



THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON EDUCATION

Social media is a series of websites and applications designed to allow people to share content in real time. Despite the prevalence of social media in everyday life, schools and universities have long hesitated to adopt social networks as an education tool. Until recently, many educational institutions prohibited access to social media during classroom time. Now, however, it is understood that for educational purposes any techniques, methods and tools can and should be used, including the methods and possibilities of social media. After gaining trust as a source of information, social media had come to be seen as a platform where educational organizations can interact with the audiences. It became obvious that the developments of social networking could be adapted for improving students' life and increasing their achievements. Using social media gives students the opportunity not only to receive useful information, but also to communicate with educational groups and systems that make education more relevant to the current and future needs of a modernizing world. It is apparent that when the right strategy is in place, social networking could make learning more effective. Recently, tools such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram have been used almost exclusively to relax and have fun, but now these social networks are increasingly being used as a learning tool, especially for today's high-tech students.

Social media can help centralize collective knowledge of the whole class in order to make learning and communicating processes more efficient for everyone. This group work saves time and effort. In this case, training networks cannot be limited only to students from one school or university. Communication barriers no longer exist. The whole world is becoming a global virtual class, which is using some form of social media to communicate, while professors who use social networking tend to be able to follow a group conversation or join chats.

What specific forms does the educational process take under the influence of social media? If a student missed a class or lecture, his/her classmates can record a lecture using Periscope, Skype or SnapChat. Social media enriches the learning experience by allowing students to pose questions to experts who are on Twitter, connect with authors of books used in the educational process and interact with deans or rectors of universities. For example, Google Apps for Education is a free set of tools for both teachers and students. As part of this freely available set of communication and collaboration tools, school principals have full access to management information, while teachers, students and even parents can effectively communicate with each other. Almost all Google Apps services can be effectively used in classrooms. For example, Google Docs and Google Sheets allow you to monitor any changes made to a document in real time, leave notes, and use the built-in chat, which makes them high-quality tools for group work on

texts. Projects created on the Google Apps base have a platform for comments and statistical services, which means that each student will receive feedback from a teacher and classmates. All these services can work separately or collaboratively with each other.

As early as in the first or second week of some university courses, regardless of their majors, students create their own blogs as part of an independent student assignment and then publish a paragraph or two on a given topic each week. They also comment on the work of their classmates and give feedback to each other. Using a special program, a teacher can, for instance, upload a photo of a natural landscape or human organs, create text boxes of certain parts or details of a photo, which a student then identifies and explains. A literature teacher can place photographic images that "explain" or interpret poems. A student will use his/her account to search for a particular poem, and then research results will be reflected as a weekly diary on the work performed in a teacher's account. On the other hand, all that is published on social networks is accessible to all, which can be a deterrent for students to freely express their opinions. However, it can also have a positive impact, as it forces students to work responsibly. They learn to think critically in order to calculate possible consequences of their words and actions.

Experts believe that social media can also serve as a way to improve online educational programs and courses. Online learning has existed in high education since the 1990s, but the widespread proliferation of social networks has begun to shape learning practices only recently. To get the most out of their online learning, students can use a variety of social media platforms. For example, since in many online programs students do not meet each other personally, social media provides an opportunity to create a virtual class environment. Therefore, many of them turn to social media to create an atmosphere of cooperation, for example, by using Facebook groups as a forum for academic discussions and personal communications.

Massive open online courses (MOOC) offer young people and older persons an opportunity to take courses at the world's best universities. Since such courses are aimed at unlimited participation and open access via the Internet, a MOOC audience can be very large, so you can learn along with thousands of other people. During the training process, MOOC students use a wide range of online media and interactive tools to interact with university professors and other students, including video lectures, articles, discussions, tasks and social networks. Some teachers require that students get to know each other, creating 15-second videos on Instagram. During the semester, students "meet" to discuss their group projects using Google Hangouts. Twitter is also popular because

it allows students to share resources and participate in discussions. Progress on a MOOC course is assessed through peer-reviewed written assignments and/or computerized testing, rather than by teachers. The inclusion of podcasts, screenshots, blogs and other multimedia functions in the current educational process maximizes learning benefits for each individual student.

It should be highlighted that there is insufficient progress in introducing new learning practices in education throughout Central Asia. Despite the fact that the countries of the region have achieved almost universal literacy, as well as high rates of primary and secondary education with full gender parity, the quality of education when it comes to the application of modern technologies and social media remains below the world standards. This issue was brought to the attention of the Central Asia Symposium on Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in Education held in Astana on June 27-29, 2016. During the symposium, the participants indicated that in order to facilitate open, blended learning opportunities and strengthen practice-oriented education there is a need to overcome a number of obstacles, the most critical of which are the limited access to high-speed Internet and undeveloped ICT infrastructure applied in the educational process. According to the Digital in 2017 Global Overview report from the We Are Social agency, Kazakhstan has the highest number of internet users in the region. For instance, in 2017, over 73% of the Kazakhstani accessed the Internet, 17% of whom were social media users. However, the similar indicators for other countries of the region are much lower. In 2017, 51% of the Uzbek population were Internet users, while only 3% of them used social media. The corresponding numbers for Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan are 34% and 10%, 19% and 1%, 15% and 0%, respectively.

