

**Internet Access and Social Networking among Nigeria Polytechnic Students
- A Survey**

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ABSTRACT

The study surveyed the Internet access among Nigerian Polytechnic students. The findings revealed that the level of utilization of Internet and the social networking media is high in Polytechnics through Mobile phones. Most institutions, though linked to the Internet, are yet to provide access to students. Respondents subscribed through their pocket money for food. Some problems they face in their use of the Internet include slowness of the server and irregular electricity for charging their mobile phones. The study recommends that the Polytechnic should provide good access points for students while social media additive could negatively affect students' performance.

Keywords—Telecommunication, Internet, Access, Social, Networking

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1 Introduction

Telecommunication is communication at a distance using electrical signals or electromagnetic waves. Consider for a moment all the different communications that take place in an organization. Some communications are face to face, but others use some type of technology. Think of email, phone calls, text messaging, viewing pages on the Internet, downloading files. All of these communications make use of a telecommunications system. A telecommunications system is a collection of nodes and links to enable telecommunication. Telecommunication is communication at a distance using electrical signals or electromagnetic waves. Examples of telecommunications systems are the

telephone network, the radio broadcasting system, computer networks and the Internet. The nodes in the system are the devices we use to communicate with, such as a telephone or a computer.

The Internet is a global system of interconnected computer networks that use the standard Internet protocol suite to serve billions of users worldwide. It is a network of networks that consists of millions of private, public, academic, business, and government networks, of local to global scope, that are linked by a broad array of electronic, wireless and optical networking technologies. The Internet carries an extensive range of information resources and services, such as the inter-linked hypertext documents of the World Wide Web (WWW) and the

infrastructure to support email. The Internet provides several opportunities for the academic. It is a mechanism for information dissemination and a medium for collaborative interaction between individual and their computers without regard for geographic limitation of space [14].

Internet access connects individual computer terminals, computers, mobile devices, and computer networks to the Internet, enabling users to access Internet services, such as email and the World Wide Web. Internet service providers (ISPs) offer Internet access through various technologies that offer a wide range of data signaling rates (speeds). Consumer use of the Internet first became popular through dial-up Internet access in the 1990s. By the first decade of the 21st century, many consumers in developed nations used faster, broadband Internet access technologies. As of 2014[update], broadband was ubiquitous around the world, with a global average connection speed exceeding 4 Mbit/s [2].

A social networking service is an on-line service, platform, or site that focuses on facilitating the building of social networks or social relations among people who, for example, share interests, activities, backgrounds, or real-life connections. A social network service consists of a representation of each user (often a profile), his/her social links, and a variety of additional services. Most social network services are web-based and provide means for users to interact over the Internet, such as e-mail and instant messaging. On line community services are sometimes considered as a social network service, though in a broader sense, social network service usually means an individual-centered service whereas on-line community services are group-centered. Social networking sites allow users to share ideas, activities, events, and interests within their individual networks. List top 10 social networking sites, the year of origination and the number of users are shown in Table 1a [5].

Social network sites (SNSs) such as Friendster, CyWorld, and MySpace allow individuals to present themselves, articulate their social networks, and establish or maintain connections with others. These sites can be oriented towards work-related contexts (e.g., LinkedIn.com), romantic relationship initiation (the original goal of Friendster.com), connecting those with shared interests such as music or politics (e.g., MySpace.com), or the college student population (the original incarnation of Facebook.com).

Table 1a: Social networking sites

Table 1a: Social networking sites

SNS	Year of origination	Number of users
FRENDSTER	2002	10 million
MYSAPCE	2003	25 million
LinkedIn	2003	225 million
FACEBOOK	2004	1.28 Billion
BEBO	2005	15 million
YOUTUBE	2005	187million
TWITTER	2008	
BUZZ	2010	
ITUNES	2011	170 million

Participants may use the sites to interact with people they already know offline or to meet new people [7]. Social networking has become part of the daily life experiences for an increasing number of people [11].

