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Using Drawings as a Means of Summarizing Reading Passages in a University English Reading Classroom

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## Foreword

It is quite a commendable feat that within a short span of time since its last issue, the University Publication Centre (UPENA) of UiTM Pulau Pinang has produced its sixth volume of the Esteem Academic Journal UiTM Pulau Pinang. Of course, this issue would not come into fruition if not for the firm commitment and close cooperation of all the relevant parties involved.

First and foremost, I would like to extend my thanks to Associate Professor Mohd Zaki Abdullah, Director of UiTM Pulau Pinang, Associate Professor Dr Mohamad Abdullah Hemdi, Deputy Director of Academic Affairs and Associate Professor Ir. Damanhuri Jamalludin, Deputy Director of Research, Industry Linkages, Development & Maintenance for offering their continuous and untiring support. They were the driving force behind the successful publication of this journal. Time and again they rendered invaluable advice on how to address the problems that UPENA encountered in the publication of this academic journal.

UPENA highly appreciates the comments and expertise proffered by the panel of external reviewers when articles in this journal were sent to them for blind reviews. Likewise, UPENA also salutes the dedicated panel of language editors for their time in editing the authors' manuscripts.

However, all the assistance tendered would have been a futile effort if there were no authors willing to submit their articles for publication. This journal comprises articles on the social sciences and technology disciplines. I am proud to state that there is no shortage of writers from Penang and the response from them in these two disciplines has been overwhelming.

Lastly, I would like to urge more lecturers to submit their articles to UPENA. Authors' contributions of articles in this refereed journal help to disseminate and share knowledge with readers. It also helps to elevate the status of UiTM Pulau Pinang in research writing. In return, the authors gain recognition from the wider audience and also consideration for promotion in their career. It is a win-win situation for both parties. So lecturers, what are you waiting for? Put on your thinking caps and start contributing your research articles to UPENA.

Liaw Shun Chone

*Chief Editor*

ESTEEM Vol. 6, No. 2, 2010

(Social Sciences and Technology)

# The Effectiveness of Blog as a Social Networking Site for Students

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## ABSTRACT

*Students nowadays are very 'extreme' in communication especially in building networks among themselves. Besides mobile communication, they are also exposed to online communication such as emails, instant messaging and most of all, social networking site such as weblogs. Most of the weblogs are managed by individuals; hence it can establish new type of social relations which develop a social network. Therefore, this research was done since many students choose blogs as a mean to communicate and extend their network. A survey has been done by distributing questionnaires to students from various fields. The results show most of the students think that blogging is effective as through blogs, they can share interests, feelings, experiences and knowledge, keep in touch with old friends and meeting with new friends while only a few of them feels that blog is a healthy hobby and activity. In conclusion, blogging has been identified as an effective social networking site for students.*

**Keywords:** *online communication, social networking, blogging, weblog*

## Introduction

Social networking website such as weblog is the most popular online communication tool nowadays. It allows communication anywhere and any time whereby students use this tool not only for communications but

also to find friends, express their feelings and share ideas among themselves. Hence, this research was done to identify the effectiveness of using blog as a social networking site for students.

## **Literature Review**

There are many ways to promote better interaction among students. A variety of techniques for both in-class and outside-of-class communication have been utilised over the years. since the explosion of Internet in the 1990s, this communication has taken the forms of e-mail, listservs, bulletin boards and others (Higgins, 2004). Thus, to meet the needs of students to have interactive Internet-based communication, the latest communication technology that can be used is the weblogs.

Nowadays, millions of people around the world, young and old, knowingly and willingly use social networking sites such as Facebook, Friendster, MySpace, and other sites to communicate and find friends, dates, and jobs (Acquisti, 2006). All these sites have also created a new form of socialisation and interaction.

Social networking sites group specific individuals or organisations together. Most of these sites supports the “friending” with other people, provide an individual profile page for each user, and incorporate content sharing in the forms of photo and list sharing (Geyer, 2008) .Through these sites, students can build their own network of friends besides sharing common interests or goals. Social networking sites, include the ability to post written materials to the web like blogs do. They revolve around the ability of an individual to build a web “presence” and to create visible links with others in the network.

A weblog is a website which has some common element, such as a list of links to other weblogs, an archive of past stories (also called posts), and permanent links (permalinks) so that anyone can mention (by linking) an annotation, or a function that allows the addition of comments (Nardi, 2004).

The social network created around a weblog is formed by the authors or editors of the weblogs, the people who comments their posts, and readers who may also have their own weblog (Prieto, 2007).

