SOCIAL MEDIA IN ISLAM

Rating: 4.3

Description: The lesson sheds light on the use of social media in the modern age and some guidelines for Muslims.

Category: Lessons › Social Interaction › The Muslim community

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Objectives

·To get a general overview of the pros and cons of social media.

·To learn a few practical tips to take advantage of social media.

·To learn five areas of caution when using social media.

Arabic Terms

·*Imam* - someone who leads the prayer.

·*Umrah* - A pilgrimage to the Holy House of Allah in the city of Mecca, Saudi Arabia. Often referred to as the *lesser pilgrimage*. It can be performed at any time of the year.

Introduction

74% of American adults online use social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Pinterest, as of Jan. 2014, up from 26% in 2008.[1] On social media sites like these users may develop their profiles, communicate with others, share ideas and thoughts, music, photos, videos and more.

The impact of social media has been in all facets of life: interpersonal relationships, education, business, religion, social movements and politics.

History

Facebook reached one billion monthly users worldwide on October 4, 2012, making it the most popular social networking site with one in seven people on the planet as

members.[2]   71% of online adults in the United States use Facebook. Every day, Facebook manages 4.5 billion "Likes," 4.75 billion content shares, and over 300 million photo uploads.[3]   As of Sep. 2014, 51% of US adults use YouTube, 28% use Pinterest, 28% use LinkedIn, 26% use Instagram, and 23% use Twitter.[4]   Twitter has 288 million monthly active users and over 500 million tweets are sent daily.[5]   Among online adults, use of more than one social networking site increased from 42% in 2013 to 52% in 2014.

Social Media for Muslims

Our mission as Muslims is to learn, to put into practice and to convey the message of Islam. We need to utilize our time wisely and stay away from sin. As for conveying the message of Islam, we need to use whatever is at our disposal to convey this beautiful message.

Islam governs how to use social media, which can be understood with the parable of using a knife. You can use a knife to cook food or as a weapon to harm someone. It depends how you use it. Likewise social media should be used wisely, so that you take the good from it and leave what is not beneficial for you.

There are magazines, internet forums, blogs, wikis, social networks, podcasts, books and so many other things that we have access to. However we have to make sure that we use them in the correct way.

For example, you can connect with many scholars and students of knowledge on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube and benefit greatly. You can stay in touch with distant family members and friends. You can also network with your professional contacts through LinkedIn. Make sure that your online friends are people who remind you of goodness and turn you away from that what is bad for you.

Tread With Caution on Social Media

1. Social media enables the spread of unreliable and false information.

49.1% of people have heard false news via social media.[6]

2. Social networking sites can lead to stress and offline relationship problems.

A University of Edinburgh Business School study found the more Facebook friends a person has, the more stressful the person finds Facebook to use.[7]   According to a February 9, 2012 Pew Internet report, 15% of adult social network users had an experience on a social networking site that caused a friendship to end, 12% of adult users had an experience online that resulted in a face-to-face argument, and 3% of adults reported a physical confrontation as a result of an experience on a social networking site.

3. Social networking sites entice people to waste time.

40% of 8 to 18 year olds spend 54 minutes a day on social media sites.[8] 36% of people surveyed listed social networking as the "biggest waste of time," above fantasy sports (25%), watching TV (23%), and shopping (9%).[9] 42% of American Internet users play games like Farmville or Mafia Wars on social networking sites.

4. Internet-based social networking can lead to personality and brain disorders.

The use of social networking sites is correlated with personality and brain disorders, such as the inability to have in-person conversations, a need for instant gratification, ADHD, and self-centered personalities, as well as addictive behaviors.[10]

Pathological Internet Use (caused or exacerbated by social networking use) is associated with feelings of loneliness, depression, anxiety and general distress.[11] The 2013 *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM) is evaluating "Internet Addiction Disorder" for inclusion. A 2008 UCLA study revealed web users had fundamentally altered prefrontal cortexes[12] due, in part, to the fast pace of social networking sites rewiring the brain with repeated exposure.

5. Social networking sites enable "sexting," which can lead to criminal charges and the unexpected proliferation of personal images.

Once restricted to cell phone texts, "sexting" has moved to social media with teens posting, or sending via messaging, risqué photos of themselves or others. In 2008 and 2009, US law enforcement agencies saw 3,477 cases of youth-produced sexual images with 2,291 agencies seeing at least one case.[13] As a result, teens and adults are being charged with possessing and distributing child pornography, even if the teen took and distributed a photo of him/herself.[14] 88% of private self-produced sexual images posted to social media are stolen by pornography websites and disseminated to the public, often without the subject's knowledge.[15]

6. Beware of celebrity culture.

Beware of getting too fascinated with celebrity culture. Yes, sadly, Muslims are into celebrity scholars! Fame is poison for a scholar as much as it is for anyone else. How famous someone appears to be online is not an assurance that what they are teaching is correct. The celebrity "sheikh" is not a substitute to learning from your local *Imam* or scholar. You can never learn manners from an online sheikh. If your favorite sheikh is always posting what he eats, where he is going, and asking his fans to tell them what prayer they want him to make for them during his *Umrah* trip, look elsewhere for Islamic guidance.

Footnotes:

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