The use of social networks in a higher education establishment

Nina Berman[1,*]

[1]Pacific State University, 680033, 136 Tihookeanskaya str., Khabarovsk, Russia

Abstract. The use of social networks as an element of the electronic educational environment in the educational institution and their influence on the formation of the information space of a higher education establishment is considered in this paper. Organization of effective interaction of participants in the educational process is an actual task of management. The subject of this analysis are social networks in the information space of a higher education institution. The possibilities and functions of social networks as a communication tool are analyzed.

1 Introduction

The modern society of the 21st century is characterized by the creation and introduction of new information and communication technologies. The attitude of people, especially young people, to these technologies is changing rapidly. It can be said that just ten years ago people often "went" to various social networks, now they occasionally "look out" to the real world from there. Therefore, information resources and information and communication technologies are becoming one of the main tools in the educational process that affect the quality of education and ensure the formation of general cultural and professional competencies of students in higher educational institutions. Information openness of a higher educational establishment is one of the parameters that are taken into account when monitoring the quality of education in an educational institution.

Creation of modern information environment is one of the most important tools for strategic development of higher education institutions, and it is aimed at the progressive development of their innovative activity and management improvement. The digital information and educational environment of a higher educational institution largely ensures the informational openness of the educational process. It facilitates and accelerates access to the current, constantly updated information on the main educational programs and the conditions for their implementation (curriculum, working programs of the disciplines, programs of practices and state final attestation), allows recording the results of the educational process and promptly analyzing these results, forms an electronic portfolio of a student, etc.

The organization of effective interactive interrelations between the participants of the educational process at all levels becomes a priority for institutions of higher education. The information and educational environment of educational institutions is an integral part of

---

* Corresponding author: nina.berman@mail.ru

social macro-sphere and covers all aspects of the educational process, psychological and pedagogical conditions and influences aimed at the formation of a competitive personality, and it should also be used for the effective management of higher education establishments [1].

The widespread dissemination and use of the Internet influences the ways and forms of communication in the society. Social networks are one of the most popular online services on the Internet.

A social network is a website that allows registered users posting information about them, and communicating, establishing social relationships and links. A feature of social networks is that their content is created by the users themselves [2]. Through social networks, a user or groups of users can create, edit, comment, combine and share content. Social media and Web 2.0 use many different technologies and forms, including RSS and other web feeds, blogs, wikis, video and photo sharing, podcasts, social networks, social bookmarks, widgets, virtual worlds, microblogging, etc. Social networks promote the establishment of social communications and allow implementing basic social needs, such as recognition, gaining new knowledge, and development and self-realization.

Social networks are the means of public communication and have a significant impact on the formation of public opinion. According to the monitoring system of social media Brand Analytics, there are more than 38 million of "writing" authors in Russia per month, who generate more than 670 million messages, of which 70.2% account for social networks, microblogs account for 11.7%, video resources - 10.8%, forums, reviews, blogs, publications and comments in the media account for 7.3%. The main age group (37%) is the authors aged 25-34 years, and the second largest group (25.7%) is the authors of 18-24 years old [3].

Social media has caused revolutionary changes in the society and become the dominant medium of communication. It is through social networks that it is the easiest, and, most importantly, it is more reliable to deliver one's information to the right subscribers. Thus, social networks are the tools by which organizations need to interact with their employees for their participation in management. Electronic participation involves informing (providing timely and relevant information), consulting (public discussion of issues online) and involving in the decision-making process [4].

Social networks provide opportunities for individuals, as well as traditional and newly formed social groups, to influence social and political processes. Elections and political campaigns, disasters and emergencies, various political actions are among the important topics discussed in social networks. However, social media is not just a place for discussions. They become a means for organizing collective actions, a source of information for understanding people's needs and their behavior, a tool for campaigning, rallying and raising funds. [5]

Social networks have an impact on educational organizations. Any educational organization is interested in increasing reputation, brand recognition, attracting entrants, and developing corporate culture [6]. Educational institutions can achieve numerous benefits through the use of social networks in advocacy and communication with applicants and their parents, students and their employees.

