

Analysis of Facebook Usage by College Students in Thailand

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ABSTRACT

Interacting with people through social media, especially Facebook, has been increasingly growing rapidly. This paper studies and analyzes Facebook usage by some college students in Thailand. The results showed that female used Facebook more than male. Although the focus of this study is on Facebook, but it was found that the social networking site that Thai college students used the most is Hi5. While using Facebook, students spent time the most on posting information and accessing Facebook applications. Regarding to the effect, the advantage and the disadvantage of using Facebook were related to health. The advantage was helping users to feel relax while the disadvantage was worse physical health. The analysis result can be further studied suggest for more constructive and effective Facebook usage.

Index Terms--Social Media, Facebook

1. INTRODUCTION

Social media has been increasingly popular worldwide nowadays. Time spent on social networking sites by Internet users has increased from 3 hours per month to 5.5 hours per month (82% increase) [1]. The number one social network site is Facebook which has 472,163,880 users on June 11, 2010 [4] while 50% of Facebook active users log on to Facebook in any given day [2] Facebook users growth is shown in Figure 1.

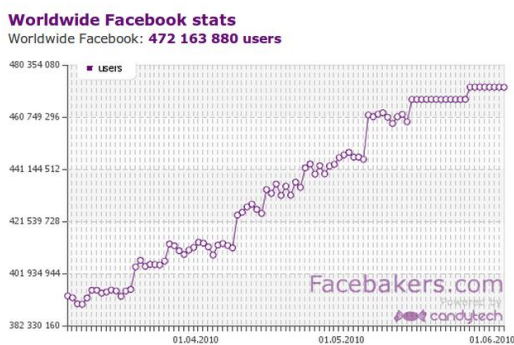


Figure 1: Worldwide Facebook Users Growth [4]

In Thailand, there were about 2,895,320 active Facebook users in March 2010 which was about 918% increase from approximately 284,340 users in March 2009 [3]. Currently, the number of Thai Facebook users is about 3,757,340 on June 11, 2010 [4]. Thai Facebook users growth is shown in Figure 2.

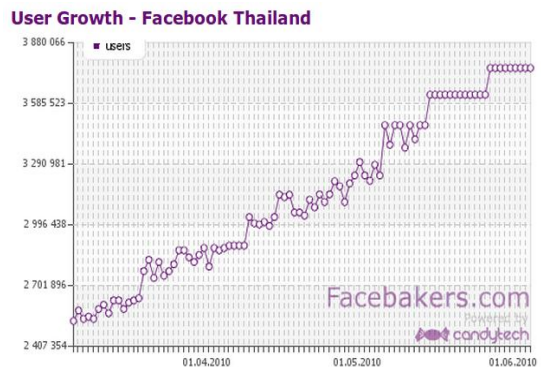


Figure 2: Thai Facebook Users Growth [4]

There are about 1,350,320 Thai users whose age is 18-24 [4] which is about 36% of the whole group. The age distribution is shown in Figure 3. As a result, it is important to study the advantages and disadvantages of using Facebook as a college student. It is also essential to understand Facebook usage patterns such as activities that Facebook users often do and any inappropriate behavior that they have done or have been imposed by others.

User Age Distribution - Facebook Thailand

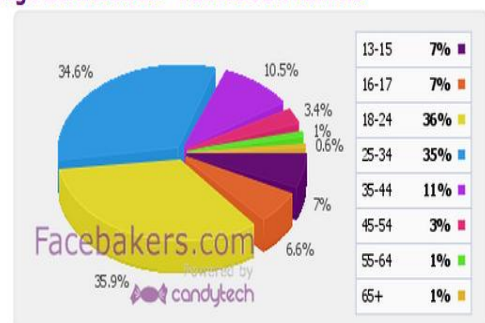


Figure 3: Thai Facebook User Age Distribution [4]

This study has two main objectives: 1) To study the proportion of Facebook usage among college students by sampling on a group of summer students in Khon Kaen University; and 2) To canvas user opinions about the advantages and disadvantages of using Facebook.

The remaining of the paper is organized as follows. Related work is briefed in Section 2. In Section 3, we discuss our research methodology. Then, we present experimental results in Section 4 and conclude in Section 5.

