Abstract

Sara A. Alsaadani

Facebook posts and design pedagogy: An Egyptian case study of social media communication in support of an architectural studio.

The use of Facebook in support of higher education has been increasing since its inception. This is particularly significant in developing countries as universities do not always have adequate access to learning management systems. Facebook is also the social media platform that is most commonly used in support of architectural design studios to mitigate the ever-increasing numbers of student enrolment and budget cuts that tend to increase student-to-instructor ratios. The social media platform allows increased contact hours between faculty members and students of architectural departments, and enhances computer supported collaborations between its users, while increasing the levels of communication throughout the pedagogical design process. Although, numerous English-language academic articles have been published on the use of Facebook in higher education in general, to date only a handful of studies examine Facebook use in support of the traditional architectural design studio. An even smaller number of studies attempt to understand how post categories created on such Facebook groups may facilitate communication between faculty and students and/or peer-to-peer discussions while few post categorization systems are proposed, these do not align with the particular nature of design education and architectural studio set-ups. The purpose of this work is to therefore propose a framework to be used in the categorization of posts created in Facebook groups created to support architectural design studio education and tailored to the architectural studio context. This may further facilitate the understanding of communication occurring on such Facebook groups and may be used in further analyses. To achieve this, a two-stage qualitative methodology was used. The first stage consisted of researchers’ observations and a thematic analysis of posts posted on a closed Facebook group that is created in support of an architectural design studio in Cairo, Egypt which is the case study investigated in this research. The study investigates all posts made within the group for the duration of 3 academic years, which allowed the identification of 16 distinct categories. A follow-up survey was then conducted with a sample of students, to triangulate and validate the initially extracted categories in accordance with students’ preferences, which allowed the higher categorization of 4 broader categories, in which the initially extracted 16 categories could be re-organized. The classifications identified appear to be the most detailed in all the literature reviewed, and are potentially beneficial not only for enhancing computer supported communication in architectural education, but also valuable for enhancing the use of social media in design pedagogy in general.