

Study finds one in three teachers actively avoids using social media

November 7 2014

In recent years social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter have become vital tools for directly educating their users - and are especially popular among children and teenagers.

However, while social media is becoming increasingly prevalent among younger audiences, research from the University of Leicester has shown that [teachers](#) are still divided regarding their own use of social media, with many unfamiliar with or unwilling to use platforms such as Facebook and Twitter.

During the study, which examined over 200 teachers nationally in the UK, it was found that although 56 per cent would class themselves as social media enthusiasts, when their attitudes and reported use were considered this proportion could be as low as three per cent.

The study also found that many teachers actively avoid social media altogether, with the survey suggesting that around 30 per cent could be classed as 'conscious luddites' who deliberately avoid engaging with these platforms - however with a much lower proportion of 8 per cent self-reporting themselves as such.

All of the teachers surveyed in the study raised concerns about the safe and effective use of social media, both for their own and their students' learning, although they felt confident that they were aware of the issues.

In light of these statistics, children and their teachers from the region

have been convening at two events, one at the University of Leicester and a second at the National Space Centre, as part of 'Social Media In Lifelong Education (SMILE) 2014' to debate the future of social media for educational purposes.

Activities have included an art competition, voting, a knowledge café and videos relating to studies about these issues to facilitate discussion amongst children and across age groups. This has involved around 150 children aged between 9 and 18.

Dr Alison Fox from the University of Leicester's School of Education, who has been leading the events, said: "As well as teachers, pupils of all ages have views and experiences of social media use and yet there is often little opportunity for teachers to hear about and discuss their hopes and fears about the use of social media for educational purposes.

"We felt that, whilst many people worry about social media, there were few spaces for these concerns to be raised and to debate the potential of these tools to enhance learning. The University of Leicester will now compile the collective views of participants to create a charter for a way forward for schools."

Terese Bird from the Leicester Learning Institute, who assists with research on the project, said: "Most school policies on social media are cautionary. At the same time, we see that students often need help imagining the use of social media for their own learning. Perhaps by creating this space for pupils to talk about social media as something they can learn from, we can help both pupils and teachers to consider positive social media use that enables independent learning throughout their lives."

Alison and Terese have been using the data collected about teacher networking and engagement with [social media](#) to present 'The Hashtag'

as a controversial object as part of the University of Leicester's College of Social Sciences 'Social World in 100 objects' mini lunchtime lecture series.

Provided by University of Leicester

Citation: Study finds one in three teachers actively avoids using social media (2014, November 7) retrieved 20 March 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2014-11-teachers-social-media.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--