2. RELATED WORK

Several papers have been presented about the analysis of the usage of social media in Thailand [5, 6, 7, 8], but none of these papers studies the usage of social media that focuses on Facebook by Thai teenagers who use Facebook many more than in the past. However, while some papers [9, 10] have discussed about important issues, such as privacy, this paper has not focused on this topic yet.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted by designing the questionnaire, having the questionnaire answered by the sample of the target group, recording the result of the questionnaire, and then analyzing the result.

A self-administered questionnaire was constructed by the researchers. The questionnaire had three parts including: 1) personal biography; 2) opinions about social networking; and 3) behavior of Facebook users. The questionnaire asked about the students whether they had used Facebook in the last three months. If they used, then students needed to answer questions about their Facebook usage patterns.

The target group consisted of 7,738 students who enrolled in summer courses in Khon Kaen University, Thailand. The selected sampling group was 740 students who enrolled in 13 faculties which were the faculty of Agriculture, the faculty of Associated Medical Sciences, the faculty of Education, the faculty of Engineering, the faculty of Arts, the faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, the faculty of Law, the faculty of Management, the faculty of Nursing, the faculty of Sciences, the faculty of Technology, the faculty of Dentistry, and the faculty of Medicine.

The answers of the questionnaire were filled by two researchers independently and ensured that they were recorded correctly (double data entry).

The results were analyzed using SPSS/PC Evaluation Version 15. Descriptive statistics included frequency proportion mean (SD) and the 95%CI. Analytical statistics included the Pearson Chi-square and the Odds Ratio.

4. EXPERIMENTAL RESULTS

This section contains the survey result which can be divided into general data of users, social network usage behavior, and Facebook usage behavior

4.1 General Data

The overall response rate was 98.6%. The study showed that the prevalence of the students using Facebook in the past three months was 67.7% (95% CI : 61.93%, 73.00%) There were about 60.6% males and 73.1% females who used Facebook as shown in Figure 4. Females used Facebook 1.77 times more than males (P-value = 0.025, Odds ratio = 1.77, 95%CI: 1.07, 2.90)

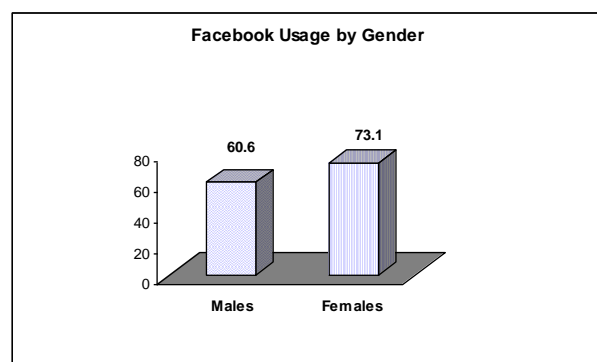


Figure 4. Facebook Usage by Gender

Students who participated in this survey study in 13 faculties. Among these students, it was found that 62.5% of 1st year students, 68.6% of 2nd year students, 76.5% of 3rd year students, and 80% of 4th year students used Facebook. Facebook usage by year of students is shown in Figure 5.

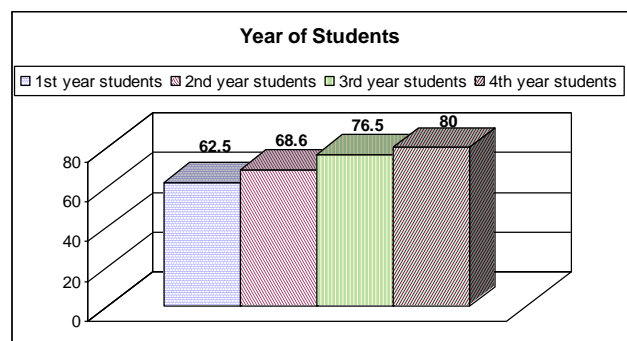


Figure 5. Year of Students

The activities of online users included watching movies and listening to music (84.1%, 13.3 hours per week), searching information for academics (81.3%, 4.8 hours per week), sending emails (75.5%, 5.2 hours per week), playing MSN (74.3%, 17.6 hours per week), using Hi5 (65.5%, 7.3 hours per week), reading news (58.4%, 3.1 hours per week), using Facebook (57.7%, 10.4 hours per week), playing online games

(30.8%, 4.2 hours per week), and using MySpace (5.3%, 0.6 hour per week). Online user activities statistics are shown in Figure 6.

