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# The Use of New Media Technology among New Media Communication Students in UniMAP

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## Abstract

*This paper will illustrate the use of new media technology among New Media Communication Students in UniMAP, detailing in what purpose the technology is being used, and when. Other than that, the devices preferred to be used will also be discussed. The purpose of use of new media technology includes for research purposes; including for completing assignments received, as well as for general knowledge and leisure. Other purposes include social networking, entertainment, and lastly, for their personal and family business purposes. All details relating to each purpose will be discussed comprehensively in several sections.*

**Keywords:** *New media, social media, technology, communication, Internet.*

## 1. Introduction

New media technology has undoubtedly become an integral part of the everyday life of the new generation, which includes teenagers and tweens, or the youngsters as a whole. In addition to social activities, this generation is using new media technology for a wide range of purposes, including for socializing, leisure, and educational purposes, including for completing group assignments by sharing and gathering information. According to Arnett (1995), young people make active choices of the media they use according to their personalities, socialization needs, and personal identification needs, and that young people will select and use the media to best fulfill their individual needs (Chan & Fang (2007). Fasae & Adegbilero-Iwari (2016) stated in their paper that according to Kord (2008), various types of social media are now being embraced by students in higher education institutions as the best means to interact with or relate to their colleagues, friends and family. This paper will illustrate the use of new media technology among New Media Communication Students in UniMAP, of which the objective of the study, methodology, as well as the discussions of the findings are included further below.

## 2. The Use of New Media Technology

The internet represents a fantastic world of opportunity for children and young people, and considerable attention and concern are now focused on how the young consumers use the internet because they are seen as the “digital generation,” at the vanguard of new skills and technologies (Chan & Fang (2007). Since the expansion of the internet in the early 1990s, it has become customary for individuals to turn to the global information infrastructure whenever they need information and facts, as the internet is an unsurpassed repository of information of all kinds (Nwagwu, Jadekannbi, & Bello, 2009). These days, the use of Web 2.0 or the latest Web 3.0 exceeds the use of regular Web 1.0 internet. New Media Technology is the latest trend being used widely, as the importance of social networking media and the increasing trend of user generated content sites has been made clear by previous studies.

Fasae & Adegbilero-Iwari (2016) stated that the web, now interactive, is the most powerful technology tool to affect human communication in the twenty-first century. They also mentioned that social media, a major part of the new online media, has further emphasized the continuous influence of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) on everyone. Nwagwu, Jadekannbi, & Bello,

2009) mentioned in their paper that the internet could contribute to students' social interaction with their close ties, and this factor is often associated with people's commitment to groups, families, neighbourhoods and organizations, and that many youth use the internet to facilitate social interactions by e-mailing, chatting and instant messaging (IM). Hamade (2013) also stated that over the past few years, social media or social networking sites have been more popular than any other sites, especially among students and young population. These days, social applications were the most popular being used by youths and those included Facebook, e-mail and Twitter (Mansour, 2016). Shao (2009) stated that people increasingly make use of social media to "learn how to make sense of things from their peers on just about any subject", and as a source of news and information, user generated content media have been influencing the concept of "searching." He also mentioned that the users are as likely to find a user generated content site about the product as they are to find the corporate site when searching, but place far more trust in the users than the corporation itself. The users are more comfortable in using the user generated media site as it is easy to be used, and that the users themselves are in control of the content. They actively contribute, share, search for and consume content; plus works and plays, on social media platforms (Bolton et.al, 2013).

### **3. Problem Statement & Objective of Study**

The adoption of new media technology in daily activities is increasingly widespread in various fields. The average community uses new media technology as it is easy to access despite of time or place. Students are also the major clients of this new media technology, as it is said to be a medium for learning processes. According to Fasae & Adegbilero-Iwari (2016), Google, Twitter and YouTube are used extensively today, indicating that it provides intellectual social platforms for young people. However, it is largely believed that the use of this new media technology is just a matter of fun without giving any benefit to the students. This is because it contains various entertainment elements that make the students more focused on fun instead of using them towards education which could benefit them. This is evident from the results of the previous study conducted by Garoufallou & Charitopoulou (2011) entitled 'The Use and Awareness of Web 2.0 Tools by Greek LIS Students' where the study shows that the majority of students are motivated to participate in social networks by simply enjoying the fun and curiosity but ignoring the potential advantages offered in the social networks in terms of professional networks and knowledge exchange.

