is running as effectively and transparency as possible.

Comment 2:

For any new initiative which commands learning, it poses difficulty for the percentage of employees which are not on par with technology. The younger generation is familiar with social media, but in a third-world country, many households don't even have a computer, nonetheless have computer literacy beyond checking mail. Rolling out social media tools to aid in time management across the organization and marketing campaigns was particularly difficult. For the most part, the application-Web site is in English. While Google translate could translate into their native language, it required much more training for them to understand the purpose and its identified objective. The biggest hurdle in the rollout-implementation phase was training the employees to navigate the site and ultimately harnessing its power to make work more efficient, which proved to be a difficult feat for many. Implementation of social media forces the staff out of their comfort zone into uncharted territories. Without concise planning and execution, it will be met with adversity and ultimately result in a failed management initiative.

Comment 3:

Microsoft Lync has been a game-changer for our organization. The level and ease of use and collaboration is excellent, and has brought our department closer internally and with our external partners and studios.

Comment 4:

We basically use social media for brand building for marketing purposes. I'm not aware of any plans to use social media to increase employee education-training-hiring or corporate communications.

Comment 5:

We do not use social media as an internal communications tool—it is only used to communicate with association members and the industry.

Comment 6:

We've been present on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube since 2007, but recently I have been lured to specifically focus on our social media effects presence.

**Summary**

Chapter 4 discussed the research findings, presented the data developed in the study, and included the researcher's analysis and comments. Chapter 5 concludes the paper and discusses the research findings. It refutes or supports positions, sets out conclusions drawn from the analysis, and makes recommendations for future research in the field.

## Chapter 5: Conclusions and Proposed Future Work

This chapter outlines the conclusions from the research results, and also describes proposed future work. The study was undertaken to gather information on current social media technology use in organizational learning environments. The data obtained was used to identify current attitudes, levels of penetration and acceptance, and best practices.

Responses to survey questions varied widely, as was expected given the makeup of the survey population. The subjects expressed different concerns and questions based on their work focus and areas of interests. Conversely, the survey data showed a number of consistent interests, which were grouped for analysis and discussion.

The survey results show a high level of awareness that social media technology plays an important and growing role in organizational learning, and a widespread belief that the proper use of social media tools enhances the learning environment and improves productivity. Key benefit factors identified included: (a) Increased speed of information dissemination, (b) Improved collaboration, (c) Reduced costs, (d) Sharing of best practices, and (e) Improved learner-user performance.

A somewhat surprising result was that the study participants identified senior management both at the executive and department head level as being the drivers of social media implementation in this area (note that the study population was predominately drawn from managers). Only two of those surveyed identified trainers as pushing for the future adoption of more social media technology.

The data in Figure 6 also show a broad diversity in the tools currently used and the lack of standardization in either the technology or utilization practices. There was wide divergence even in what channels and tools were considered to be social media, with some participants

limiting their responses to branded tools such as Facebook and Twitter to the exclusion of internal or nonbranded structures, which still have social media characteristics in that they allow multidirectional collaborative participation.

The data also show that while the subjects were aware of a need to embrace and effectively use social media channels, they also felt that there needed to be additional development in a number of identified areas such as: (a) Internal resistance to change, (b) Operational strategy, (c) Management support, (d) Infrastructure, and (e) Learner-user adoption.

One of the participant's comment was:

> For any new initiative which commands learning, it poses difficulty for the percentage of employees which are not on par with technology. The younger generation is familiar with social media, but in a third-world country, many households don't even have a computer, nonetheless have computer literacy beyond checking mail. Rolling out social media tools to aid in time management across the organization and marketing campaigns was particularly difficult. For the most part, the application-Web site is in English. While Google translate could translate into their native language, it required much more training for them to understand the purpose and its identified objective. The biggest hurdle in the rollout-implementation phase was training the employees to navigate the site and ultimately harnessing its power to make work more efficient, which proved to be a difficult feat for many. Implementation of social media, forces the staff out of their comfort zone into uncharted territories. Without concise planning and execution, it will be met with adversity and ultimately result in a failed management initiative.

Given the perceived need to adopt and utilize technology, which is developing and changing at blinding speed, these issues can be effectively addressed.

