

The Journal of Information Technology for Development

CALL FOR PAPERS

Social Media for ICT for Development: Outlining Debates, Theory and Praxis

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Aims and Scope

The special issue invites contributions on Social Media and Development with an emphasis on societal change including the dynamics of civic engagement and the wider context of development objectives such as poverty alleviation. As mobile internet technologies rapidly penetrate everyday lives of the next billion, there is an acute need to study the transformations wrought by them at the level of society (macro), organisations or institutions (meso) and the individual (micro).

Mobile and fixed line web-based social media offer potential in developing countries to empower individuals and groups by supporting such applications as citizen reporting, crowd sourcing and education. Social media may contribute to poverty alleviation by facilitating sharing of resources (time, expertise, support); information (job opportunities, benefits advice, influence); opportunities for capacity-building (to develop skills or start an enterprise); and enables collective action and influence (improving a local area, social campaigning, ensuring a voice in local affairs). It can also reduce corruption and increase institutional transparency, thus improving the effectiveness of state poverty reduction initiatives (Afridi 2011, Bertot et al., 2010). Importantly, social media afforded hitherto unavailable networked resources and identity creations building a virtual repository of expressive behaviours and social capital. However there is also a dark-side of social media use, from cyber-bullying, to mindless ‘buzzing’ in the competition among business organisations, to organising riots and spreading hatred in the society. In addition the use of Social Media assumes the availability of access to IT infrastructure that in some developing and emerging economies is still problematic as it is concentrated only in the most developed parts of the countries. In some emerging democracies, too, governments have different opinions in the way they control the use of Internet and social media in terms of censorship and content monitoring. The aim of this special issue is to present these debates – to discuss the extent to which social media can contribute to development and what condition within which the potential of this technology can be realised and harnessed for developmental purposes.

Topics addressed

1. Social media for alleviating poverty and capacity building
2. Social media for political activism
3. Social media, civil society, and civic engagement
4. To broaden the scope of ICT-enabled development models from a development 2.0 perspective. (E.g. Twitter, Blogs, Facebook etc., countries for political activism e.g. Indonesia).
5. Case studies of social behaviors and practices of online life, among diasporic communities, multifarious interest groups and social segments.

6. Exploring, analyzing and theorizing best practices of studying social media in development? Examples may include social media and disaster relief, reducing corruption in developing countries; or use of particular social media
7. Issues around development and empowerment, equalities and inequalities. Topics may include how beneficiaries of power are redistributed: Does the fall of regimes in the so called Arab Spring for example provide examples of enlivened radicalism and empowered populations resulting from social media? Or is this explanation reflective of a naive technological determinism? Utopian / dystopian perspectives on social media effects
8. Reflexivity between the studies of Social Media and Development: analysis of how discourses around social media affect use of technology and how discourses of social media affect the study of development for example the role of language, ethnicity, technological shortfalls, ethics
9. Methodological approaches in social media studies e.g.; ethnographic, on-line research, big data mining etc. can inform each other and contribute to social media studies
10. Links between social media in the developing world and development, for example the potential of social media for Open Development.

e) **Special issue editors**

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f) **Timeline**

Submissions due 15/01/2014 via the journal website

<http://itd.ist.unomaha.edu/itd/?p=submitGuide>

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