

## The Impact of Social Media on University Learning

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### Abstract

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**Purpose:** The main purpose of the paper is to investigate the usage of social media sites by faculties of GGS IP University. **Design:** A structured questionnaire was designed and personally distributed to 168 respondents. **Findings:** It is observed that faculties are using social media sites for both personal and professional purposes. It is also found that most of the respondents used social media sites for “lurking” while few used such sites for promoting one’s research. **Conclusion:** Collaborative and peer-to-peer learning were common benefits from SMSs (Social Media Sites) while some expressed concern regarding lack of integrity of online submissions and privacy. In spite of those concerns, however, faculties believe that social media sites offer value in teaching.

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**Keywords:** Social media, Social networking sites (SNSs), University learning, Higher education, GGS IP University.

### 1. Introduction

There is a new medium for communication and human interaction named as social media sites. It is spread across the globe and is less than ten years old. Social media offer highly enlightening platforms through which individuals communicate, share and discuss their ideas with others, contribute and modify the content, search their friends and make new friends. It can be used as hobby or a serious and effective learning and connecting tool.

In the early 2000s, World Wide Web has moved from a static and passive viewing of web pages to more interactive and user-contributed content within what were online.

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This was named Web2.0 which refers a set of technologies e.g. Blog, Tagging, Wiki, RSS (Really Simple Syndication), and AJAX (Asynchronous Java Script) etc. Further development, web includes social networking sites which besides text-based communication and content communities, enable sharing of image, audio, videos and other forms of media. On the highest level are virtual game and social world (e.g., World of Warcraft, Second Life), which try to replicate all dimensions of face-to-face interactions in a virtual environment (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Social media is a group of Internet based applications that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content. Being multimedia in nature, it allows knowledge to be represented in the form of text (blogs), presentation (SlideShare), stories (Scratch), cartoons (ToonDoo), video (YouTube) and more. Social media has significantly speeded up in learning and education. High bandwidth and pervasiveness of devices that can connect in the Internet and display content in multiple formats has led to the abundance of social media which has in turn facilitated easy creation and remarkable sharing of enriched and enhanced learning experiences.

Informal learning like cultivating a hobby, new media offers a plethora of learning resource in multiple formats to suit different types of learners. Enthusiasts share their knowledge, best practices and tips on YouTube, Slide share and Twitter. Experts create learning resources in their area of expertise and make them available on websites like Pinterest, ScoopIt, and Learnist. Teachers are sharing free tutorials on Udemy and WizIQ. Most of these savants are even willing to engage in a dialogue on a discussion forum, e.g. Facebook, or Google group to help in solving specific issues their followers raise. Some are even keen to form informal online learning communities.

Collaborative learning activities can be taken to a different orbit on social media. Today, an institute or a university can easily find institutions across geographies and initiate dialogue to other institutions for collaborative learning. On social media the overhead cost of online collaboration is so low that even individual teachers or students themselves can take initiative and explore co-creation and collaborative learning. The bigger point here is that social media based education has the possible scalability and low cost structure to address the 'education for all' challenge that high population countries like India face.

### 1.1. GGS IP University (Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University)

Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, informally known as Indraprastha University or simply IP, is located in Delhi, India. It is a teaching and affiliating university which was established in 1998 by the Govt. of NCT of Delhi. The university runs almost 50 courses of study e.g. engineering, technology, business management, medicine, pharmacy, nursing, education, and law. As on date it has 15 Schools of Studies and centres with one maintained institute, namely, Indira Gandhi Institute of Technology (IGIT) wherein as many as 19 Undergraduate, 33 Postgraduate academic programmes and research programmes (PhD) are being conducted for more than 5000 students. There are 120 colleges in Delhi-NCR affiliated to it. In these affiliated institutions, 80 academic programmes are being conducted with a total strength of around 63,000 students.

Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University has been graded 'A' by NAAC (National Assessment and Accreditation Council). It has received the Platinum Technology Award for quality and excellence in the field of education presented by Otherways Management and Consulting (OMAC). Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University is a member of the Association of Commonwealth Universities, Association of Indian Universities, Medical Council of India and Distance Education Council (GGS IP University, 2014).

## 2. Review of Literature

Social media has become noteworthy for connecting and sharing of knowledge among students, researchers, teachers and even individuals. With the emergence of social media, it is get in touch with everyone and evolving learning and teaching. Participants' reasons and motivations for online presence varied as a function of gender and age (Koles and Nagy, 2012). Paia and Arnottb (2012) found that belonging, hedonism, self-esteem, and reciprocity are the four main values users attain through SNS adoption. Furthermore, the chains associated with SNS adoption can be represented in a hierarchical value map.

