

A Study of Commercial Extended Social Media Events Applications

Sarah Jibran and Salih Ismail

Abstract—Social media is a pervasive part of our daily life. The debate about the pros and cons of social media is never ending. This project tries to focus on the positive impact of events in social media. We look upon events as a tangent that facilitates the connection between the digital world and the real world. We review the common advantages and disadvantages of social media. We then try to briefly understand the concept of events from various disciplines like philosophy, psychology etc. After which, we perform a comparative study of the features of common commercial extended social media applications like Bizzabo, CEvent and Eventbrite. This provides a clear understanding of how events in social media websites have extended into real world.

Index Terms—Social media events, extended applications, comparison.

I. INTRODUCTION

Social media has been a part of our life and has become pervasive. However, due to the inefficiencies of the current social media applications and the cumbersome techniques of usage, we are not using it to its full potential. The idea of being connected to each other through social media has been the main objective of almost all social media tycoons. The idea of connection can be seen differently and can have various perspectives. Being connected can be through applications or by using the application to organize physical meetings. This can be seen as different ways of being connected. There are various applications that specialize in both these aspects of ‘being connected’.

The biggest name synonym to social media is Facebook. They have gone in-depth to provide ‘being connected’ with your friends and family at great length. Facebook event has been able to help users with searching local events and to express interest of attending the event or not.

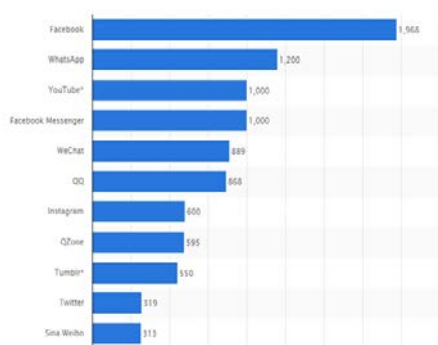


Fig. 1. Usage of social media.

Computer mediated communication (CMC) is one of the most important parts of maintaining any relationship. In Fig. 1, Facebook is the most visited website in the world with an estimated number of 1.96 billion active users as of April 2017 [1].

Currently, Facebook is one of the largest social media site, and more than 50% of the users in Facebook participate in events and groups made for events [2]. This in turn leads us to thinking about the kind of impact Facebook event has on users. Users all over the world can easily have access to this information. Events happening around us can easily be knowledge of everyone and anyone using Facebook.

II. STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

Section III gives a background study in the area of social media, providing its advantages and disadvantages. Section IV throws light on events as a concept from a philosophical and psychological point of view. In Section V, we summarize the various commercial extended social media applications for events management. Then we provide a brief analysis of the related works done in this area. We will conclude this research in Section VII.

III. BACKGROUND STUDY

A. Advantages of Social Media

Communication is the key to human interactive nature. But it is currently drifting apart from every person's human sense, which is creating distances between people instead of connecting them [3].

People use social media to eradicate their loneliness in their personal lives. This is currently divided between many important social media apps and websites, which allow users to interact with anyone over just a click of a button. Apart from this benefit, we have many other benefits of social media [4]. Websites like Facebook or Instagram helps in allowing users from all over the world to connect with other users. A user sitting in one corner of the world can easily have access to his friends/ family/ colleagues' etc. social life and happenings in any other corner of the world. LinkedIn as a website helps in professionals to build connections inside the jobs and career networks [5]. It allows users to get in touch with other users who are a part of any organization or a business, which in turn can help them land up a job and build a career.

Then we have websites like Twitter, which helps in getting updates and being up to date on daily news and happenings. It can also be an easy platform for users to portray their thoughts on any relevant news, politics, TV

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series, passion, or anything as a matter of fact. If it wouldn't have had been for Twitter, users wouldn't know about the thoughts which goes inside the United States President's head, Donald Trump. Or neither would they be a huge part of the cult which revolves around the Game of Thrones TV series and the hype around it. These are just few of the examples which a social media platform has the power to hold or portray. Users can build their psychological behavior, and overtime even get affected by nature just by the help of social media. Reading about the happenings around the world and the opinions of other people, impacts a major change in human behavior and in turn, can also help in aiming towards peace and kindness amongst humans.