The principal conclusion drawn from the study is that there is a pressing need for additional work in assisting both managers and users in selecting, structuring, and applying social media tools. The reluctance some study participants show to engage fully and rely on social media technology can be alleviated by making additional information available. This means that techniques for managing technology, measuring its results, and identifying what the best practices for selection, implementation, and use, are important to leveraging the technology to maximize organizational productivity, both in the learning sector and in other areas where the technology is adopted.

One recommendation for best practices the study data indicated would be to implement a pilot project (ranges from 3 to 9 months). Using piloting to test the technology, work out bugs, and train a leadership group to guide implementation seems to be a successful method of easing some of the expressed concerns. Careful planning and sensitivity to user feedback, particularly in the early stages of the rollout, is important. Tracking patterns of adoption and frequency of use provides helpful data so that the adopted platform can be tuned as it is used. While security and avoiding dissemination of private and sensitive information was an important consideration for most of the study participants, this needs to be balanced against a strong user preference for ease of access and open architecture permitting use of preferred devices once a social media channel has been put into use. There needs to be a full commitment to the technology to promote organizational familiarity and acceptance. In the future effective use of social media tools will create new relationship with employees, partners, and customers. “Things that are change relationships fundamentally are the things that you really need to pay attention to, because those are the things that matter and change the way that you have to run and act in your business” (as cited in Davis, 2010, p. 18)

**Proposed Future Work**

The study data confirms that there is a high level of penetration of social media technology in many organizations. Figure 29 shows 11 (73%) of the respondents stated that their organizations would be likely to increase future social media use for learning and planned to continue testing and implementing new social media technology as they were launching. At the same time, the participants confirmed that careful planning, flexibility, and close monitoring will allow the technology to be leveraged to maximize its benefits.

A recommendation for further research would be to look at specific industries, since this study is general and was not focused on specific business sectors. Research shows that some business sectors rely more on social media tool than others, especially to increase their social media buzz.

A second recommendation would be to look at the levels of implementation of enterprise social networking tools for internal organizations such as Yammer, Telligent, and several others. More and more companies are investing in these tools to enhance team collaboration and information dissemination, to connect with remote workers, unify business units, and have more focused discussions within the organization.

A final recommendation, and the most interesting area at this time, involves mobile social media marketing. With social media marketing technology rapidly advancing, more businesses are leveraging the Apple iOS, Windows, and Android mobile platforms for their marketing efforts, which appear to be an increasingly important development area.

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# APPENDIX A

## Social Media in Your Organization Research Questionnaires

Thank you for taking this brief survey and providing your valuable feedback with regards to social media in your organization. This survey should take 10-15 minutes, and is designed to capture information on use of social media in learning, which correlates to performance improvement.

Please fill out the questionnaires below and check all applicable categories. Your responses will be compiled for a graduate dissertation project at Pepperdine University, Graduate School of Education and Psychology. Your individual answers will be anonymous and completely confidential. If you have any questions, please contact me by email at [redacted] or by phone at [redacted]

Thank you,
Camilla Nguyen
Doctoral candidate, Organizational Leadership

### I. Research Participants and Organizations Assessment

Which best describes the principal functional area you work in?

☐ Corporate Communications ☐ Executive ☐ Finance

☐ Human Resources ☐ Sales ☐ IT

☐ Operations ☐Social Media ☐ Training & Support

☐Sales/Marketing/Product Management

☐Other (please specify) _____

Were you involved in the initial setup and use of the technology?

☐Yes ☐No

What is your organization's industry?

☐Aerospace & Defense ☐Agriculture ☐Automotive & Transportation

☐Banking/Financial ☐Education ☐Computer Hardware/Software

☐Government ☐Health Services ☐Hospitality

☐Insurance ☐Media ☐Pharmaceutical

☐Real Estate ☐Other (please specify)_____

How many workers in your organization?

☐Under 250 ☐ 251 to 500 ☐501 to 1,000 ☐1,001 to 5,000

☐5,001 to 10,000 ☐ Over 10,000

What is the annual revenue of your organization?