1.1 Objectives of the study

The objective of this study is to find out the students knowledge on how they use the Internet and the social networking sites by;

- Determining the regularity and duration of student's use of the Internet and identifying the purpose for which the students use the Internet;
- Identifying access points to Internet; and Finding out the benefits and constraints of Internet use to students.
- Examining and assessing the impacts of social networking addiction among the students in Nigerian polytechnic
- Determining the level at which students are addicted to the internet and Social networking Sites and to determine if they affects their academic performances

2 Literature Review

Obviously, research concerning the effect of spending time on the Internet is still on a formative stage. The Internet seems to have had the most impact on television usage. This is not surprising since much Internet use take place during the evening, the same time that most television viewing takes place generally. Magazine and Newspaper

reading, radio listening and movie going seem not to have been significantly affected [4].

The Internet is becoming more important as a source of news. At the same time, there has been a decline in the number of people who rely on broadcast television and newspaper as their main source of news. Research has been conducted to prove that the Internet and the social networking involvement have been contradictory. A 1998 survey of on-line users revealed that as people used the Internet more, they spent less time talking to family members, experienced more loneliness and depression, and reported fewer friendship [4].

According to Ani [3], the Internet is a network of linked computers which are located at different points all over the world that provides easy communication between persons and organizations no matter where they are located. The Internet is used mostly in obtaining information. [15] quoting Sadler, 1995 observe that the Internet is not a single network of computers but a network of nets, a large network that connects many smaller networks to one another. The major functional advantage of the Internet stems from its willingness to share information with others so that everyone might benefit. [17] posits that the Internet is a communication super highway that links, hooks and focuses the entire world into a global village, where people of all races can easily get in touch, see, or speak to one another and exchange information from one point of the globe to another. It is the largest network in the world that allows computer users to communicate and access electronic databases with ease maintains that an observable trend in the Internet is that more and more resources are moving to it and in some cases being made available only in the Internet [8].

Quoting Ojedekun, 2001 reveal that the Internet has many benefits in the academic cycle as it provides a round the clock access to global sources of information [6]. It also gives researchers the ability to discuss and share experience with colleagues [16]. Identified areas in which Internet could be used to include education, agriculture, office automation, security, entertainment, politics, construction, banking, commerce, health, etc. The Internet also has a role to play in the library, which is the hub of research activities in a university. Lancaster and Sandore, 1997 outlined the roles of the Internet in the library thus: an electronic resource that is now having the most significant impact on

library services, operations and on the professional activities of librarians. This strength of impact is due to its multi-faceted nature since it simultaneously fulfill three important roles in library services, first, it is a resource that can be consulted and used like any other reference tool. Second, it is more dynamic and far – reaching than any other resource used in a library setting. Finally it provides a medium of communication that has extended the potential of librarians' interaction beyond the physical library to users, colleagues and other professional activities and relationships with library users. The Internet is very useful in obtaining information for research. [1] in their study on the impact of the Internet on research, reported that the Internet contributed significantly to the ease of research through downloading materials. It is commonly believed that researchers and students in Nigerian higher education institutions are battling the problem of inadequate and out-of-date materials. The only way to pursue knowledge is through research and the Internet is having a profound impact on the research process and dissemination of information [11]

The use of the Internet and social networking is gradually becoming popular in Nigeria. Statistics show that Nigeria with an estimated population of 178,283,240 people has 83,362,814 Internet users as at February, 2015. A study conducted by Pew Internet and American Life project in 2007 found that majority of youths, over 79% cannot tear themselves away from the use of social networks and must update and view their profiles daily [9]. In [13], Olowu & Seri conducted a study of 884 students of different universities in Nigeria, which indicated that youths in Nigeria are spending too much time on social networking sites at the detriment of other necessary things such as their studies. They explained that Youths' use of these social networking sites even point towards obsession. The youths have made the social media their top priority and continued to need more usage in order to feel satisfied [9]. Posits that there seem to be an alarming rate of social networking obsession among youths today; a trend that could affect their academic, social and spiritual lives negatively if not properly controlled [10]. It was observed that if the dangerous trend of social network “obsession” if left unchecked could further affect an already collapsing education system in Nigeria.

3 Methodology

The instrument used for data collection in this study was the descriptive statistics survey method with structured questionnaire. This was because of the nature of information required and the form of analysis to be carried out.