In fact, today's students in Kazakhstan, as well as in other countries, are much ahead of their teachers in computer literacy. Obviously, the technology is not used in the classroom as much as necessary, because the overwhelming majority of teachers do not know how to use it themselves. Students who grow up in this digital world prefer to access reliable information on the Internet, where it is more accessible and more relevant. The Digital Kazakhstan 2020 state program emphasizes the need to introduce and develop media education, which is understood as a complex of legal and educational activities aimed at increasing the level of knowledge of children about the information environment, as well as improving their ability to critically analyze information from Internet resources. However, there is still much work to be done in order to adapt the entire educational system of the country to new educational technologies. In any case, Kazakhstan just takes first steps on its way to introduce new educational tools and mechanisms, which have the potential to transform completely the existing education system of the country.

Politics, Foreign Affairs and Security

- During their official visit to Baku, Georgian Minister of Internal Affairs Giorgi Gakharia and Minister of Finance Mamuka Bakhtadze met with President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev to discuss the perspectives of strengthening bilateral ties between the two countries in a number of fields, including cooperation between the law enforcement agencies and financial institutions. Moreover, during the talks, the parties stressed the importance of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway project in terms of regional and international economic cooperation.
- During the 5th Trilateral Ministerial Meeting of Azerbaijan, Iran and Turkey held in Baku, Elmar Mammadyarov, Mohammad Javad Zarif and Mevlut Cavusoglu reviewed global and regional issues of mutual interest focusing on boosting cooperation by implementing joint projects and programs in the fields of energy, transportation, banking, telecommunications, industry, agriculture, tourism, and environment.
- During his official visit to Kabul, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan Abdulaziz Kamilov met with President of Afghanistan Muhammad Ashraf Ghani to discuss practical aspects of bilateral relations, including perspective directions for further development of cooperation in the political, economic, investment, transportation, educational, cultural, humanitarian and other fields. In particular, the parties discussed the joint construction of the Surkhan-Puli-Khumri power transmission line and the Mazar-i-Sharif-Shibirgan-Mayman-Herat railway.
- President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev signed the constitutional law introducing amendments and additions to certain constitutional laws, which are aimed at further implementation of the constitutional reform. The law specifies certain provisions of the constitutional laws on the issues of the judicial system, placement of state symbols, the Constitutional Council and Astana International Financial Centre activities.
- During his official visit to Bishkek, Secretary-General of the Collective Security Treaty Organization Yuri Khatchaturov met with President of

Kyrgyzstan Sooronbai Jeenbekov to discuss the plans of the organization for 2018. The parties noted their commitment to the development and strengthening of wider ties within the organization.

Economy, Finance and Energy

- According to Minister of Industry and Trade of Russia Denis Manturov, in 2018 the country plans to sell 30 Sukhoi Superjet-100 planes, more than half of which will be sold on the Russian market. Sukhoi Superjet-100 is the Russian short-range passenger jet developed by Sukhoi Civil Aircraft with participation of foreign companies.
- According to Deputy Prime Minister of Belarus Vladimir Semashko, the country re-exported 6 million tons out of 24 million tons of oil supplied by Russia in 2017. It was noted that the country re-exported oil to Ukraine, Poland, and the Baltic states. The remaining 18 million tons were sent to the Belarusian oil refineries for processing.
- According to the Asian Development Bank, the guarantee agreements on the allocation of the \$524.5 million worth loan were signed between the bank and the Finance Ministry of Azerbaijan. The loan would be allocated to support the second stage of development of the Shah Deniz gas and condensate field within the Southern Gas Corridor project.
- President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev signed a law on additional measures to stimulate exports and ensure competitiveness of domestic goods on foreign markets. The decree provides for the cancellation of export customs duties and licensing for all types of goods, except for specific goods listed in the law. The companies exporting their own products are allowed to open trading houses and representative offices abroad for marketing research of foreign markets and advertising for the supply of goods on consignment terms.
- The Parliament of Uzbekistan approved the country's state budget for 2018. The 2018 state budget will have a surplus of 0.02% of GDP, or 59 billion soums (\$7.08 million). Revenues of the state budget in 2018 will amount to 62.23 trillion soums (\$7.47 billion), or 21.4% of GDP of Uzbekistan, while expenses are projected at the level of 62.17 trillion soums

(\$7.46 billion), or 21.4% of GDP. The GDP of Uzbekistan in 2018 is projected at 290.6 trillion soums (\$34.87 billion), which is 5.9% more than in 2017.

Society and Culture

- According to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Azerbaijan, a memorandum of understanding on establishing cooperation for detailed research of important archaeological findings made during the expansion of the South Caucasus Pipeline was signed between the Ministry and BP. The work to be carried out under the document includes two months of excavation by six archaeologists representing the Institute of Archeology and Ethnography of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences.
- According to the Mission Control Center of the Russian Federal Space Agency, the country's spacecraft Soyuz MS-07 carrying a crew of three astronauts successfully docked at the International Space Station. Their mission in orbit is expected to last for about four months.
- According to the Institute of Volcanology and Seismology of the Far Eastern Department of the Russian Academy of Sciences, the Klyuchevskoy volcano in the Kamchatka Region spewed up ash as high as 7 kilometers above the sea level. It is noted that the ash spread 68 kilometers in an eastward direction. Klyuchevskoy is Eurasia's highest active volcano, reaching 4,750 meters in height, and one of the most active on the peninsula.
- According to President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev, 2018 is declared as the Year of Support of Active Entrepreneurship, Innovative Ideas and Technologies. This year was declared in Uzbekistan as the Year of Dialogue with People and Human Interests.
- According to the Uzbek Foreign Ministry, an agreement on organized recruitment and attraction of citizens of the country for temporary work on the territory of Russia entered into force. It was noted that the agreement was prepared and signed to streamline and further improve the legal regulation of the movement of labor, as well as ensure the protection of the rights and legitimate interests of migrant workers who are employed on a temporary basis in Russia.