This situation has attracted the researchers to study the level of use of new media technology among university students. Seeing then whether the use of the new media technology affects their learning processes in later studies. This research has 3 different objectives, as listed below;

- To investigate how the students allocate their time in using new media;
- To study how the students use the internet for different purposes;
- To examine how new media choice vary by activity.

### **4. Research Paradigm**

A survey was conducted to examine the use of new media technology among New Media Communication students in Universiti Malaysia Perlis (UniMAP). The target population was first year undergraduate students. Hard copies of the questionnaires were distributed through face-to-face interactions. Briefing session was conducted with the interviewers about the objectives of the study and the exact meaning of all the questions. All the questions in the questionnaire were close-ended. The data were collected in June 2016.

#### **4.1 Measurement**

The instrument used in this study is questionnaire, of which divided into several parts, and the types of questions consisted of multiple-choice questions and Likert Scale form of questions. Included in the questionnaire is the purpose of the study, and every answer is solely based on the individuals respond without peer discussions and recommendations. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software is used to analyze the data collected.

The instrument is designed based on the conceptual framework suggested in The Use of ICT in Rural School Libraries (see Journal of Asian Scientific Research. 3(6): 587-599), focusing on the ‘purpose of use’ as the independent variable.

#### 4.2 Sample profile

The sample consisted of 125 students from Bachelor of New Media Communication Programme, School of Human Development & Technocommunication (iKOM), Universiti Malaysia Perlis (UniMAP), Malaysia of which all of them are full-time students. They are of first year students, aged from 20 to 21 years old. Among the respondents, 35.2 percent were males and 64.8 percent were females.

### 5. Findings & Discussion

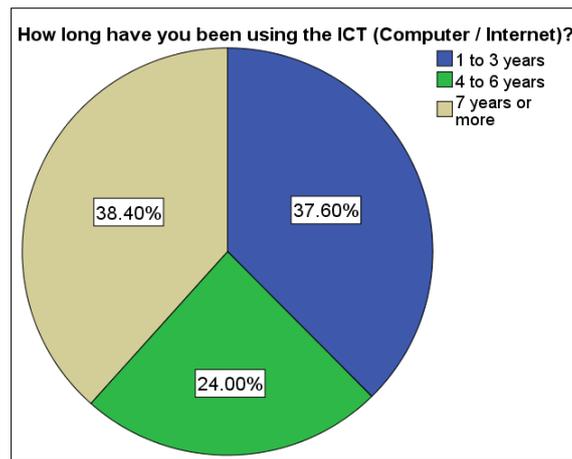


Figure 1. How long have you been using the New Media Technology (Internet)?

The first question is to identify how long have the students been exposed to the use of new media. Here, it shows that 38.4% of the students have been using the internet for more than 7 years. Followed by 37.6% of students been using the internet for 1-3 years, and the lowest is 24% students have been using the internet for 4-6 years. This shows that the majority of the students have been exposed to the internet for quite a long time, and it can be concluded that all of these students are knowledgeable and skillful in using the new media technology.

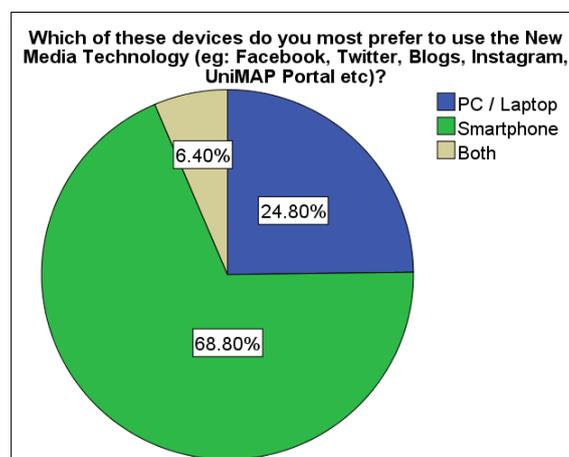


Figure 2. Which of these devices do you most prefer to use the New Media Technology (eg: Facebook, Twitter, Blogs, Instagram, UniMAP Portal etc)?