Social networking sites (SNSs) provide users with entertainment and greater social involvement. People who use these sites express positive attitudes about them.

Most of the individuals are used social media sites for 'meeting new friends,' 'maintaining relationships,' 'searching for friends,' 'searching for information,' and 'understanding and learning' (Shu and Chuang, 2011). The majority of researchers used Social media sites (SMSs) for "lurking" while few used such sites for promoting one's research. They have a positive attitude towards academic use of social media. Most of the respondents preferred the SNS Facebook and ResearchGate for academic purposes. Collaborative and peer-to-peer learning were common benefits from Social media (Madhusudhan, 2012).

Although there are some differences in terms of students' opinions on academic applications of SNSs, these differences are largely due to the fact that the use of these sites in academic contexts is not well-defined (Jahan and Ahmed, 2012). Till now, Social networking can serve as direct and indirect supports for learning, such as providing an emotional outlet for school-related stress, validation of creative work, peer-alumni support for school-life transitions, and help with school-related tasks. It can stimulate social and civic benefits, online and offline, which has implications for education (Greenhow, 2011). In higher education, where it is generally acknowledged that there is a need to adequately capture, store, share and disseminate knowledge, as this can lead to greater innovation, creativity and productivity, participants were suspicious of the nature of the technology and the fact that it could intertwine their professional and social life (Garcia, Annan singh and Elbeltagi, 2011).

There are also studies dealing with a number of concerns professionals in higher education grapple with when considering using, or even embracing social media (Reuben, 2008). These concerns are regarding privacy, cyber-bullying, time consuming, information overload and unwanted attention from others. Privacy and lack of security are the main concerns of social networking sites, a majority of respondents used their real names and photos in their profiles (Khan, et al., 2011). Anyone can misuse this type of personal information. Especially, female respondents were more concerned about privacy concerns and cyber-bullying than males (Madhusudhan, 2012). However, they did not directly affect users' acceptance of SNSs. Instead, privacy concerns did moderate the effects of perceived usefulness, and perceived ease of use, on users' intention to continue to use SNWs (Tan, et al. (2012).

The students, researchers and faculties use SNS to frequently engage with their networks of "friends," often updating or adding to their SNS pages.

The respondents are becoming addicted to the virtual world. SNS membership affects their academic performance and causes them to stay up late, lose sleep and unable to concentrate on their studies (Madhusudhan, 2012). Paul et al. (2012) found a statistically significant negative relationship between time spent by students on OSN and their academic performance. The time spent on OSN was found to be heavily influenced by the attention span of the students. Kirschner and Karpinski (2010) also found negative impacts of SNSs on academic performance as people become easily addicted to the SNSs.

### Objectives

The main objective of the study is to investigate the impact of social media on university learning. The some related objectives of the study are:

- i). To identify the usage of Social media by faculties of the GGS IP University;
- ii). To determine access tools, techniques and services of social media sites preferred by faculty members ;
- iii). To study the purposes and academic activities performed by faculties using social media;
- iv). To find out benefits of using Social media in academic and research work; and
- v). To know barriers and difficulties faced by faculties in using Social media.

### Research Methodology

A survey was conducted in March 2014. The sample for this study contains faculty members (including visiting faculties) from all departments of GGS IP University (Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University). In this study, a questionnaire was used as a tool for data collection. A closed ended questionnaire was mailed to 168 faculties of GGS IP University. Out of total sample, 145 participants successfully answered with response rate of 86.31%. This study attempts to investigate the awareness of social media sites among faculties, purposes of using them and barriers faced by them. The data is analyzed through graphs and tables.

## Data analysis and Interpretation

## Faculty awareness of social media

The first aspect examined in paper is the level of faculty members' awareness of a number of popular social media sites by number of teaching experience in table 1. Awareness levels among faculty are almost common. There are very slight differences between levels of awareness of different faculties' groups. Table 1 also presents the average awareness about some well-liked social media sites. It reports that all the faculty members are well aware with Facebook and YouTube. Over 90% faculties are aware of sites such as LinkedIn, Twitter, Wikis and blogs. The awareness level drops somewhat for other sites, with over 80% saying that they know of Google+ and Flickr. Once you get past the most common of the social media sites, however, the level of awareness drops considerably. More than 70% of faculty are aware of Myspace, while 49 % report they are aware of presentation sharing site SlideShare and only 12% are aware of Delicious.