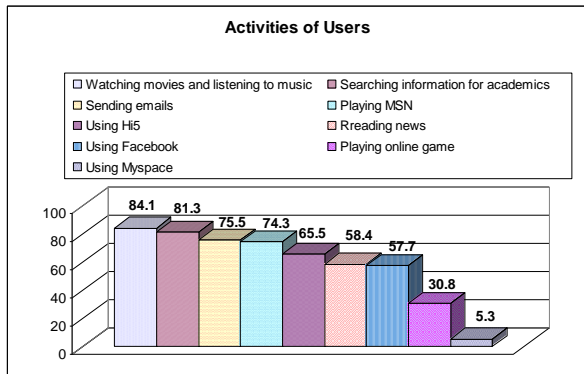


Figure 6. Activities of Online Users

Average of amount of time spending on Internet is 4.6 hours per day

4.2 Social Network Usage Behavior

About 88.6% of Internet users were active on social networking and about 62.4% of people trusted the information about social networking in level 3 (medium)

Regarding to social networking types that people use, it was found out that 99.2% of people used Hi5, 75.7% used Facebook, 14.1% used Twitter, and 1.2% used Friendster as shown in Figure 7.

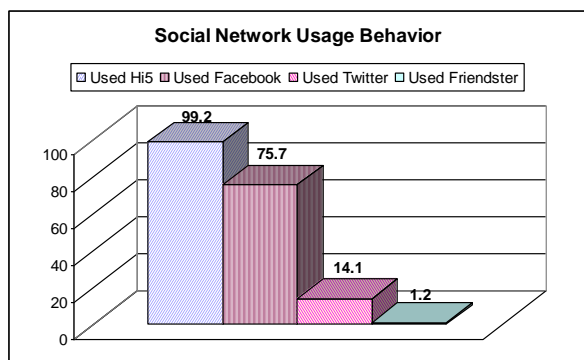


Figure 7. Types of Used Social Networking

4.3 Facebook Usage Behavior

About 71.6% of people used Facebook during 20.01-24.00 which was the most active time period.

About 92.7% of people used Facebook from home or dormitory which was the place accessed to Facebook the most. It was estimated that students used Facebook from home or dormitory for the average spending time about 3.4 hours per day.

Facebook activities included posting information (64.5%, 1.2 hour per day), using applications (64.0%, 1.3 hour per day), chatting (41.6%, 0.9 hour per day),

uploading pictures (36.0%, 0.4 hour per day), and joining groups (12.2%, 0.1 hour per day) as shown in Figure 8.

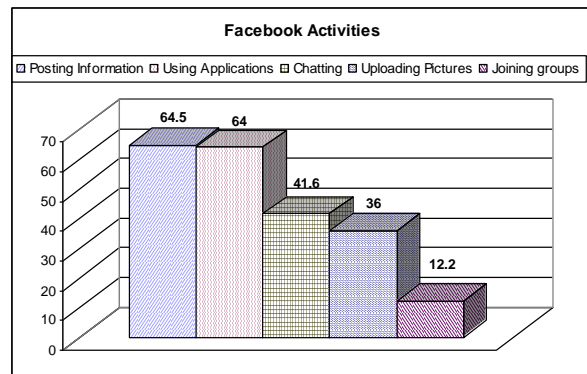


Figure 8. Facebook Activities.

Regarding to the study about inappropriate behaviors in using Facebook, it was reported that 4.1% of users uploaded improper pictures and 3.1% of users received inappropriate content. The inappropriate content included inappropriate languages such as malicious, defamatory, abusive, offensive or hateful words (20.2%), unsolicited or unauthorized advertising (19.2%), false data (17.6%), obscene, pornographic or sexually explicit photos (8.8%), enticing others (0.5%), and others (1.6%) as shown in Figure 9.

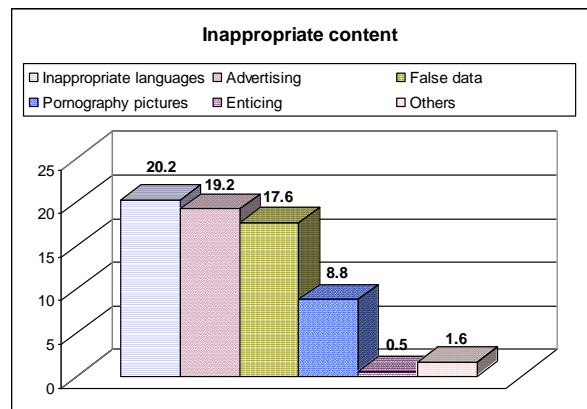


Figure 9. Inappropriate Content

The reasons why people use Facebook included having conversation with friends (77.1%), reducing stress (74.8%), playing games (64.9%), viewing photos (58.0%), killing times (44.3%), finding new friends (30.5%), being a member of interested groups (28.2%), being updated to technology trends (19.8%), finding new intimate relationships (6.9%), and others (1.5%) as shown in Figure 10.