☐Under $5 million

☐$5 million to $10 million

☐$10 million to $25 million

☐$25 million to $100 million

☐$100 to $250 million

☐$250 million to $1 billion

☐$1 billion to $5 billion

☐$5 billion to $10 billion

☐over $10 billion

What social media tools are currently being utilized?

| **Social Media Tool Types** | **Work** | **Personal** | **Both** | **None** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Blog site | | | | |
| Microblog (e.g. Twitter) | | | | |
| Social Networking site (e.g. Google +, Facebook) | | | | |
| Social Networking for the Enterprise (e.g. Newsgator, Jive, Jammer, Telligent, SocialText) | | | | |
| | | | | |
| **Social Media Tool Types** | **Work** | **Personal** | **Both** | **None** |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Professional networking sites (e.g. Plaxo, LinkedIn) | | | | |
| Photo sharing sites (e.g. shutterfly, Flickr, instagram) | | | | |
| Collaboration Tools (e.g. Googledocs, sharepoint) | | | | |
| Social bookmarking (e.g. StumbleUpon) | | | | |
| Discussion boards / dashboards | | | | |
| Chatroom | | | | |
| Internet audio& video calls/conference (e.g. Skype, webex) | | | | |
| Instant Messager (e.g. AIM, MSN, Meebo) | | | | |
| Wikis | | | | |
| RSS feeds | | | | |
| Podcasts | | | | |
| Internal custom social networking tool | | | | |
| | | | | |

How long has your organization been using these tools?

☐ Less than 6 months ☐ 6 months to 1 year

☐ 1 to 2 years ☐ 2 to 3 years

☐ 3 to 4 years ☐ More than 4 years

## II. Leveraging Social Media in Organizations

How are these social media tools being utilized?

☐ Deliver courses with social media learner collaboration

☐ Deliver information via social media (tutorials, etc.,)

☐ Facilitate communities (workers and clients) for social networking

☐ Project Management

☐ Performance support

☐ Other (please specify) _____

What were the reasons that your organization selected particular social media tools?

☐ Learners/users familiarity

☐ Learners/users requests

☐ Extra-organization requests (e.g. customers, suppliers)

☐ Intra-organization requests (e.g. department, business unit)

What occurred after the technology was implemented?

☐ Increased learner use

☐ Increased speed of information dissemination

☐ Reduced internal meetings/emails

☐ Sharing of best practices

☐ Improved collaboration

☐ Reduced costs

☐ Improved learner/user performance

☐ Employee retention

☐ Other (please specify) _____

**III. Implementation and Utilization of Social Media**

Who in your organization supported/ initiated the implementation of social media technologies?

☐ Executive management

☐ Departmental management

☐ Learners/users

☐ Trainer

☐ Other (please specify) _____

What preparation was done prior to introducing/implementing this technology in your

organization?

☐ Conduct research on social media tools

☐ Use outside consultant to perform an evaluation

☐ Develop implementation plan

☐ Pilot testing

☐ Designate/develop internal leader

☐ No plan or assessment

☐ Other (please specify) _____

How effective was this preparation?

☐ Very effective

☐ Somewhat effective

☐ Not effective

To what extent, if any, was the technology piloted or tested prior to implementation?

☐ Very extensive

☐ Extensive

☐ Somewhat extensive

☐ Very little

Did you use the technology to replace or enhance/complement existing learning and development tools/programs?

☐ Yes ☐ No

What worked well? What didn't work so well?

| | Worked Well | Not So Well | Don't Know |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strategy | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Integration project plan | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Testing | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Deployment/rollout plan | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Learner/ user adoption | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Policy of use | _____ | _____ | _____ |

How do learners/users in your organization feel about the implementation of the technology?

☐ Supportive

☐ Somewhat supportive

☐ Neutral

☐ Not supportive

☐ Objected

Does learner/user age groups (generational differences)affect success in implementation/utilization of the technology?

☐ Yes ☐ Somewhat ☐ No

IV. **Measurement of Effectiveness and Best Practices**

Do you measure the level of social media learning engagements?

☐ Yes ☐ No

How is the measurement done?

☐ Feedback from users/learners

☐ Testing

☐ Evaluate task performance after use

☐ Evaluate team/department performance after use

☐ Compare prior practices

☐ Measure use of tools (e.g. stats report)

☐ Other (please specify) _____

What level of impact has social media tools have on your organization's learning practices?

☐ Great ☐ Good ☐ Neutral ☐ Poor

Does your organization have formal policies regarding use of social media tools?

☐ Yes ☐ Somewhat ☐ No

Which security practices are used?