**Table 1: Faculty Awareness of Social Media Sites by Number of Years Teaching**

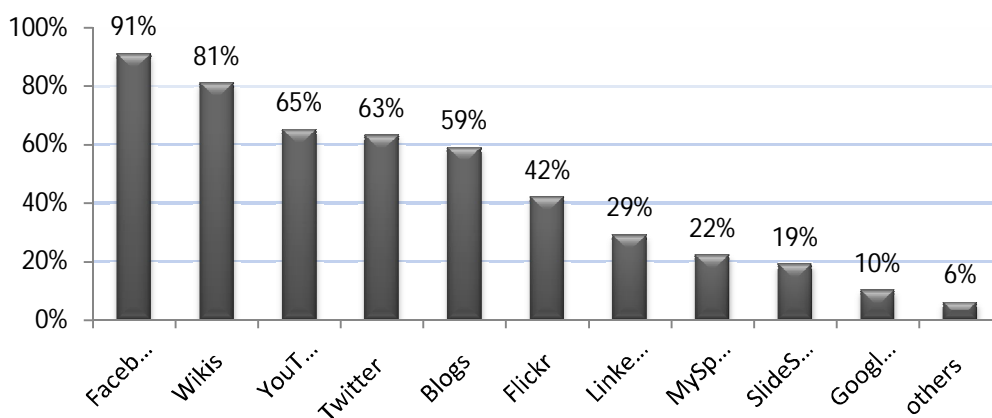
<b>Teaching Experience</b>	<b>Less than 5 years</b>	<b>5 to 10 years</b>	<b>11 to 20 years</b>	<b>20+ years</b>	<b>Average Percentage</b>
<b>Social Media Site</b>					
Blogs	95%	97%	98%	96%	97%
Delicious	16%	14%	11%	8%	12%
Facebook	100%	100%	99%	99%	100%
Flickr	88%	90%	86%	83%	87%
Google+	86%	86%	85%	83%	85%
LinkedIn	95%	92%	94%	92%	93%
Myspace	71%	74%	74%	73%	73%
SlideShare	50%	53%	47%	44%	49%
Twitter	97%	99%	99%	96%	98%
Wikis	95%	98%	95%	96%	96%
YouTube	100%	100%	100%	98%	100%

Note: the percentage is in rounding off. (n= 145)

### Usage of Social Media by Faculties

Fig. 1 depicts the usage of SMSs among faculties as provided in the questionnaire. The majority of faculties used Facebook (91%) and wikis (81%) as a connecting and access tool of SMSs followed by YouTube (65%), Twitter (63%), blogs (59%), Flickr (42%), LinkedIn (29%), MySpace (22%), SlideShare (19%) and Google+ (10%). Very few (6%) of faculties said they used other Social media tools, such as: Delicious, Hi5, Skype and Ning.

**Figure 1: Usage of Social Media by Faculties**

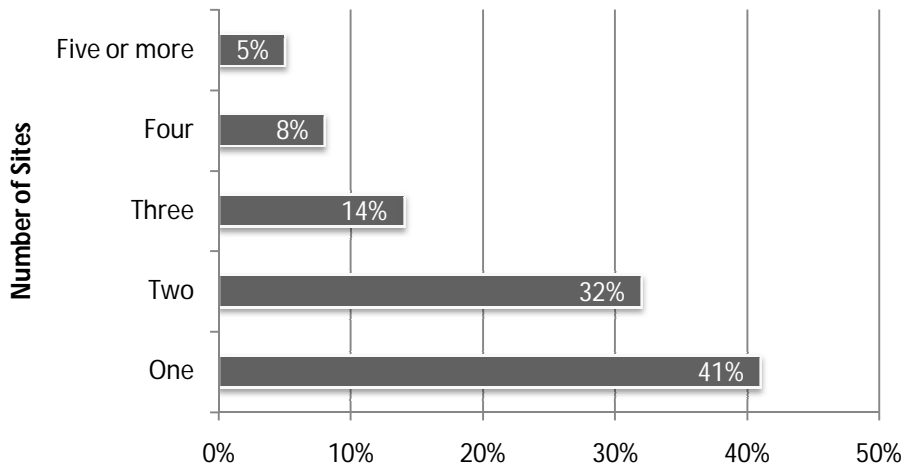


Note: the percentage is in rounding off. (n= 145)

### Number of Social Media Sites Visited Regularly by Faculties

The patterns of social media sites, which are used by faculties regularly, illustrated in figure 2. Fig. 2 shows that 41 percent faculty members used single SM site, 32 percent visited two sites, and 14 percent used three sites. A few faculties (8%) used four SM sites, while five or more than five SM sites is used by only 5 percent of respondents for personal and academic purposes.