The student of Gateway Polytechnic Saapade formed the population for this study. Only 500 students irrespective of their department were sampled, both National Diploma (ND) students and Higher National Diploma (HND) level were chosen because they are all expected to be conversant with the reality of Internet tools / facilities and the social networking sites. A self- designed questionnaire was used to collect data. The study was conducted in 2015 / 2016 session.

4 Result

The questionnaire was administered personally during lecture time. The generated data was analyzed using simple frequency counts and percentages. A total of eight hundreds (500) copies of questionnaires were distributed to the respondents out of only seven hundred (472) were able to be retrieved.

Research Question 1

Did you make use of the Internet?

The items on the table below provided the answers to research question 1. The table and analyses of the contents are presented below:

Table 1b: Use of Internet

	Frequency	%
Yes	415	87.9
No	54	11.4

Table 1b shows that 87.9% of the student under study makes use of Internet while 11.4% do not make use of Internet. Findings therefore show that students of the polytechnic do make use of Internet.

Research Question 2

What is the frequency of Internet usage among students of Gateway Polytechnic, Saapade in Nigeria? The items on the table below provided the answers to research question 2. The table and analyses of the contents are presented below:

Table 2: Frequency of Internet usage

Frequency of use of Internet	Frequency	%
Daily	223	47.25
Once a week	93	19.7
Twice a week	58	12.3
Monthly	22	4.66
Irregular interval	66	13.98
Others, please specify	-	-
Total	472	100`

Table II shows that 47.3% of the respondents use the Internet on daily basis and 19.7% once a week, 19.7% use the Internet twice a week, 4.66% use the Internet monthly and 12.3% use it on irregular intervals. Findings clearly show that the students use the Internet when the need for it arises.

Research Question 3

What reasons does the student have for using the Internet? The items on the table below provided the answers to research question 3. The table and analyses of the contents are presented below:

Table 3: Reason for using Internet

Reasons for using Internet	Frequency	%
To obtain educational and research information	245	51.9
To watch and download film and musics	90	19.1
To watch pornographic films	-	-
To engage in cyber crime (419 or Yahoo)	12	2.5
To listen to news and information	58	12.3
Communication and chatting	92	19.5
Total	247	100

Table 3 shows that 51.9% of the students that makes use of Internet use it for educational and research information; 19.1% use it to watch and download films and music, 2.5% use it to listen to news, 2.5% use it to engage in cyber crime while 48.6% use it for communication and chatting.

Findings therefore show that the students use the Internet mainly for obtaining educational and research information.

Research Question 4

What are the reasons for usage of social media among students of Gateway Polytechnic, Saapade? The items on the table below provided the answers to research question 4. The table and analyses of the contents are presented below:

Table 4: Reasons for usage of social networking media

Reasons for usage of social media	Frequency	%
Social Networking Media has positively influenced the Students.	52	11
Social Networking Media has negatively influenced Students.	91	19.3
Students regard Social Networking Media as interesting	78	16.5
Students regard Social Networking Media as uninteresting	50	10.6
Social Networking Media help Students to achieve academic excellence	53	11.2
Social Networking Media reduces the time of reading their books.	80	16.9
Social Networking Media motivate students to engage in cybercrime	68	13.8

Table 4 shows that 11% of the students are positively influenced by social networking media; 19.3% are negatively influenced by the social networking media, 16.5% regard social networking media as interesting, 10.6% regards it as uninteresting, 11.2% said it helps to achieve academic excellence, 16.9% stated that it reduces the time of reading their books while 13.6% said it motivate them to engage in cybercrime. Findings therefore show that the Social Networking Media has negatively influenced the students.

Research Question 5

What is the perception of students of Gateway Polytechnic, Saapade on social media? The items on the table below provided the answers to research question 5. The table and analyses of the contents are presented in Table 5. It shows that 18.6% of the student use social networking media to share information; 27.5% use social networking media to connect, interact and chat with friends, 25% use social networking media to access news, movies, music and photos, 8.7% use it for business empowerment, 2.8 % use it to view pornography, 14.2% use it for job seeking while 3.2% use it for religious propagation. Findings therefore show that the students of Polytechnic use Social Media to connect, interact chat with friends.