☐ Communications are not monitored

☐ Communications are monitored on a random basis

☐ Communications are monitored and reviewed prior to posting

☐ Use of facilitator/moderator

How much did your organization spend on implementation of social media tools for learning?

☐ Zero

☐ Under $5,000

☐ $5,000 to $ 10,000

☐ $10,000 to $50,000

☐ $50,000 to $100,000

☐ $100,000 to $500,000

☐Over $500,000

Have you received a return from the technology investment?

☐ Yes ☐ No

How do you measure the impact of use of social media tools?

☐ % of use across the organization

☐ Frequency of site visits

☐ Increased speed of information dissemination

☐ Reduced internal meetings/emails

☐ Sharing of best practices

☐ Improved collaboration between teams/departments

☐ Feedbacks

☐ Reduced overhead costs

☐ Improved learner/user performance

☐ Employee retention

☐ Recruitment

Did your existing content or delivery practices have to be modified or reworked to accommodate the social media tools you utilize?

☐ Yes ☐ No

V. **Sustaining Implementation of Social Media**

How likely is it that your organization's use of social media tools in learning functions, will it increase in the next year?

☐ Most likely ☐ Somewhat ☐ Neutral ☐ Not likely

Describe your organization's future social media implementation plans?

☐ Change management

☐ Tutoring on social media technologies

☐ Internal advertising/marketing campaign

☐ Pilot groups to help promote the benefits

☐ Leader identification

☐ Endorsement from executive

☐ Sales/marketing function

☐ Help desk / support function

☐ Rewards for participation (content contribution)

☐ Hiring

☐ Other (please specify) _____

Identify any problems or limitations which affect further implementation of social media?

☐ Organizational Strategy

☐ Management Support

☐ Policy of use

☐ Infrastructure

☐ Knowledge of social media tools

☐ Learner/user adoption

☐ Resistant to change

Additional comments for researcher:

_____

# APPENDIX B

## Letter to Participants

Dear [prospect participant]

My name is Camilla Nguyen, I am a doctoral candidate in the Organizational Leadership at Pepperdine University, Graduate School of Education and Psychology. To fulfill requirements for this Doctorate of Education degree, I am conducting a research study on the use of social media tools in selected organizations to provide information on what social media tools being utilized, levels of penetration of social media based technologies, how they are being used in learning, and evaluating effectiveness and results, which should assist in development of improved practices and techniques in this rapidly growing area.

This letter is being sent to you to request that you participate in the study. If you agree to participate, you will be sent a consent form and a questionnaire asking about how social media based applications are used in your organization. After the questionnaire is completed and returned, you will be contacted to set up a time for an interview to obtain additional information, the interview will take approximately one hour.

The study is designed to keep information about the study's participants and their organization completely confidential at all times. The study data will be included in my doctoral dissertation, which will be published through Pepperdine University, where it may assist other researchers and educators in understanding how social media tools may be adopted and leveraged in organizational learning.

If you would like to participate in the study, please contact me by email at [redacted] or by phone at [redacted] so that I can send you the appropriate forms. If you are not involved in the use of social media technology in your

organization or do not wish to participate in the study, please consider forwarding this invitation to someone will participate.

Thank you for considering this invitation. I appreciate your assistance.

Sincerely,

Camilla Nguyen
Doctoral candidate, Organizational Leadership

# APPENDIX C

## Informed Consent Form

I. Purpose and Procedure of the Research

This form provides information to study participants describing the research purpose and interview procedure. We thank you in advance for your willingness to participate and contribute to the study, which is directed at obtaining and analyzing information to improve organizational learning techniques as well as organizational performance.

Please review the items listed below carefully prior to signing if you wish to participate .

1. You are being asked to provide information for a study being conducted as a research project to fulfill requirements for the degree Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership at Pepperdine University. The study is being conducted by Camilla Nguyen, the degree candidate, under the direction of Dr. June Schmieder-Ramirez, Academic Chair, Organizational Leadership Doctoral Program at Pepperdine University Graduate School of Education and Psychology.

2. The study is directed at gathering information about use of social media in medium-sized organizations in the areas of learning, services, and development, and analyzes the effect of their adoption and utilization on organizational learning. You have been selected as a potential study participant because of your active involvement in social media activities in your organization.