The Pacific State University (PSU) uses various forms of social media, including social networks. The official page of the University in the social network "V Kontakte" has more than 9 thousand participants, in Instagram - 2618 subscribers, and 2315 and more than 1000 people have subscribed to the Facebook and Telegram PSU pages respectively. In addition, all public organizations of the University have their pages in social networks, for example, the student trade union organization is represented in "V Kontakte", Instagram, Facebook and Telegram. Faculties and student groups also have their pages in the networks.

Using modern information technology tools, the University opens opportunities for communication methods: rapid informing of students and employees, conducting competitions and surveys on current and topical issues on the network, coverage of events with photo and video reports (advantages of the Instagram network), involvement of students and employees in public, creative and sports life.

Characteristics of the pages and groups in social networks show that they can relate to different target audiences. There are two levels of access to information: open or closed. Members of open groups are teachers, students, other university staff, as well as third-party users. Closed groups are created, as a rule, for interaction on specific issues for a limited number of persons. For example, for the exchange of information between teachers of the faculty (department), communication of curators with groups, individual groups of students for preparation and conduct of certain activities, etc.

Students' polls and surveys conducted on the transport and energy faculty show that all students use social networks and have accounts in several networks at once. Students are registered in the following networks: 98.1% in "V Kontakte", 81% in Instagram, 64.2% in Telegram, 56.6% in Facebook, 23% in Twitter, and 21% in "Odnoklassniki", as well as the networks Google+, YouTube, LiveJournal, Pinterest were also mentioned. The majority of students (75.5%) answered that they use social networks more than 10 times a day. To enter social networks students use: smartphones - 86.6%, tablets - 5.7%, computers - 69.8%, and 17% of students apply all these methods.

The main purposes of using social networks were noted as the following: reading news, communicating with friends, communicating in thematic groups (communities), for educational purposes, running their own group, selling / buying goods and services, finding a job, watching videos and listening to music, and other (1.9%).

92.1% of the students are signed on the official page of the Pacific State University in the social networks "V Kontakte", 44.9% - in Instagram, 20.4% - in Telegram, and 4.1% - in Facebook. In addition, the students indicate a large list of groups (communities) of the University, in which they are members.

The results of the questionnaire make it possible to draw a conclusion about the importance of using social networks by official structures (pages of the university and faculties) and by public organizations of the university. Social networks are a necessary element of the information and educational environment of a higher educational institution and perform not only information and educational functions, but also allow students and employees of the organization being involved in the public life of the university, creating an image for the university, predetermining the value system, the model of relationships in the university and increasing its competitiveness in attracting entrants. In addition, the official structures of the university, using social networks for interaction, form the information culture of students and employees for the effective use of information resources and the tools of information communication [7].

The openness and importance of social networks cannot be overemphasized, especially as they continue increasing exponentially in the number and types of tools, levels of participation and influence in many areas of activity.

References

1. A. I. Ulyanova, Bulletin of the Kazan Technological University, 8 (2010)
2. S. G. Jones, Cybersociety 2.0: Revisiting Computer-Mediated Communication and Community.
3. *Official site of the company "Brand Analytics"* (https://br-analytics.ru/statistics/, 2018)

4. A. V. Lyamin, A. R. Khobotova, M. S. Chezhin, *Using social networks in education* (University of ITMO, St. Petersburg, 2015)

5. D. A. Gubanov, *Social networks: models of information influence, management and confrontation* (Publishing House of Physical and Mathematical Literature, Moscow, 2010)

6. V. A. Chistyakova, A. N. Savko, Information and Education: Borders of Communications, **9**, 17 (2017)

7. N. D. Berman, Modern Studies of Social Problems (Electronic Journal of Science), **8**, 6-2 (2017)