Table 5: The perception of students on social media

Factors	Frequency	%
Students of the Polytechnic use Social Media to Share information	88	18.6
Students of Polytechnic use Social Media to connect, interact chat with friends	130	27.5
The Students use it to access News, Movies, Music and Photos	118	25
The students use it for Business Empowerment	41	8.7
Students use it to view Phonography	13	2.8
Students use Social Media for Job seeking (employment)	67	14.2
Students Use Social Media for religious propagation	15	3.2

Research Question 6

What is the level at which the students are addicted to the social media? The items on the table below provided the answers to research question 6. The table and analyses of the contents are presented below:

Table 6: The level at which students are addicted to social media

Addiction	Frequency	%
Strong	198	41.9
Moderate	159	33.7
Never	115	24.4
Total	472	

As seen in the Table 6 above 41.9% of the respondents are strongly addicted to Social Networking Sites, 33.7% of the respondents are moderately addicted while only 24.4% are not addicted to SNSs. Findings therefore show that the students are strongly addicted to social networking usage

Research Question 7

What is the effect of social networking on academic performance of the students? The items on the table below provided the answers to research question vii. The table and analyses of the contents are presented below:

Table 7: The effects of social networking on academic performance

Effect	Frequency	%
Positively	98	20.8
Negatively	198	41.9
Never	176	35.8
TOTAL	472	100

Table 7 shows that 20.8% of the respondents agreed that, the use of SNSs positively affects their academics performances, 41.9% are negatively affected while 35.8% are not affected in any way by their use of the SNSs. Findings therefore shows that majority of the students are of the view that, too much use of social network negatively affect their academic performances.

Research Question 8

Which access point does the students used for the Internet? The items on the table below provided the answers to research question 8. The table and analyses of the contents are presented below:

Table 8: Point of accessing Internet and the social networking sites

Point of access	Frequency	%
School Computer room	-	-
School Library	-	-
Café	52	11
Home (Broadband)	12	2.5
Mobile Internet (phone)	408	86.4
Total	472	100

Table 8 above 11% of the respondents access the internet and the SNS through cafe, 2.5% of the respondents access it through the broadband while 86.4% access it through their mobile phones. Findings therefore show that the students access the internet and the SNS most with their mobile phones.

5 Discussion

This study surveyed on the Internet access and the social networking media among students of Gateway (ICT) Polytechnic, Saapade. Findings of the study give fresh insight into how students of Gateway (ICT) Polytechnic, Saapade utilize the Internet and social networking sites. The study has demonstrated that there is high use of Internet and the social media by the students, which they regard as an avenue for communication, information and sources of entertainment, while they perceived it as something interesting that they can use to improve their academic performances. Majority of the respondents declared that the Internet and social media has impacted positively on their academic and social lives. Based on the above we can admit that the objectives of the study proposed at beginning of this study were achieved.

Summary of Findings

- i. The Gateway Polytechnic students use their mobile devices to access the Internet and social media.
- ii. The students use social media to connect, interact, share information and chat with friends.
- iii. That social media has affected their attitude of reading their books.
- iv. The students of the polytechnic do make use of Internet.
- v. The students use the Internet when the need for it arises.
- vi. The students use the Internet mainly for chatting, obtaining educational and research information
- vii. The social networking media has negatively influenced students.
- viii. The students are strongly addicted to social networking usage
- ix. The students are of the view that, too much use of social network negatively affects their academic performances.

6 Conclusion and Recommendation

The study has revealed that the level of utilization of the Internet and the social networking media is high in polytechnics. Even though there is high usage of it by the students, it did not reflect that they are using it for academic pursuit. The study concludes that the students believed that social media is an essential medium that help them to interact, communicate and gather information. The study concludes that the students should be warned on the frequency of use of the internet and the social media so that it does not turn to addictive use of them because anything addictive could turn negative and eat into the study and other related time schedules of the students. In other words, addictive internet and social media use could negatively affect students' performance in their educational pursuits.

The study recommends that students should be encouraged to use Social Media in ways that could be beneficial to them and the school should also provide access point in the library and the computer rooms for students use so that they can be monitored against entering into sites that can have negative effect on them.

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