**Figure 2: Number of SM Sites Visited Regularly for Personal and Academic Purposes**



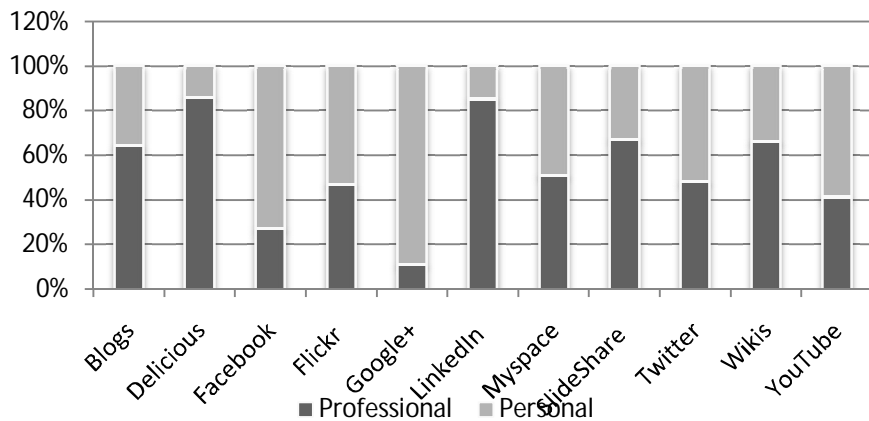
Note: the percentage is in rounding off. (n= 145)

#### Comparison of Faculty Personal and Professional Use of Social Media by Site

Respondents are asked to provide information regarding usage of Social media sites for personal and professional purpose. Figure 3 illustrates that the top two sites used for personal purpose are Google+ and Facebook while LinkedIn and Delicious are top two for professional use. Blogs, SlideShare, and wikis are also used for professional purpose. The pattern of use for the other social media sites, however, is comparable for personal and professional purposes.



**Figure 3: Comparison of Faculty Personal and Professional Use of Social Media by Site**

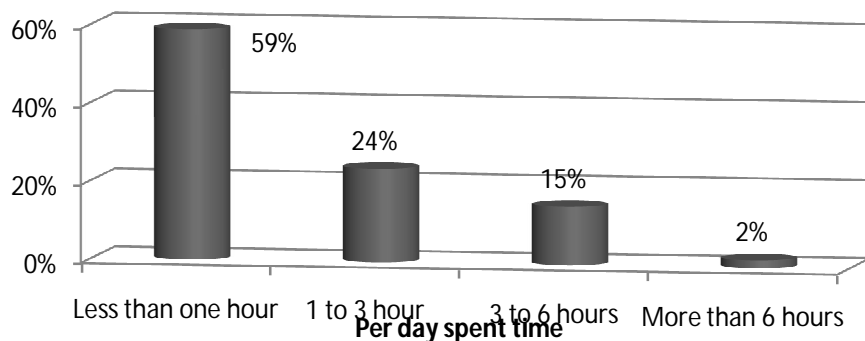


Note: the percentage is in rounding off. (n= 145)

**Time Spent on Social Media**

Time spent on SMSs meant how long they were logged on the site. Fig. 4 displays the time spent by faculties on SMSs. It is observed that 59% of faculties spent less than one hour on SMS, 24% use SMS for 1-3 hrs, 15% uses 3-6 hrs and 2% uses for more than 6 hrs. The respondents said that they did not continuously use of SMSs but are live on SMSs during some of this time.

**Figure 4: Time Spent on Social Media**

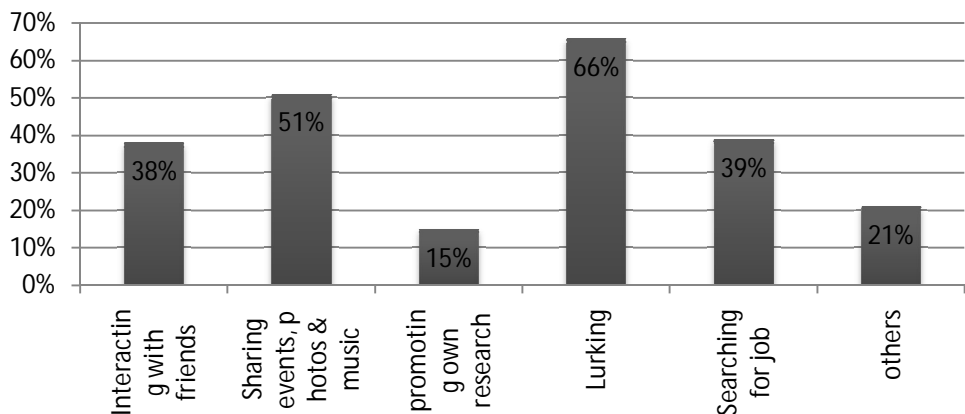


Note: the percentage is in rounding off. (n= 145)