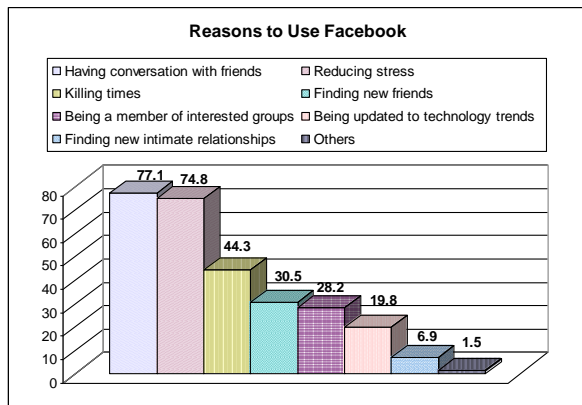


Figure 10. Reasons to Use Facebook

Advantages of using Facebook were relaxation (99.0%), communication (98.4%) and education (89.1%), information (87.6%), news and events (85.0%), knowledge (79.8%), and others (5.2%) as shown in Figure 11.

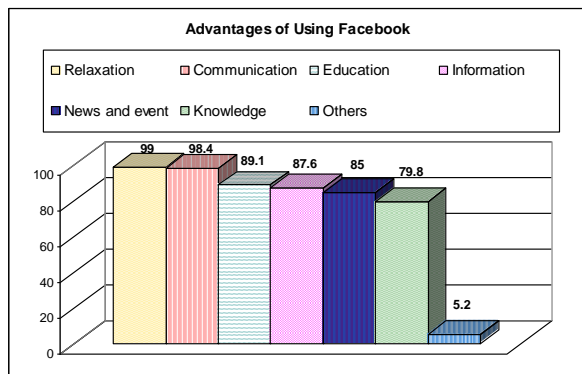


Figure 11. Advantages of Using Facebook

Disadvantages of using Facebook were health problems such as less sleeping time and worse eye conditions (79.8%), reduction of face-to-face social activity (64.8%), less time for studying (62.2%), waste of time (61.1%), reduction of work performance (59.1%), waste of money (55.4%), reduction of GPA (39.9%), conflict with parents (25.4%), class absent (22.3%), and others (3.1%) as shown in Figure 12.

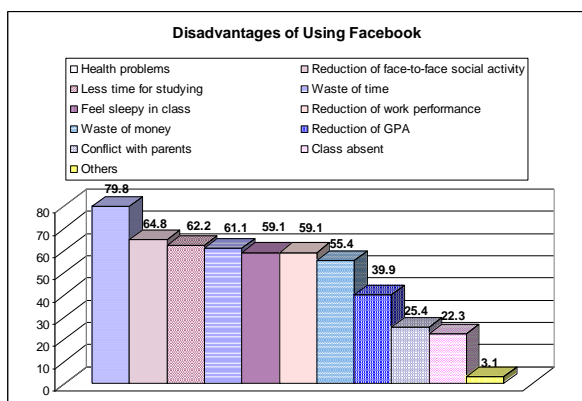


Figure 12. Disadvantages of Using Facebook

5. CONCLUSION

Facebook is the largest social networking site worldwide. From our study of Facebook usage among college students, females were significantly more common users. Relaxation was the most advantage while health problem was regarded as the most common disadvantage. Two top reasons why people used Facebook were having conversation with friends and reducing stress.

Among different groups of students, the fourth year students were the largest group that used Facebook. The first of the two most frequent activities on Facebook was posting data which included updating status and uploading photos. The other popular activity was using Facebook applications which included playing games.

We are interested in answering questions that answer how to spend time efficiently on Facebook. It would be interesting to know how to search for updated information efficiently on Facebook. We also want to analyze friends' information so that we know which friends will likely be interested in what we are going to post or pages that we want to suggest.

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