Impacts of Micro-Blog on Contemporary College Students with Countermeasures

Chen Mengyi +
School of Humanities, Zhejiang University of Technology

Abstract. Internet is an essential part of campus life for college students. Micro-blog, as a format of new media, has been prevalent among college students. However, because of the complexity of information conveyed from micro-blog, it has inevitably brought students some negative effects, while it offers them lots of benefits. How to make micro-blog really become the good mentor of college students rather than a bad friend is needed to be explored now. Several typical statuses of college students of using micro-blog are presented in this paper. Both positive and negative aspects of micro-blog are analyzed. Several countermeasures are proposed to promote the positive aspects and repress the negative ones.

Keywords: Micro-Blog; Positive and negative impacts; Countermeasures; College students.

1. Introduction

Micro-blog is a new social networking service based on the Web2.0 technology [1]. Similar to MSN, messages can be released and sent instantly and conveniently through micro-blog. It is a novel communication technology which fully takes advantages of wireless networks or landline networks. Micro-blog is a format of blogs that allow the user to publicly release a short text, which is usually less than 140 characters [2]-[4]. With its text fragments, diversification of distribution channels, and viral dissemination of information, micro-blog prevails rapidly among human beings. A great attention all over the world arises from this novel communication tool.

Contemporary college students, as a forefront group with new social technologies and new ideas, are particularly paying high attention to this new network product. So far, micro-blog culture has become a new cultural phenomenon on campus. Nearly each college student has at least one account of micro-blog. They use micro-blog to keep in touch with classmates and friends, obtain the latest news around the world, share movies and music, look for jobs and so on. It seems that micro-blog has become a best friend for college students without producing any harmful effect. However, this conclusion is not true. Each college student’s comprehension on micro-blog varies due to their individual differences. As a matter of fact, like other new technology, micro-blog is a double-edged sword. If a college student does not use micro-blog appropriately, this new emerging technology will only bring him troubles or even serious impacts. Therefore, it is urgent to explore effective and reasonable measures to minimize the negative impact and maximize positive impact of micro-blog.

2. Phenomena

Contemporary college students live in an internet age full of information. Their values completely differ from previous generations. College students have a strong interest in the emerging mobile Internet technology. Micro-blog is already very popular among them. At the beginning of the year 2011, I asked more than 100 students, who are from different departments in my university, to do a questionnaire. According to the results collected from about 80 questionnaires, the status of college students of using micro-blog can be summarized as follows:

* Corresponding author. Tel.: + 8613758243663. E-mail address: chenmengyi.8912@163.com.
Firstly, they are using micro-blog to instantly record their daily life routine and to kill time. Using micro-blog to express feelings or convey all kinds of information is their primary purpose. When their released micro-blog is commented by others, they will reply to them happily and immediately. It seems that students enjoy this process very much. Some of the college students will even open a PC to see the status of their released micro-blog as soon as they wake up in the morning. Whether in the classrooms, dormitories, libraries, canteens, or even on the road, they will subconsciously come up with mobile phones to watch their micro-blog.

Secondly, they are using micro-blog to obtain the latest information. College students master the usage of micro-blog to keep up with social affairs and current hot topics. If some information they think is valuable or interesting, they will forward it to share with fans. In addition, some latest information about movies and music will also be shared on their personal micro-blog. Others only need to select which one to watch or listen to via micro-blog. Some college students even use the micro-blog to seek jobs online. Up to now, many well-known enterprises have opened their own official micro-blog, and will update all kinds of jobs on the home page of their official micro-blog.

Finally, they are using micro-blog to expand the social circle of college students. With the help of micro-blog, students have the opportunity to know the living conditions of the "strangers". When they encounter with their like-minded people, they will add each other as friends in order to expand the circle of campus life. If they know each other deeply after chatting on micro-blog, they can become a good friend in real world. At the same time, many celebrities now also open their personal micro-blog. They often update their micro-blog every several hours. Therefore, college students can have a real-time understanding of living conditions of celebrities through their micro-blog.

3. Impacts

Micro-blog has brought much convenience for contemporary college students’ daily lives. They can benefit a lot from this new communication tool. Nevertheless, several problems are also produced by micro-blog. In this section, both the positive impacts and the negative ones of micro-blog on college students are summarized into two aspects, respectively.

