Social Networking and Mobile Learning:

Slide 2

Good day everybody and welcome to the webinar on social networking and mobile learning. At the end of this webinar you will be able to identify the benefits of incorporating social networking tools into mobile learning. In the first part of this video I will share with you some recent stats indicating the growing popularity and access to the social networking tools.

Then I will move to the discussion of the pedagogical aspects of the use of social networking tools and I'll focus on how to harness these new participatory forms to support mobile learning.

Enjoy the webinar.

Slide 3

It is a social world.

According to a report by comScore:

Social networking is the most popular activity worldwide and it's not just young people using social networking anymore–it's everybody.

Social networking sites now reach 82 percent of the world's online population, representing 1.2 billion users around the world. The social networking adoption trend largely mirrored the global Internet adoption curve, and it grew proportionately, showing that as people began to get connected, they immediately began to get connected with each other.

Slide 4

Smartphones and tablets definitely drive mobile social networking use.

From a technology standpoint, mobile devices represent the future of social networking as they provide the means for users to get connected on-the-go, facilitating real-time interaction.

Let's have a look at the number of internet users who use a social network site via any device at least once per month. Let's have a look at India and Canada just for the comparison sake.

Internet users who use a social network site via any device at least once per month: approximately 7% of the population of India used social network sites in 2012; it is forcasted that the number of social network users will more than triple by 2017 to over 282 million users.

Slide 5

At the same time in Canada, 50% of the population use social network sites and the number is projected to grow only by 17% by 2017. That would be due to already rather high levels of social network penetration. Developing countries are definitely rapidly joining the social networks and are getting ready to incorporate social networking tools in their mobile learning activities and practices.

Slide 6

Generally speaking, almost a quarter of the global population use social networking tools and, quite often, access social network sites through the mobile devices.

Slide 7

Let's have a look at the figures representing monthly active users of various social network sites across the world. As we can see, the most popular remains *Facebook*, then it's followed by *Qzone, Twitter, Google+* and a few other social network sites that are very popular amongst internet users.

These tools can be utilized to foster 'learning communities', as well as formal and informal learning through the application of mediated social interaction. Such dynamic interaction through social networks affords communication and sharing of meaning and experiences that can lead to learning, performance support as well as human development.

In general, social networks connect people across the world, across various cultural backgrounds and perspectives. Social networking platforms actually connect people in order to, not only communicate and discuss things, but also to share multimedia, to share images, experiences, learning resources and opinions. They allow for exchange of any type of multimedia artifacts and resources. They allow for communication in order to create a common understanding, as well as new knowledge.

Slide 8

Such communication and exchange can support participatory learning.

When connecting to social networks through mobile devices, learners enjoy even broader and more flexible access to other people. This allows for distributing information, sharing meaning and experiences ad-hoc and on-demand, from wherever and whenever you are, or from time and place spaces that actually enrich the shared information… often generating more meaningful learning experiences. Mobile social media then enable participatory learning and co-creation of knowledge both when the user is in an organized educational setting and when she or he are entering into a learning transaction in an informal context. These mobile tools allow for instantaneous interaction and exchange of feedback yet sometimes risking the depth of that process and of the insight.

We've noticed new social behaviour patterns have emerged with the growth of social network tools and systems…having impact on the way people mediate symbols and communicate. Keeping in mind that the broad adoption of the social media tools might have both positive and negative effects on the human interaction, we cannot deny that the mobile social network systems provide a powerful forum for participatory and collaborative type of learning.

Mobile social networking tools also support the building of community.

Slide 9

Mobile phones and tablets offer an ever-available connection to the learning community or community of practice by way of micro-communicating or micro-blogging. Such social media tools available to mobile learners provide not only connection to experts and the learning community at a distance but also serve as a channel for a quick and convenient exchange of ideas and resources in a f2f situation for a f2f community, for example during a class or a conference where you can use *Twitter* as a

backchanelling tool –by backchanelling tool I mean a way of maintaining a real-time online conversation during a presentation or lecture.