Student can get advantages when using blog. For instance, students share their learning experience and express their thoughts to the instructor and peers through course blogs (Maag, 2005). Besides, students who read blog posts but rarely write are also able to benefit from reading

their peer entries and comment to give feedback. Weblogs also provide many features and functions which can attract students to use them. It offers lots of information to reflect students personalities. It is not only an effective medium of communication but also as a form of identification whereby through blogs, students can share their everyday lives, thoughts, experience and feelings with other people around them.

## **Methodology**

This study involves primary data whereby questionnaires were distributed to students from Universiti Teknologi MARA, Pulau Pinang and Seberang Perai Polytechnics. These students come from various fields such as engineering, pharmacy, hotel management and computer science.

The secondary data involve data from library and Internet search, books, publications, journals, magazines and also observation on certain weblogs.

## **Results and Discussions**

### **Blog Effectiveness**

This section will explain respondents' opinion on how blog as a social networking site can be effective to students, their views on the effectiveness of blogging activities and the category of blog effectiveness that students feel as the most effective. Four effective activities using blog that have been identified in this study are knowledge-sharing; sharing interests, feelings and experiences; healthy hobby; and keeping in touch with old friends and meeting new friends.

### **Blog as a Social Networking Site**

In order to identify the effectiveness of blog as a social networking site to students, we have given questionnaires to ask the students' opinion whether blog is an effective social networking site. Therefore, in Figure 1, the bar chart shows the number of respondents based on their opinion of blog effectiveness as a social networking site. Majority of the students thought that blog as a social networking site was effective while only 3 of the total respondents thought that blog is not effective.

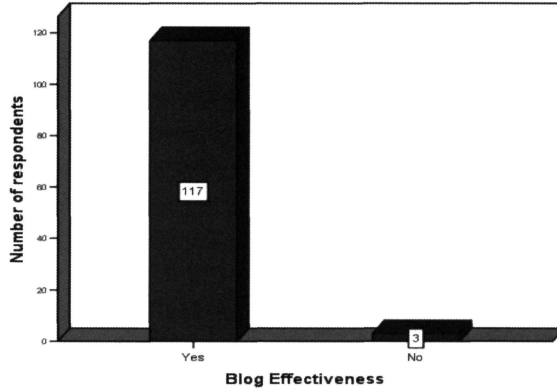


Figure 1: Number of Respondents Based on Their Opinion on Blog Effectiveness as a Social Networking Site

The next question ask the respondenst from different programmes regarding their opinion on the effectiveness of blog as a social networking site. Figure 2 shows that majority of the students from various programme thought that blog as a social networking site was effective whereby only 3 respondents from Pharmacy, Mechanical Engineering and Information Technology programme thought that blog as a social networking site was not effective.

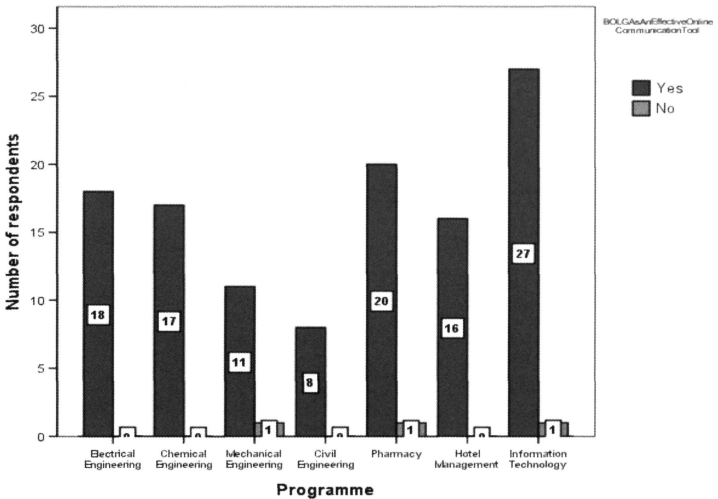


Figure 2: Number of Respondents Based on Their Programme Majoring and Their Opinion on the Effectiveness of Blog as a Social Networking Site



## Categories of Blog Effectiveness

All the activities done in blogs were categorised in order to identify blog effectiveness among students. Figure 3 below shows the number of respondents and the categories of activities in blogging that they thought were effective. It shows that 86 respondents felt that sharing interests, feelings and experiences were the most effective activities followed by 74 respondents also felt that keeping in touch with old friends and meeting with new friends were effective while 73 respondents felt that knowledge sharing was effective. A small number of respondents are 27 of them felt that blog was a healthy hobby and activity.