Another major factor of social media is that it helps in physical interaction amongst humans. Many a times, we are unaware of our surroundings and the events taking place in our vicinity. Social media helps in making people aware of all sorts of events and in turn helps them socialize and meet other people.

B. Disadvantages of Social Media

There have been sources which claims that usage of too much social media can lead to depression or a lower quality of life [6]. Stress levels increases and this is indirectly connected to a person's health in the long time run. Once a person starts feeling depressed or lonely, they start to look out for ways to feel wanted and ignore such negative feelings building up inside them. This in turn leads to more increase of usage of social media [7]. They try to look out for some attention, feelings of being wanted, etc. from these social media websites. This becomes a vicious never-ending cycle, and the person keeps getting deeply involved into this.

There are also cases where people get so obsessed over social media, that they lose track of reality. The relationships start deteriorating slowly, since most of the attention and time is given to social media instead of spending quality time with friends and family. Even if a person is attending a family event or a gathering, he/she ends up spending most time looking over the phone instead of making real conversations. It is hence important for a balance between people and the usage of social media in their lives (Fig. 2).

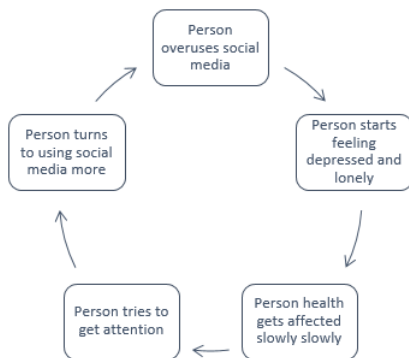


Fig. 2. Life-cycle of social media over-usage.

IV. EVENTS AND ITS PERSPECTIVES

It is vital to understand what an event is in terms of social media platforms. The definition of event has varied from

various disciplines such as Philosophy. For instance, in Philosophy there are different types of events. The author goes in great length to explain the different types of events such as:

- Activities, Accomplishments, Achievements, and States
- Static and Dynamic Events
- Actions and Bodily Movements
- Mental and Physical Events
- Negative Events [8]

Similar to philosophy, Psychology [9] has its own version of events. The definition of events tends to have various perspective based on the area of interest. However, in social media, the idea of events is "physical social gathering of people in a particular geographical area for a specific interest". There are few properties that are common among every social media in the aspect of events. These are:

- Title – Name of the event
- Description – A small summary of the events details.
- Location – A geographical area. Generally, a city or a place.
- Venue – The exact spot at which the event occurs.
- Time – Time of the event. Generally, this is extended to a duration if the event is held for longer than a day [10].

These basic properties are common to all events aggregation platforms like Facebook events, EventBrite, Last.fm events.

V. EXTENDED SOCIAL MEDIA EVENTS APPLICATIONS

Definitely, the events application provided by Facebook is widely used and accepted to organize events and connect with friends in the real world. However, there are specific alternate applications that are custom made for this purpose. Some of them are commercial applications utilized by various organizations to manage their events. We look at some examples below to understand how social media extended applications have been performing:

A. Bizzabo

The main target of Bizzabo is to help organizations manage events. Bizzabo tries to provide a holistic platform to perform every activities related to event management of an organization [11].

TABLE I: SUMMARY OF BIZZABO [11]

Features	API Integrations	Supported Languages
Attendee List Management with Check Ins	MailChimp	English
Badge Management Meetings	Slack	
Trade Shows	Facebook	
Ticketing	Twitter	
Vendor Management	LinkedIn	
Conventions, Conference and Seminars		
Facebook promotion		
Sales Insights		
Dashboards		
Poling and Online Surveys		

Event Website		
Analytics and Reporting		
Real Time Digital		
Client Management		
Customizable Forms		
Social Media Sharing		
Payment Processing		
Credit card Processing		
Agenda for Event		
Personalized email Marketing		
Sponsorship Management		

Bizzabo have integration with social media websites like Facebook, Twitter, Slack and LinkedIn. Table I has a complete summary of the Bizzabo application.