## Purpose of Using Social Media

Fig. 5 depicts the purpose for which faculties visit SMSs. It is found that most (66%) of respondents uses SMSs for lurking i.e. to see other's information without posting anything followed by Sharing events, photos & music (51%), Searching for job (39%), Interacting with friends (38%) and promoting own research (15%). It is also observed that respondents (21%) uses SMSs for other purposes such as searching study material, creating online bio-data, participating in special interest groups, and selecting research topics.

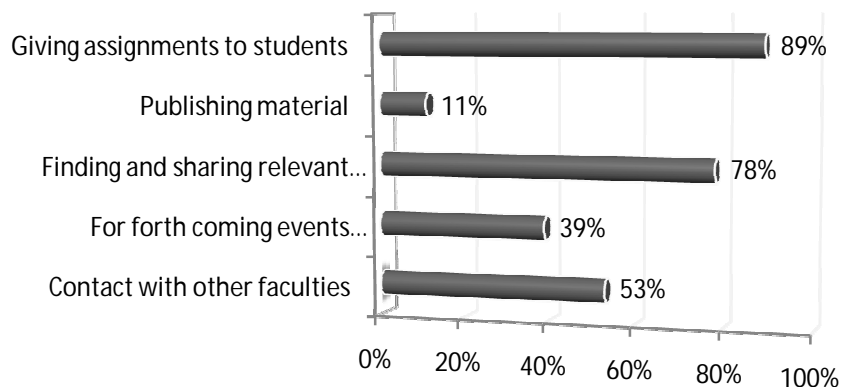
**Figure 5: Purpose of Using SMSs**



Note: the percentage is in rounding off. (n= 145)

## Academic Purpose of Using Social Media Sites

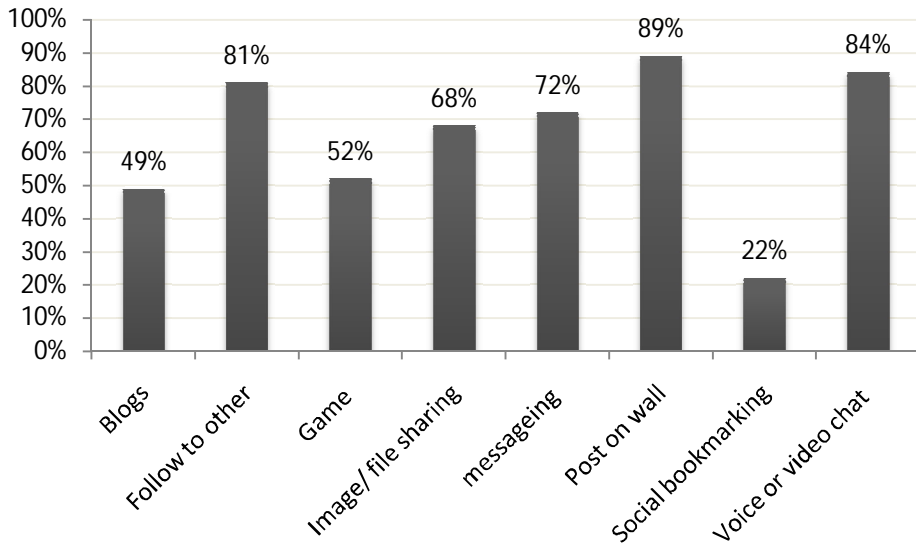
Fig. 6 shows the response of faculties regarding academic purpose for which SMSs are accessed. The results reveals that 89% faculties uses SMSs for giving assignments to students, followed by finding and sharing relevant material (78%), building contact with other faculties (53%), for searching fourth coming events (39%) and publishing material (11%).