This question is asked to identify which device the students prefer most to use while browsing or using the new media technology. From the result, it is clear that the majority of the students prefer to use the smartphone, compared to only 31% students prefer to use the laptop. This can be supported by the nature of the device itself, of which it is portable, user friendly, and gets the jobs done. According to Mansour (2016), students used smartphones more for communication purposes by using applications installed in their smartphones, such as Google Mobile, Facebook, e-mail, Twitter, YouTube and Wikipedia Mobile. Other than communicating, students also use the smartphone for socializing including instant messaging, following the news and playing games.

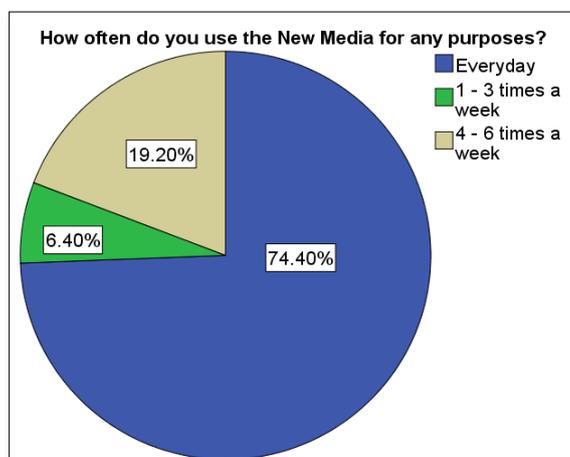


Figure 3. How often do you use the New Media for any purposes?

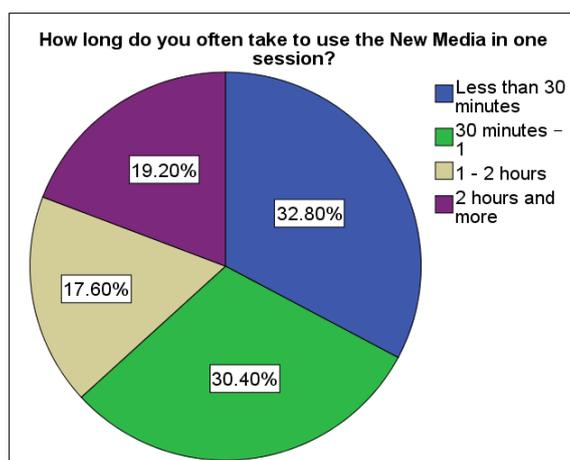


Figure 4. How long do you often take to use the New Media IN ONE SESSION?

Figure 3 and 4 show the frequencies of new media technology usage. A large majority of the students use the new media everyday. For each session of the usage, 63.2% students take less than 1 hour, 17.6% take 1-2 hours, and 19.2% use the new media for more than 2 hours in each session. Here, it can be concluded that the students are regular users of new media technology, and that this technology is a part of their life. New media allow individuals to be visible to others and establish or maintain connections with others, as these sites can be used for work-related issues, personal issues, romantic relationships, and shared interests such as music, arts, sports, or politics (Hamade, 2013).

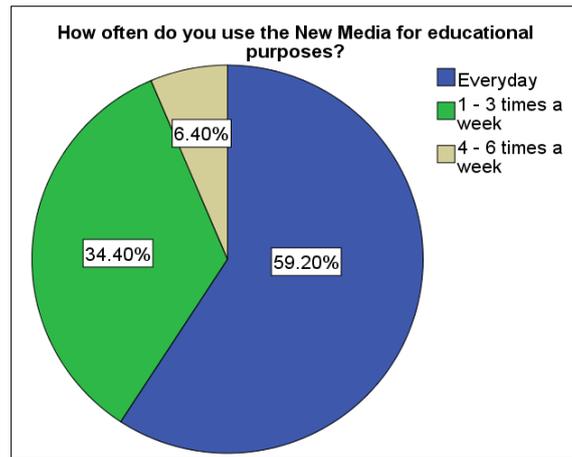


Figure 5. How often do you use the New Media for educational purposes?