B. Eventbrite

Eventbrite is the most famous event management application. It is a standalone event management system that can manage events without any interaction to the social media websites. However, they provide this functionality as an additional feature [12].

TABLE II: SUMMARY OF EVENTBRITE [12]

Features	API Integrations	Supported Languages
Event registration and ticketing	Salesforce	English
Event dashboard	Zoho	German
Mobile event app	Microsoft Dynamics	Spanish
Online sales Custom badges	MailChimp	French
Bar-code scanning	Google Apps	Italian
Reporting and analytics	Facebook	Dutch
Social marketing and Facebook promotion	Twitter	Portuguese
Event promotion and automated promotion	Dropbox	
Easy refunds		
Online payments		
Fundraising and crowd funding		
Dashboards		
Custom venue maps		
Reserved seating		
Speaker profiles		
Event design listing		
Private events		
Automated reminders		
Recurring events		
Group registration		
Surveys and audience polls		

Table II shows a list of features that is provided by Eventbrite and the available integrations provided by its API.

C. Cvent

Cvent is a cloud based event management software that supports various platforms like Windows, Android, iOS etc.

The application has evolved throughout the years adding more and more features every year [13].

TABLE III : SUMMARY OF CVENT [13]

Features	API Integrations	Supported Languages
Event registration	Salesforce	English
PCI Level 1 compliant	Concur	
Mobile payments	Webex	
Workflow management	Eloqua	
Membership management	Marketo	
Housing and travel management		
Event calendars		
Contact management		
Email marketing		
Custom event sites		
Event marketing		
SocialWall		
Onsite-solutions		
Mobile-friendly registrations		
Event reporting		
On-site functionality		
Budget management		
Payment processing		

Table III shows a list of features that is provided by Cvent. Even though Cvent is not an extension of integrations of events on social media, it might be a good idea to compare the features of core event management software with others and hence included in this list.

VI. RELATED WORKS

Ramadani *et al.* [14] discussed extended social media applications specifically for management of events. The authors focused on applications created by individuals rather than commercial applications. They briefly compared various applications like Bizzabo, Super Planner, Explara, and Schedule Planner. They further discussed architecture for a prototype of their own.

Nguyen *et al.* [15] proposed a recommendation system for suggesting relevant Facebook events based on probabilistic classification and re-ranking. They performed a real-time test in the city of Ho Chi Minh city in China. Their proposed framework compared other suggestive models for events by other researchers. However, they haven't looked in to the suggestive features available in the commercial applications for events' planning using social media.

The effect of our research tangent of extended social media event applications was studied by Esfandyari *et al.* [16] Their research tried to answer to very important questions which are the very back bone of the applications that we compared in our paper:

- How participating to an event advertised in Facebook can change the structure of the online social network?
- How do friendships among attending people increase during the event?

They scraped data using the Facebook graph API and

performed temporal analyses on the data to get to their result. The result revealed 80% of users who create new friends attending an event, require their first level friends to be present. This clearly shows the importance of such applications.

VII. CONCLUSION

In this research, we have analyzed the advantages and disadvantages of social media. This allowed us to highlight the thin line between events which acts as an extension of social media into the real world. We summarized the most important commercial applications that act as an extension to social media applications for managing events. The summary clearly shows a pattern of ease of usage for their users.

The various improvements that these commercial applications come up every year are a clear depiction of the importance of social media in terms of events.

For future work, a methodological study can be done about the applications created for different platforms for social media extended applications. This can be useful to create a taxonomy for better understanding the tangent of social media application being extended. This would further allow social media giants to understand the missing features in their current inclusion and make informed choices.

A formal survey can be conducted of the commercial applications that are being discussed in this paper, focusing on the effectiveness of user engagement in events due to specific applications.

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