Some social media tools give voice to those less vocal students, those shy students who rarely contribute their insights in person. The tools also tend to foster a stronger sense of belonging to a community which some learners do not experience otherwise, especially in a distance education settings.

Peer and expert interaction is a very important element of using social media tools on the go.

Slide 10

Overall, the mobile social media tools encourage higher levels of participation leading to more frequent, although often fragmented, communication and exchange of opinions and resources including those created by our learners: learner-created artifacts and resources. The tools also enable communities to stay in touch across time and location barriers allowing for both synchronous and asynchronous communication and mediation. That offers more frequent and relevant opportunities for performance support and knowledge co-creation.

Communication via social network platforms tends to be unstructured hence more fluid, sometimes even chaotic, and unpredictable; however if used properly with guidance from a facilitator the social networks and mobile tools that help users connect to those networks can enrich both learning at a distance as well as in the classroom in the f2f setting.

Slide 11

In the next three slides, I will give examples of how some affordances of social networks can support m-learning.

Staring with how by continuous rapid feedback exchange, comments, and posts can foster brainstorming, expression and reflection; also, feedback exchange also encourages rehearsal, for instance in language learning, as well as the negotiation of meaning.

Slide 12

In terms of reflection on self in community, the rapid cycles of communication, reflection and co-production are always intertwined and dynamic, inspiring learners to manage their identity and explore a sense of self and an expanded sense of community. Such a reflective experience of self in community could be highly motivating and it usually is rather encouraging. It can also prepare learners for the real-life experience and the demands of the real-world workplace.

Slide 13

Mobile social network tools often enhance learning through contextual information when prompt communication and rapid cycles of feedback exchange support context embedded learning activities that are location-bound and/or time sensitive, for example performance support situations.

In addition, students can access a variety of scaffolds and supports through the active social network.

Mobile social networks also support learning which is spaced over time through bite-size pieces of information and feedback which are potentially contribute to the creation of new knowledge.

As far as meaning-making, it's further supported by the exchange- the continuous exchange - of multimedia artifacts.

Peer and self-evaluation and assessment can be augmented by the built-in ranking and rating tools (for example "liking" posts on *Facebook*.)

Co-creation of content and message leading to co-creation of new meaning also enhances the learning process and outcomes (for example, using dynamic discussions and debate through micro-blogging and encourage negotiation of meaning amongst your students.)

Now these are only a few benefits of using social media in order to enhance the learning process and outcomes.

Slide 14

Let's have a quick look at a few other benefits…

These other benefits would include the fact that participating in social networks can:

Encouraged creativity and expression, both self-expression and collective expression (e.g., when brainstorming using *Twitter*). Viewed through a socio-constructivist lens, learning is enhanced in such a social context where the processes are mediated by communication and technology tools and the learning is relevant to the individual involved in that process.

Let's celebrate engagement and motivation: invite your learners to moderate their collaboration by openly celebrating their successes and showcasing their learning artifacts for example through photos on *Flickr* or videos on *YouTube*.)

Enhanced currency and richness of information that students exchange is another very important benefit (e.g., when we invite Distance Education students to submit examples of customs or behaviours, issues or solutions as they occur in their own local communities.)

Finally, individual and group ownership - when students contribute their own insights and resources to co-create a learning process and outcomes such as a group *Youtube* video, for example, on the environmental issues in India. Such a video could be created by remixing pieces of video captured by phone in remote areas of the country and then put together to form a group video.

All-in-all, educators are encouraged to harness the power of social networking tools to support mobile learning. It is up to the experts to provide enough curricular support and structure, as well as direction, to lead the exchange of ideas to new knowledge creation and new skill acquisition. Fostering collaboration using social networking tools is a significant element of the mobile learning ecosystem and ensuring measurable learning outcomes is truly essential to its success.

Slide 15

I hope you enjoyed this video on mobile social networking tools and you're going to take what you've learned here into your teaching and learning practice.

Good day and see you in the next video.