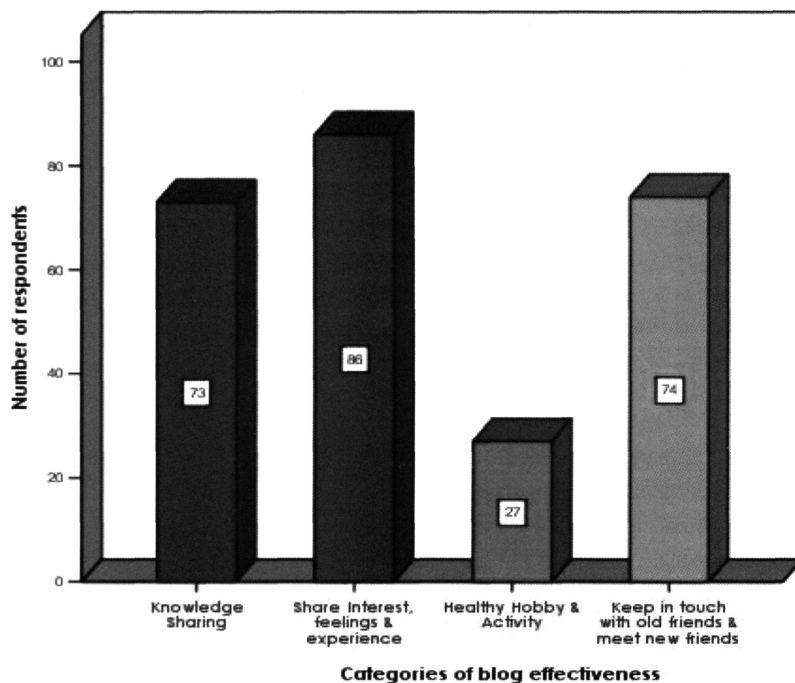


Figure 3: Number of Respondents Based on Categories of Blog Effectiveness

## The Most Effective Category in Blogging Activities

For the categories of blogging activities, students needed to select the most effective category in blogging activities to identify the effectiveness

of blog as a social networking site to students. Figure 4 illustrates the number of respondents based on their opinion of the most effective blogging activity. From the total of 117 respondents, the largest number of respondents which are 57 of them felt that blog was the most effective means to keep in touch with old friends and to meet new friends. On the other hand, another 36 respondents thought that sharing interests, feelings and experiences was the most effective activity in blogging, followed by a respondent who consider blog as healthy hobby and activity while the remaining 23 respondents believed blog was the most effective for knowledge sharing.

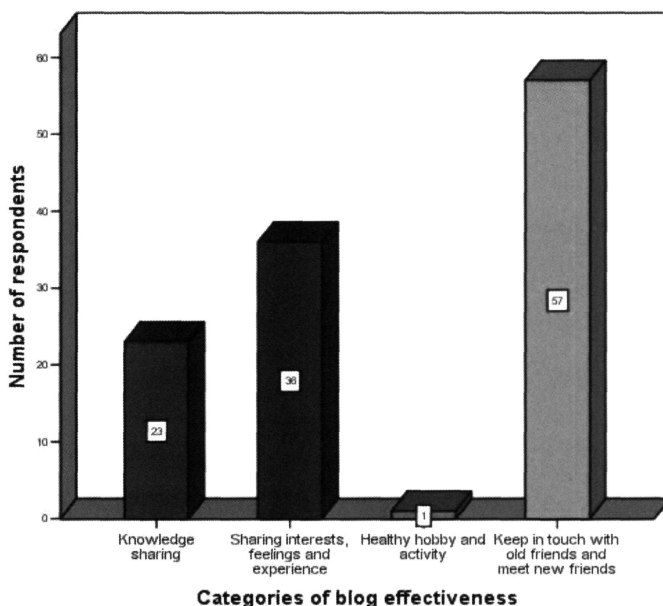


Figure 4: Number of Respondents Based on the Most Effective Category in Blogging Activities

Students from different genders may also have different opinion on the effectiveness of blog as a social networking site. Figure 5 shows the number of respondents based on genders and their opinion on the most effective blogging activity. Most of the respondents feel that the most effective activity using blog was keeping in touch with old friends and meeting new friends. However, only 1 male respondent felt that blog was a healthy hobby and activity.