3.1. Positive Impacts

Firstly, micro-blog is convenient for college students to exchange ideas, express emotions, and meet interpersonal needs. Micro-blog, carried by Internet, provides an immediate and equal exchange platform for college students. Students only need to write down one or a few sentences they want to say most to express their inner feelings and meet the needs of self-expression. Not like chatting with friends face to face, this kind of communication way allows students to express their real emotions out without any anxiety. On the other hand, students can keep in touch with classmates and friends through the use of micro-blog. They can know each other better by watching their personal micro-blog. As a result, the friendship will be enhanced naturally. Meanwhile, people with similar ideas and interests can be gathered to establish a blog group to start a more in-depth exchanges and discussions. They can also become good friends with each other in the real life if they like to.

Secondly, micro-blog helps students broaden their horizons and realize their own aspirations. Micro-blog has tremendous information for college students to develop their own vision, broaden their thoughts, and increase their knowledge. Students are able to acquire useful knowledge from micro-blog to understand the social rules well, which can aid them to get ready for their future social lives. Besides, many companies, schools and other institutions have now opened their own official micro-blog. They only need to visit the relevant micro-blog to get much valuable information, such as job opportunities, library schedules, internships, and so on. College students can take full advantage of micro-blog to carve out their own channels to succeed. As far as I know, many online open courses have been released on micro-blog. Some
college students have already utilized these valuable courses to learn the most cutting-edge knowledge. Their level of specialization can be dramatically improved if they make full use of these online free sources.

3.2. **Negative Impacts**

Firstly, adverse information from micro-blog can produce negative impacts. The application of micro-blog becomes more and more prevalent, followed by information released out of control. Some micro-blog contains unhealthy information, such as pornography, violence, crime, drugs and so on. Spreading of such bad information and personal privacy has brought new problems and challenges to college students. In the past, college students nearly have access to information from radio, newspapers, television and other communication channels. The contents from these channels have been filtered strictly by the government in advance. Unhealthy violent information is almost inaccessible to college students. However, students are often directly exposed to diverse information via micro-blog, including good and bad. Because their values have not yet been fully formed during this period, they are vulnerable to adverse information without judging from right to wrong.

Secondly, college students may get addicted to micro-blog thus abandon learning knowledge. Such serious problem has appeared among some college students and cannot be ignored by the school administration. Micro-blog can be visited through mobile phones and other portable devices anytime and anywhere. When college students receive information from micro-blog, they will tend to follow it lack of independent thinking. Some students usually use mobile phones to land on micro-blog in the classroom, which has a serious impact on their own development and achievement. Some students even indulge in micro-blog all day, not to communicate with friends in real life. As such, the friendship will be weakened, and the relationship between relatives may be undermined. Such degree of harm is as much as online games, resulting in more severe reality of interpersonal exchanges.

4. **Countermeasures**

As analyzed in the above section, although micro-blog has many advantages, it can also be a harmful communication tool if college students do not apply it in a healthy manner. In the following parts, several suggestions are presented to maximize the positive aspects of micro-blog, while several countermeasures are proposed to repress the negative ones.

First of all, supervision of information from micro-blog must be strengthened. Information that comes into the campus network must be strictly filtered. Some unhealthy information, like violence and drugs, must be strictly abandoned. Appropriate rules and regulations, in conjunction with the actual situation of the state and local government policies as well as colleges and universities, should be established to constrain students’ network behaviour.

Secondly, students should be guided to use the network in accordance with the laws, and to establish a correct concept and develop their self-awareness of micro-blog. The school administration should help students to realize that micro-blog is only one of instant message tools. Although micro-blog has brought much convenience and pleasure to our daily life, it cannot replace our life and solve all problems. Students should be educated to control the time of surfing online. They should be often told that using micro-blog in the class is only a waste of time.

Last but not least, a real-name system should be implemented to strengthen network monitoring. On such mechanism, I believe that some students will not use micro-blog to do some dirty things. Since their personal blog is directly bundled with their identification card, they will not use micro-blog to do activities against the national laws.

In short, a variety of methods should be taken to provide a safe and healthy network environment for the students. Through these countermeasures, micro-blog can truly become a mentor for the students' growth.

5. **Conclusion**
In this paper, the phenomena of wide use of micro-blog among contemporary college students have been presented. Both positive and negative impacts of micro-blog on college students have been analysed. Several countermeasures have been proposed to maximize the advantages of micro-blog and minimize the disadvantages of micro-blog.

6. References