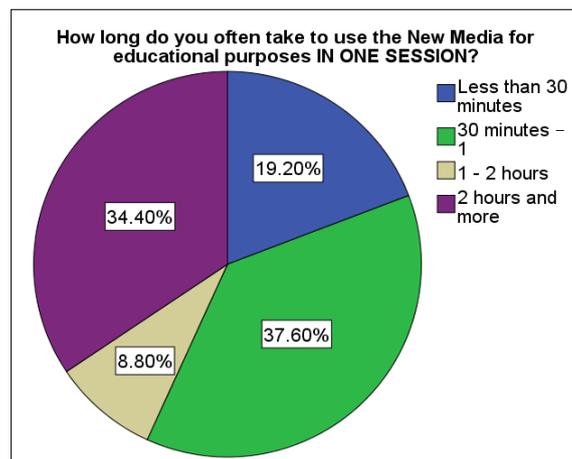


Figure 6. How long do you often take to use the New Media for educational purposes IN ONE SESSION?

Figure 5 and 6 show the frequencies of using the new media for education purposes. 59.2% students use them everyday, and the rest use them less for this purpose. And for each session, 34.4% students use them for more than 2 hours, the rest of them use them less than that. The availability of a lot of apps and website these days make the educational process more fun, easy, and effective. For example, the use of university portal and e-learning can make the teaching and learning process more attractive, and the availability of Facebook and Whatsapp group enable discussions to take place anytime, anywhere. These two Figures show quite a difference result from Figure 3 and 4, of which the frequencies are visibly higher. This data shows that apart from educational purposes, the students also use the new media technology for other purposes.

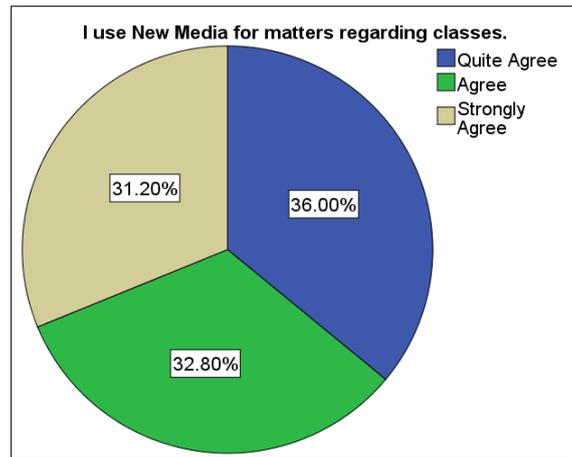


Figure 7. I use New Media for matters regarding classes.

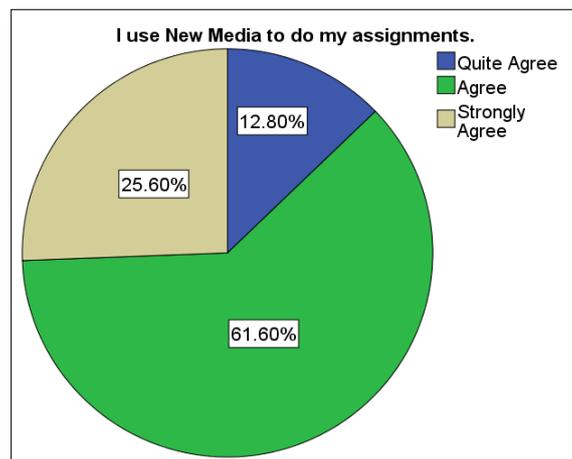


Figure 8. I use New Media to do my assignments.