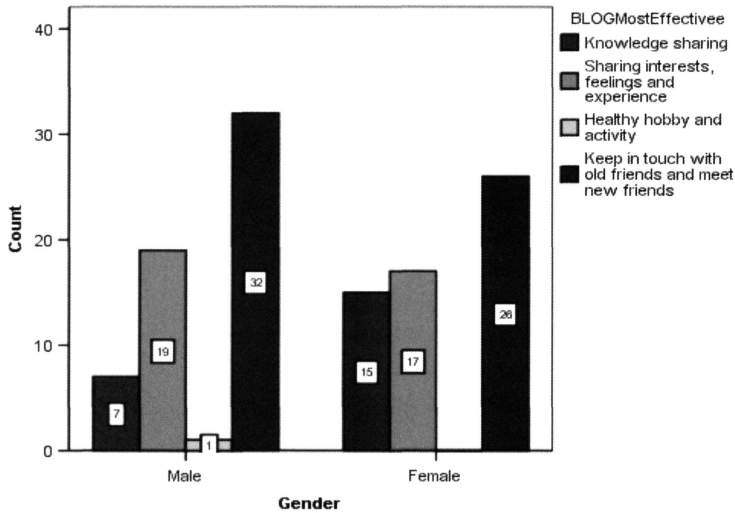


Figure 5: Number of Respondents Based on Genders and Their Opinion on the Most Effective Blogging Activity

## Findings

In order to identify respondents’ feedback on the effectiveness of respondents’ opinion on how blog as a social networking site can be effective, the effectiveness of blogging activities and the categories of blog effectiveness were analyzed. For that reason, four effective activities using blog that are knowledge-sharing; sharing interests, feelings and experiences; healthy hobby; and keeping in touch with old friends and meeting new friends’ are added to the questionnaire in order to identify the blog effectiveness.

From the analysis, we have found that 97.5% of respondents agreed that blog was an effective online communication tools whereby only 2.5% of the total respondents thought that blog was not an effective online communication tool. This is because blog actually provides many features and functions that offer usability to users.

From the graphs that show number of respondents from different programmes and their opinion on how blog as a social networking site can be effective to students, it shows that 97.5% of the students from various programmes thought that blog was an effective online communication tool whereby only 2.5% respondents from Pharmacy,

Mechanical Engineering and Information Technology programme thought that blog was not an effective online communication tool. This is probably because pharmacy and mechanical engineering students are not familiar with IT whereas the particular IT students may be the first year students. They were not aware of blog and did not know the functionality of blog.

For the graph on the number of respondents and the categories of blogging activities that they thought were effective, the respondents can choose more than one answers. As a result, it shows that 71.6% of the respondents felt that sharing interests, feelings and experiences were the most effective activities followed by 61.6% of the respondents who felt that keeping in touch with old friends and meeting new friends were effective whereas 60.8% of the respondents felt that knowledge sharing was effective. Nevertheless, 22.5% of the respondents felt that blog was a healthy hobby and activity. The respondents chose sharing interests, feelings and experiences as the most effective categories in blogging activities as they thought that may be other activities were not suitable and confidential to be shared with their friends in the blog.

It is important to find out the most effective blogging activity. Therefore, the graph on the number of respondents based on their opinion on the most effective blogging activity shows that from the total number of 117 respondents who thought that blogging as a social networking site was effective, 49.1% of the respondents felt that keeping in touch with old friends and meeting new friends is the most popular blogging activity. However, about 30.5% of the respondents preferred to share interests, feelings and experiences in blog while 19.5% of them thought that knowledge sharing could be the most effective blogging activity. Only 0.9% of the respondents thought that blogging could be a healthy hobby and activity. These explain that the respondents believed that blog was most effective in keeping in touch with old friends and meeting new friends.

A comparison was also done between the respondents' genders and their opinion on the most effective blogging activity. As we can see, there is a different opinions between a male and a female student towards the blogging activity. Hence, from the graph on the number of respondents based on their genders and opinion on the most effective blog activity, it shows that 54.2% of the respondents whether they are male or female felt that the most effective activity using blog was keeping in touch with old friends and meeting new friends. However, only 0.9% of the male respondents felt that blog was a healthy hobby and activity.

## **Conclusion**

From the above results and findings, the objectives of the study has been achieved whereby the results show that most of the students felt that blog as a social networking site was effective as through blogs, students can share knowledge, interests, feelings and experiences; keeping in touch with old friends and meeting new friends as well as blogging can also be a healthy hobby and activity. Based on the research, the respondents from Information Technology (IT) Programme are the most interested in using and having their own blogs compared to respondents from other programmes such as Engineering, Pharmacy and Hotel Management. This is probably because students from IT field are more literate and keen to explore and experience new technology in their area of expertise, particularly in communication, network and computer technology subject.

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