

Social networks as a support of marketing for nonprofit organizations

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Social network web sites or social networks in short, became a surprisingly interesting and popular subject, especially since the mass acceptance of this specific form of online communication and interaction. Social networks attract the attention of both experts and scientific researchers largely because of the numerous possibilities of using the specific form of networking provided on almost every type of widely accepted social networks. Social networking is one of the key components of Web 2.0, which is characterized by openness, freedom and collective intelligence. However, the most important characteristic of Web 2.0 is the exceptional interactivity between users. All the specific aspects of nonprofit organizations and especially of the education sector are apparent in the online environment as well. Furthermore, enhanced online communication systems enable a high level of usage of the aforementioned aspects for accomplishing the organizations' goals. This paper deepens the research carried out during the spring of 2009 on the similar subject of general usage of social networks amongst its users. The paper starts with a brief overview of the historical development of social networks in order to show how these communities have changed and developed over time. Current characteristics of social network web sites are determined and described in order to give a full picture of their state and marketing possibilities as well as the implications they have on future development of Internet based interactions. In addition, there is a special comment about the value of social networks and the way of determining their value and specific types of networks that are present in the global Internet space today. This paper also gives a general picture of the state of social networks and their users in the Croatian Internet scene with estimates of further development in the near future. The practical example of Internet presence within the social network environment takes the central place in the paper. An overview of the postgraduate study profile, on the currently most popular social network Facebook, is given. In addition, the advertising campaign of the aforementioned study within the same social network, as well as its overall efficiency is accentuated and commented. At the very end, the current marketing value and the reach of social networks concerning the marketing for nonprofit organizations is summed up and directions in which the future research of this subject will go are given.

Keywords: social networks, Web 2.0, Internet, online advertising, education