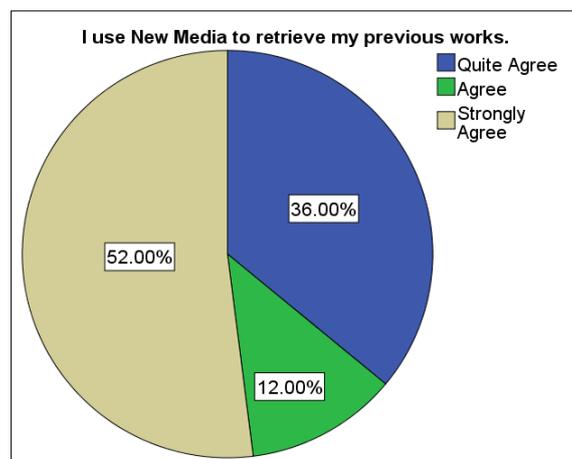


Figure 9. I use New Media to retrieve my previous works.

From Figure 7, 8, and 9, it can be concluded that the students use new media technology for matters regarding classes, to do their assignments, as well as to retrieve their previous works. Here, the students unanimously agree that they do use the new media technology for educational purposes. Perry, Perry, & Hosack-Curlin (2006) mentioned in their study that students also use the internet for

academic purposes, as they can e-mail their instructors when they have questions, and that the students may find electronic communication less threatening than speaking in class. The use of new media technology in education provides opportunity to integrate all subject areas. It can motivate discussions between peers and lecturers without having to meet face to face, and be able to receive a prompt reply once the message is sent. The students may also upload announcements in social media, or having an online class, by using Skype to communicate. Other than that, there are also applications such as Dropbox or email to back up assignments. This ensures their works are safe and can be accessed easily. Furthermore, the students these days prefer to search for e-book instead of going to the physical library. This saves a lot of time, and a lot of tasks can be completed by only connecting to the internet with the help of new media technology tools.

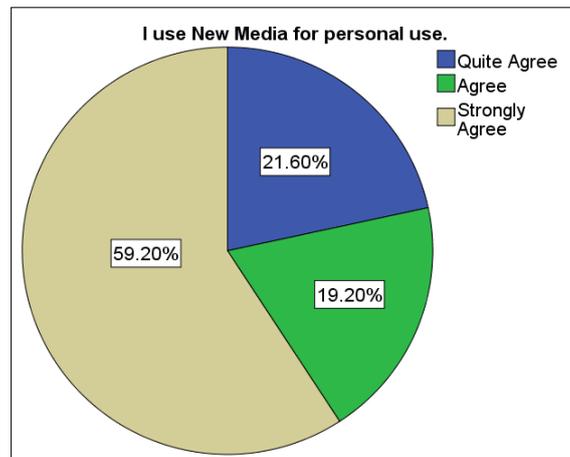


Figure 10. I use New Media for personal use.

From Figure 10, it can be seen that the students also use the new media technology for personal use. With 59.2% and 19.2% of students strongly agree and agree respectively, and 21.6% quite agree, it shows a unanimous result that all of them are using the new media technology for personal purposes. After a tedious academic day, access to the internet can be a good companion to the students for their leisure in their hostels (Ani, 2010). There are more options for communicating there are a lot of applications which allow them to talk and send message for free. These applications provide real time information sharing, which allows the students to contact family regularly, or to find new and old friends. According to Chun & Hann (2007), online messenger users typically communicate with their close friends, family members, or co-workers, who are on their buddy lists. Other uses include checking bank accounts and online shopping without having to use the ATM machine, or to use Google Translate for assignments, or to improve self vocabulary.