**Figure 6: Academic Purpose of Using SMSs**

Note: the percentage is in rounding off. (n= 145)

### **Preference Regarding Different Types of Services on Social Media Sites**

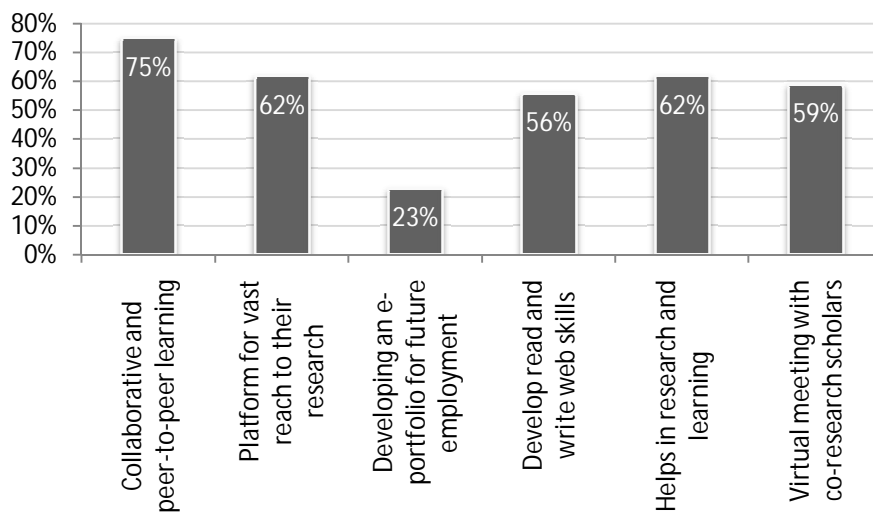
Social media sites offer different types of social networking services. Some social media sites provide a combination of two or more services and some other provide one specific service. Fig. 7 presents that more than 80 percent faculties prefer three services 'Post on wall (89%), Voice or video chat (84%), and follow to other (81%) followed by messaging (72%) and image or file sharing (68%). Social bookmarking with (22%) is the least preferred service by faculties.

**Figure 7: Preference of Social Media Services by Faculties**

Note: the percentage is in rounding off. (n= 145)

#### Benefits of Using Social Media Sites

Fig.8 explains that collaborative and peer-to-peer learning is a universal benefit for faculty members (75%) followed by Platform for vast reach to their research (62%) and research and learning (62%), virtual meeting with fellow scholars (59%), and developing reading and writing for the web skills (56%). A few (23%) of faculties say that they are developing an e-portfolio for future employment using SMSs.

**Figure 8: Benefits of Using SMSs**

Note: the percentage is in rounding off. (n= 145)

#### Barriers of Using Social Media at Work Place

Table 2 presents possible barriers to the use of social media, the most essential concerns is privacy (80%) followed by “lack of integrity of online submissions” (78%) is an “important” or “very important” barrier. Both ‘Unwanted attention from others’ and ‘Takes too much faculty time’ are also main barriers faced by more than 60% respondents. Lack of training is considered as barrier by 47% faculties and Lack of institutional support is the least-cited barrier, with 41% of faculty chosen it as an “important” or “very important” barrier.

**Table 2: Barriers of Using Social Media at Work Place**

<b>Barriers</b>	<b>Somewhat Important</b>	<b>Important</b>	<b>Very Important</b>
Lack of integrity of online submissions	22%	33%	45%
Privacy concerns	20%	28%	52%
Takes too much faculty time	39%	34%	27%
Unwanted attention from others	35%	46%	19%
Lack of faculty training	53%	30%	17%
Lack of support at my institution	59%	26%	15%

Note: the percentage is in rounding off. (n= 145)

## **Conclusion**

This study concludes that faculty members of GGS IP University are well aware and familiar with social media sites and their services. Social media sites facilitate communication, formal and informal learning. There are a number of social media sites with different or similar purposes and facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Blogs, LinkedIn and wikis are well known social media sites among respondents.

Facebook is the most used social media site by the faculties. Nearly 60 percent Faculty members have membership of two or more SMSs, which are offering diverse services (such as video, messaging, power point presentation etc.). It is found that most (66%) of respondents uses SMSs for lurking i.e. to see other's information without posting anything. Other than it, faculties are using SMSs for academic activities such as to give assignments to students, share relevant material, building contact, fourth coming events and to publish their research output.

The common worries of faculties in using social media sites are unwanted attention from others, lack of institutional support and privacy. Privacy is the most essential concern because any one can misuse the personal information. Many faculty members spent more time on SMSs (social media sites) which cause wastage of time.

SMSs have benefits over these concerns by providing a platform for collaborative and peer-to-peer learning.

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