3. If you decide to participate in the study, you will fill out a questionnaires and be interviewed by researcher. The questionnaire and interview questions are directed at obtaining information about your organization's use of social media and reactions to that use. The research is being done to advance understanding of the extent of social media use in organizational learning and it correlates to performance improvement.

4. When the research conducted for this study is completed the results will be compiled for publication as a Doctoral Dissertation. You will be provided with a copy of the document and asked for your comments prior to publication.

5. The study is designed to protect the anonymity of all participants. If you decide to participate in the study, you will be assigned a number which will be used to identify your responses to the written questionnaires and the transcripts of your interview. Names of study participants and their organizations, and all personal information will be kept separate from the data compiled for the study and will not be used in what is published.

6. You have been contacted and provided with materials about the study because you and your organization are within the parameters of the data field being developed in the research. Participation is voluntary, and if you decide not to participate or later decide to withdraw from the process, you are free to do so at any time.

## II. Consent Agreement

If you wish to participate in the study, please indicate your consent below by initialing each line item.

__ I agree to participate in the research study and would allow appropriate quotes to be used in publications.
__I understand that my name and the name of my organization will not be disclosed.
__I understand that I have the right to refuse to participate or withdraw at any time.
__I agree to be interviewed by a researcher.
__I understand that the interview will be recorded and stored
__I understand that all data developed from the research will be maintained in a confidential and secure manner and destroyed after the completion of the study.
__I understand that there are no monetary incentives or payments provided for participation in this research project.

## III. Contact Information for Questions or Concerns

For information regarding the study, please contact Camilla Nguyen by telephone at [redacted] or by email at [redacted] or Dr. June Schmieder-Ramirez, Academic Chair, Organizational Leadership Doctoral Program at Pepperdine University Graduate School of Education and Psychology, at [redacted]

For information about participation in a research study and about Pepperdine University Institutional Review Board (IRB), a group of people who review the research to protect your rights, please visit the Pepperdine University IRB web site at http://services.pepperdine.edu/irb/graduate/ .

## IV. Signature and Consent/Permission to be in the Research

Before making any decision regarding participation in this research study you should:

- Discuss the study with an investigator,
- Review the information in this form, and
- Ask any questions you may have.

**Participant:** By signing this consent form, you indicate that you are voluntarily choosing to take part in this research.

_____ _____ _____ _____
Signature of Participant Date Time Printed Name

**Principal Investigator (The researcher):** The signature below means that you have explained the research to the participant/participant representative and have answered any questions he/she has about the research.

_____ _____ _____ _____
Signature of person who explained this research Date Time Printed Name

# APPENDIX D

## General Interview Structure

PART I. Contact with subjects

Introduce interviewer
Thank the subject participation in the study
Explain the interview note form heading purpose of the study
Explain the interview process
Present IRB guidelines, including informed consent form for approval/signature

PART II. Next contact with subjects

| | |
|---|---|
| Name: | Interview ID: |
| Date of interview: | |
| Place of interview: | |
| Description of the place: | |

Introduction: Review purpose and process of this interview.

The purpose of the interview is to gather general and specific information about the use of social media tools in selected organizations to develop information on the types of social media tools being utilized, levels of penetration of social media based technologies and how they are being leveraged for learning and performance improvements based on the perceptions and beliefs of a selected sample of those currently involved in the implementation and use of the technology, which should assist in the development of improved practices and techniques in this rapidly growing area.

Prior to the interview process, all participants will sign a Letter of Informed Consent (Appendix C) providing information on the purpose of the study. The interviewer will contact participant, confirm willingness to be interviewed, verify consent under the consent form, and arrange for the interview to be conduct at a time and place convenient for the participant. The interview will be an hour and structure will consist of five categories:

a) Research Participants and Organizations Assessment
    1. Which best describes the principal functional area you work in?
    2. Were you involved in the initial setup and use of the technology?
    3. What is your organization's industry ?
    4. How many workers in your organization?
    5. What is the annual budget for social media?
    6. What social media tools are currently being utilized?
    7. How long has your organization been using these tools?

b) Leveraging Social Media in Organizations

8. How are social media tools being utilized?
9. What were the reasons that your organization selected particular social media tools?
10. What occurred after the technology was implemented?