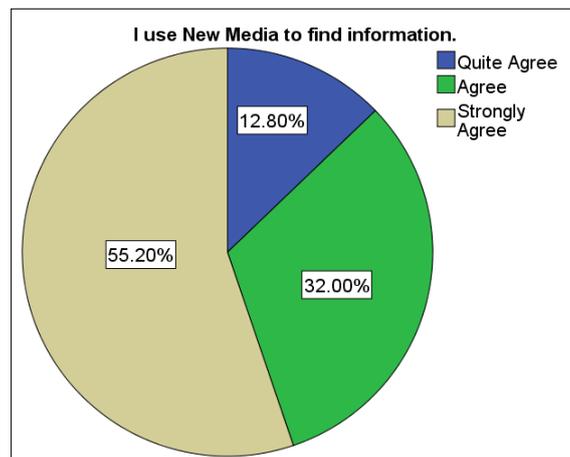


Figure 11. I use New Media to find information.

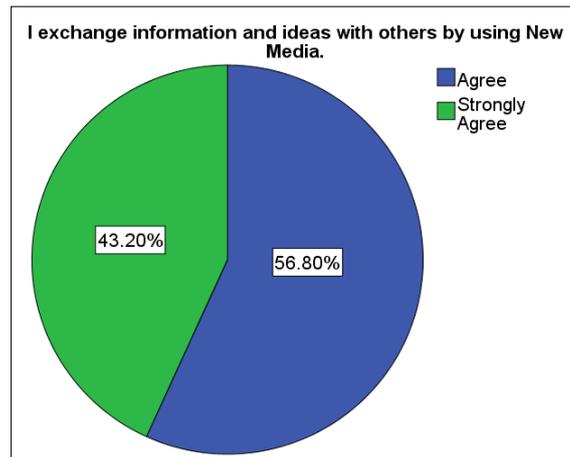


Figure 12. I exchange information and ideas with others by using New Media.

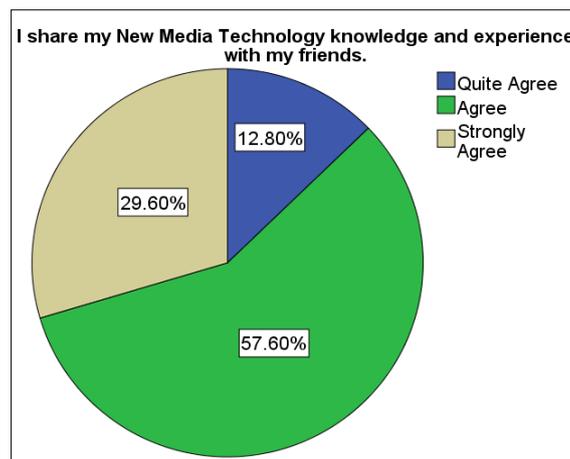


Figure 13. I share my New Media Technology knowledge and experience with my friends.

Information seeking is driven by people's desire to increase awareness and knowledge of one's self, others, and the world (Shao, 2009). Figure 11, 12, and 13 indicate the questions regarding the use of information gained from using the new media technology. The students all agree that they use new media to find information, and all of them also strongly agree and agree that the use new media to exchange information and ideas with other people. Other than that, they also agree that they share their knowledge, skills, and experience in using new media technology with their friends. By doing so, these students can benefit the society as a whole, by providing knowledge and methods on using a more advanced technology. For instance, they can implement collaborative working and editing, such as by using Wikis. Other examples of the use of new media for finding information including reading news online rather than waiting for their turn to read the newspaper in a family home, or to find location or to travel everywhere by using GPS and Waze. A lot of available applications for different purposes can be used to make all traditional tasks becoming more fast, efficient, and of course, cost-friendly.

Figure 14 to Figure 22 (further below) all show the different applications or website frequently use by the students. A characteristic of the new information and communication technologies is the multi-function capacity, and in order to understand how the young consumers use the internet and the traditional media, we need to look into the specific uses or the specific motivations (Chan & Fang, 2007). Different applications serve different function. The students use different applications

according to their preferences and needs. One of the many reasons to use the new media technology is because of its interactivity and immediacy. It is easy for the students to find or update any information, easy for sharing, and the benefits to the youngsters these days is that they will be skillful by having the ability to analyze any message in any media, since almost all of these applications are user-friendly and some of them even offer sync function. Several accounts from different apps can be connected, and this promotes better function and meets the sophisticated lifestyle of the youngsters.

