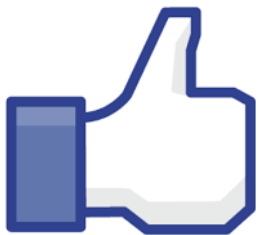


USING FACEBOOK TO ENHANCE STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT WITH TECHNOLOGY COURSES



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SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

- 9.6 million active users
- This number rose from 6.8 million in 2013 showing a 28% growth
- The largest social media website in South Africa
- The third most visited website in South Africa
- Fastest growing group of users were 23-26 years old
- 87% of active Facebook users in South Africa access Facebook from their mobile phones



HIGHER EDUCATION CONTEXT

- Traditionally use LMS based systems for communication with students
- Studies have shown that there is potential for using Facebook for teaching and learning (Wang et al., 2012, Mohamad & Mohamad Shariff, 2011)
- A study by Ivala and Gachago (2012) showed that using Facebook's groups and blogs at a Technology University actually increased students' engagement



WHY?

The problem is that Universities in South Africa continue to experience low levels of students' success and throughput rates. University lecturers therefore need to explore new and innovative ways of teaching and communicating with their students.



AIM

Create a Facebook page for Information Systems and Technology, first year students so that they could create discussions with each other and the Academic Development Officer regarding academic content.



METHODOLOGY



Check My Brain
Community [9]

+ Follow Share ...

[Timeline](#) [About](#) [Photos](#) [Likes](#) [More ▾](#)

PEOPLE >

251 likes

Status Photo / Video Offer, Event +

 What have you been up to?

METHODOLOGY

- Data obtained for the study includes student responses on the Facebook page in terms of posts and direct messages and reports generated by the page/system on user activity.
- Design-based Research
- Posts were coded during analysis

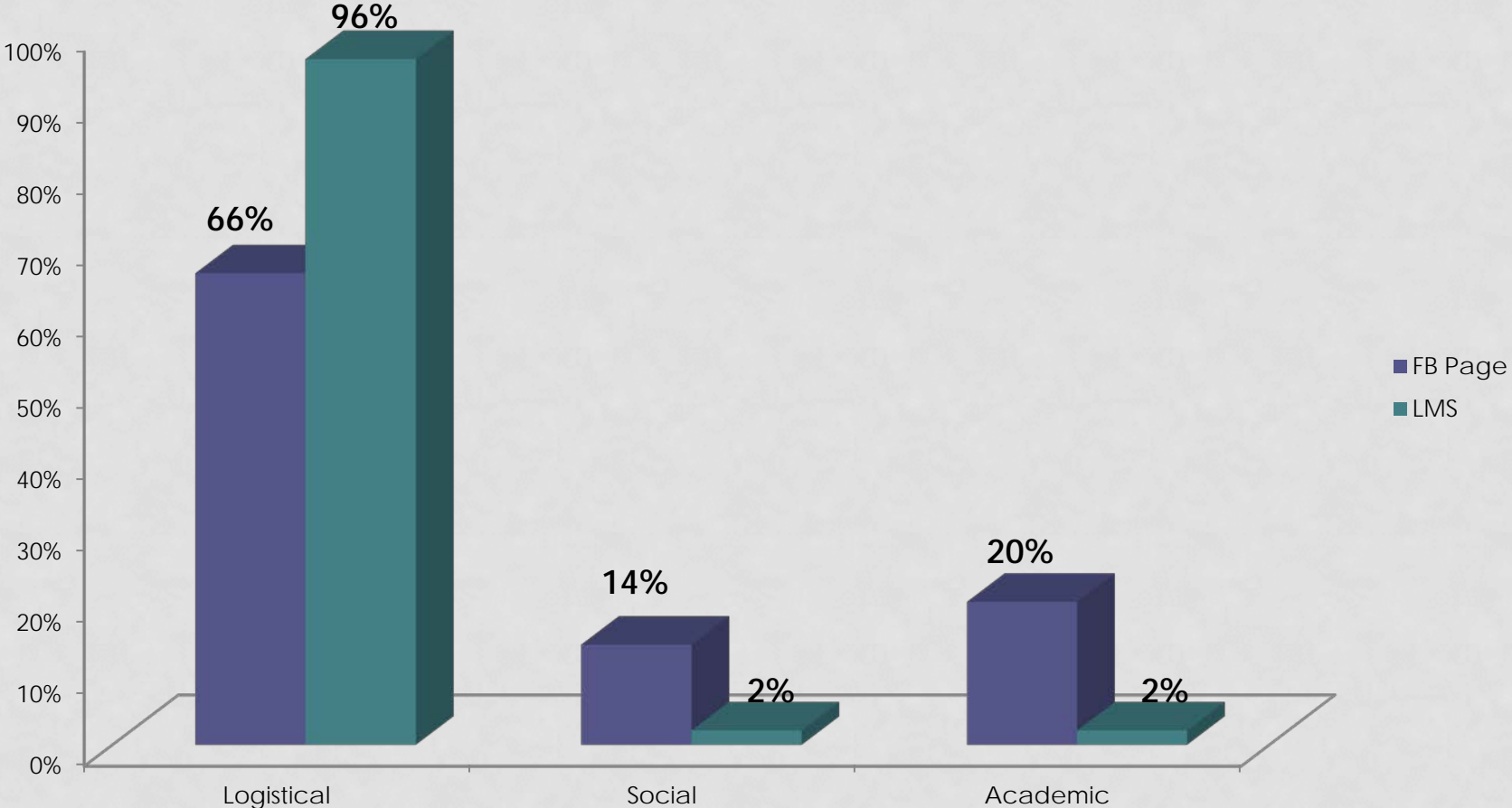
KEY FINDINGS

- Across the first year Information Systems courses there are 1860 students, of these 251 students joined the page.
- Although the page did reach a number of users, only 13% of students in the discipline actually followed the page.

PARTICIPATION

- Results showed that although many students joined the page, they did not participate in any discussions or create discussions on it.
- Students seemed to use the official course LMS for discussions more than the Facebook page.
- The most popular posts were the ones that were photographs of the first lecture period. The students engaged more with these posts than any of the others.
- The posts relating to academic content were the ones the students interacted the least with.

FB PAGE AND OFFICIAL LMS POSTS



POSSIBLE REASONS FOR STUDENTS NOT JOINING

- All students do have access to the course whereas with Facebook a user has to create an account or already have one to join the page.
- Students possibly preferred to keep their social and academic spaces different. Therefore they feel that using their social space for academic purposes infringes on their privacy, as shown in the literature (Madge et al., 2009).



DID THE FB PAGE HAVE EDUCATIONAL USE??

Some of the observations linked with the literature in the sense that although the Facebook page did reach students it did not have much educational use (Hew & Cheung, 2012) as students barely interacted with any of the academic content and did not create discussions with each other or their peers.



CONCLUSION

- Results showed that the page has potential for reaching many users
- Even though engagement from students is passive at this point, it still does exist, and can be nurtured to make this tool highly effective
- Create more discussion based posts per week
- Creation of podcasts for certain aspects of the course and uploading them to the page
- Introduce Facebook pages to smaller classes

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