



RU connected

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF INTEGRATING A SOCIAL NETWORKING PLATFORM AND A LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

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Date: 29th October, 2012



Learning

Student

Teacher

Course

E-Portfolio

Journal/Blog

Podcasting

Friendship
Request

Social
Networking

Mahara

Moodle

PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

- Introduction
- The Problem and Research Idea
- Related Work
- Project Design
- Project Implementation
- Results and Discussion
- Study Limitations and Conclusions
- Questions

INTRODUCTION

■ Research Objective

- Investigate the Educational Value of Integrating a Social Network Platform and a Learning Management System.
 - Peer Learning
 - Student-to-Student relationship (Academic and Non Academic)
 - Access to information (Contribution of content by students)

THE PROBLEM AND RESEARCH IDEA

LMSs

- Mainly support formal learning
- Main focus the distribution of course material
- Content creation is limited to staff, system administrators
- Limited student-to-student interactions in the system

SNSs

- Support informal learning
- User interactions and relationship management
- Promote creation of content by users

Research Idea: Integrating a SNS and a LMS will support both informal and Informal Learning

RELATED WORK

- Investigation of the students' perceptions of academic use of social networking (Jahan, I. and Zabed Ahmed, S. August 2012)
- Investigated the students' use of Facebook at the University of Cape Town (UCT), as well as lecturers' engagement with students on the social network (Bosch, T.E. 2009)
- Investigated the social impacts and implications of university students' online social networking using Facebook (Yu *et al.*, 2010)
- Integration of Learning Management Systems with Social Network platforms (Rozac *et al.*, January 2012)

RELATED WORK

- What is common in all these studies (except that by Rozac *et al.*)
 - Used common SNS (Facebook) (including that by Rozac *et al.*) (Adv)
 - Received positive responses
 - They used a questionnaire only. They did not use a social network system in the courses the respondents were taking.
- Using SNS for Learning will provide a different angle of results

PROJECT DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

Moodle – test RUconnected

RUconnected
RHODES UNIVERSITY
Where leaders learn

Main Menu
The education value of a Social Networking Platform integrated with a Learning Management System

Site Administration
Notifications
Users
Courses
Grades
Location
Language
Modules
Security
Appearance
Front Page
Server
Networking
Reports
Miscellaneous

Course categories
Turn editing on

Miscellaneous
CS1L2

Search courses:

Calendar
October 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Network Servers
Mahara social network

Online Users
(last 5 minutes)
System Administrator

Tags
baking and laughing.
Everything! I love tennis
Laughing!!!! reading
TennisBakingshoppingWatching
moviespartying

Messages
No messages waiting
Messages...

Rhodes University | RU Library | Student Zone
You are logged in as System Administrator (Logout)

Mahara

mahara
Search users

Chiku | Settings | 0 | Logout

Dashboard | Content | Portfolio | Groups

Welcome
RUconnected social network is a fully featured electronic portfolio system with social networking features to create online learning communities.

Chiku
You have logged in from RUconnected.

Create and collect
Develop your portfolio
Update your profile | Upload your files
Create your résumé | Publish a journal

Organise
Showcase your portfolio
Organise your portfolio into pages. Create different pages for different audiences - you choose the elements to include.

Share and network
Find friends and join groups
Find friends | Join groups
Control your privacy | Discuss topics

Latest pages
thando | Thandokuhle Mkhize T | Updated 26 September 2012
thando again | Thandokuhle Mkhize T | Updated 26 September 2012
CompSci Practicals | Chiku | Updated 4 September 2012
practicals | Chikumbutso Gremu | Updated 27 August 2012

Recent activity
New friend request
New friend request
New friend request

Topics I'm following
No messages

My pages
CompSci Practicals
This page contains my Comp Sci Practicals

Online users (Last 10 minutes)
Chiku
Admin User
Show all online users

PROJECT DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

- System was implemented on a virtual machine and was tested with the CS1L2 students
- Students used test Ruconnected to access course materials
- Used Mahara for:
 - Organising and submitting their work to tutors
 - Collaboration on the practical assignments
 - Social Networking (Friendship Management)
- Developed questionnaire and requested the students to give their feedback on the use of the integrated system

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

- **Use of Ruconnected**
 - **Mainly used as to access course materials**
 - **Students are not naturally using the features in Ruconnected designed for peer learning and interaction (e.g. Forums, Messaging)**
 - **Staff are not engaging students in peer assessment or activities which require them to interact using Ruconnected (Workshop, Forums)**

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

■ Use of Mahara

- Students did not use the social network features in Mahara in the same way they used other SNSs
- The perception of the students is that social networking is for informal interactions rather than for academic use
- The students had problems using Mahara

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

IN GENERAL: The use of Social Network in the course did not make much impact on the students' learning.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

- **28 August 2012**

“This is my work for the 2nd excel prac. By the way i think this social networking thing is going to far!!! Why we cant hand in our work on through the normal RUconnected page i don't know!!”

- **26 September 2012**

“the wae i understand mahara nw ts a pitty we wnt use t again”

STUDY LIMITATIONS AND CONCLUSION

- No training was given to the students and tutors which led a low learning pace
- The first weeks of the test the systems was only accessible on campus
- ***There is a potential for social networking to make an impact if used for academic purposes if***
 - ***the challenges mentioned above and other challenges are addressed;***
 - ***social networking features are included as part of a LMS ;and***
 - ***students are encouraged and guided to their use.***

CONCLUSION AND FURTHER WORK



Create an application that works as a Facebook plugin and offers features tailored for education use but leverages o the strong popularity of Facebook.

CONCLUSION AND FURTHER WORK



“how the students’ use of other tools for both formal and informal learning can affect their adoption of (similar) tools introduced to support learning.”

QUESTIONS