c) Implementation and Utilization of Social Media
   11. Who in your organization supported/initiated the implementation of social media technologies?
   12. What preparation was done prior to introducing/implementing this technology in your organization?
   13. How effective was this preparation?
   14. To what extent, if any, was the technology piloted or tested prior to implementation?
   15. Did you use the technology to replace or enhance/complement existing learning and development tools/programs?
   16. What worked well? What didn't work so well?
   17. How do learners/users in your organization feel about the implementation of the technology?
   18. Does learner/user age groups (generational differences)affect success in implementation/utilization of the technology?

d) Measurement of Effectiveness and Best Practices
   19. Do you measure the level of social media learning engagements?
   20. How is the measurement done?
   21. What level of impact has social media tools have on your organization's learning practices?
   22. Does your organization have formal policies regarding use of social media tools?
   23. Which security practices are used?
   24. How much did your organization spend on implementation of social media tools for learning?
   25. Have you received a return from the technology investment?
   26. How do you measure the impact of use of social media tools?
   27. Did your existing content or delivery practices have to be modified or reworked to accommodate the social media tools you utilize?

e) Sustaining Implementation of Social Media:
   28. How likely is it that your organization 's use of social media tools in learning functions, will it increase in the next year?
   29. Describe your organization's future social media implementation plans?
   30. Identify any problems or limitations which affect further implementation of social media?

Following completion of the interview, the recording will be transcribed and a copy will be sent to you for approval. If there are any discrepancies in the transcription and you want corrections or changes made, please advise interviewer of the requested changes.
Thank you for participating in this study.

# APPENDIX E

## Coding Plan

| Code | Theme | Description |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Research Participants and Organizations Assessment | • Participants information<br>• Organizations information<br>• Social media information<br>  ○ Types<br>  ○ Sources<br>  ○ Duration of use<br>  ○ Changes |
| 2 | Leveraging Social Media in Organizations | • Social media tools<br>  ○ Sources of tools<br>  ○ Social media tools used<br>  ○ Purpose<br>• Learning structure information<br>  ○ Types/functions<br>  ○ Structure in organization directed at learning |
| 3 | Implementation and Utilization of Social Media | • Drivers for social media in learning<br>• Implementation/preparation plans<br>• Users/learners assessment<br>• Generational difference |
| 4. | Measurement of Effectiveness and Best Practices | • Measurement of results of use<br>• Best practices and effect of use |
| 5. | Sustaining implementation of Social Media | • Future use of social media tools<br>  ○ In learning functions<br>  ○ Implementation plans<br>• Advantage, limitation, and problems<br>  ○ As perceived by participants |

# APPENDIX F

## Additional Comments from Participants

Comment 1:
"We use social media tools heavily in our organization from internal tools like Salesforce chatter to external tools like Hootsuit, Radian 6, and many others, social media technology is a very important part of our business. We plan to continue testing and implementing new social media technology until we feel that our organization is running as effectively and transparency as possible."

Comment 2:
"For any new initiative which commands learning, it poses difficult for the percentage of employees which are not on par with technology. The younger generation is familiar with social media, but in a third world country, many households don't even have a computer, nonetheless have computer literacy beyond checking mail. Rolling out social media tools to aid in time management across the organization and marketing campaigns was particularly difficult. For the most part, the application/website is in English. While Google translate could translate into their native language, it required much more training for them to understand the purpose and its identified objective. The biggest hurdle in the rollout/implementation phase was training the employees to navigate the site and ultimately harnessing its power to make work more efficient, which proved to be a difficult feat for many. Implementation of social media, forces the staff out of their comfort zone into uncharted territories. Without concise planning and execution, it will be met with adversity and ultimately result in a failed management initiative."

Comment 3:
"Microsoft Lync has been a game-changer for our organization. The level and ease of use and collaboration is excellent, and has brought our department closer internally and with our external partners and studios."

Comment 4:

" We basically use social media for brand building for Marketing purposes. I'm not aware of any plans to use social media to increase employee education/training/hiring or corporate communications."

Comment 5:
"We do not use Social Media as an internal communications tool - it is only used to communicate with association members and the industry. "

Comment 6:
"We've been present on facebook, twitter, linkedIn, and YouTube since 2007, but recently I have been lured to specifically focus on our social media effects presence."