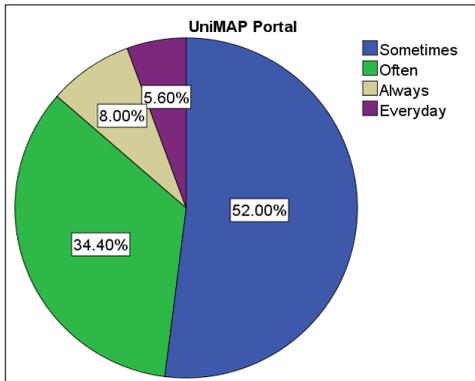


Figure 14. UniMAP Portal

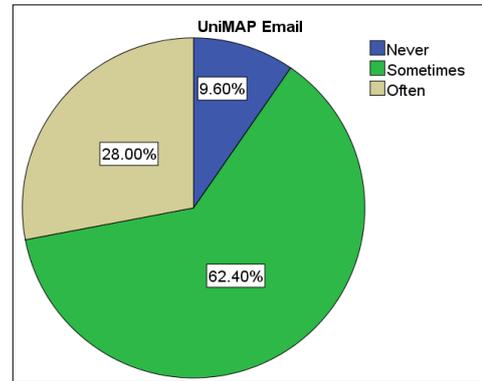


Figure 15. UniMAP Email

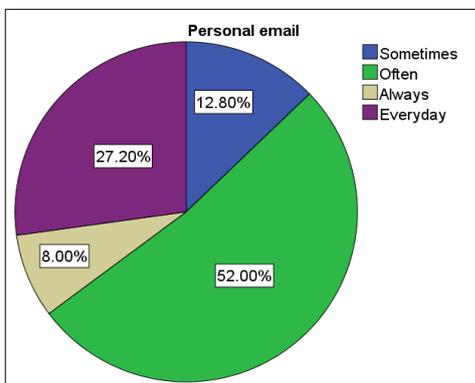


Figure 16. Personal email

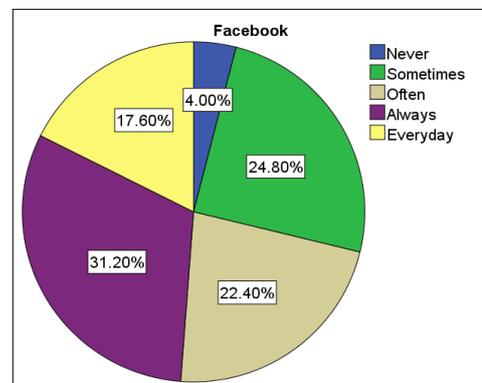


Figure 17. Facebook

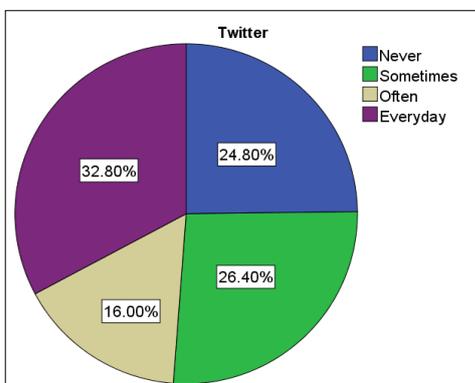


Figure 18. Twitter

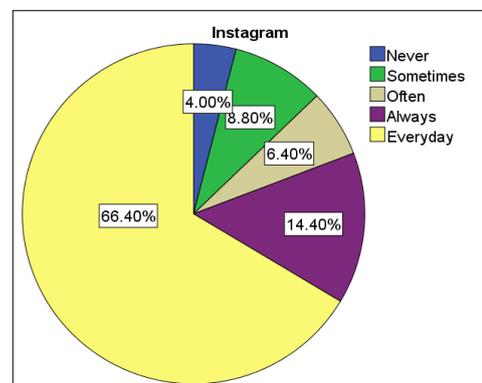


Figure 19. Instagram

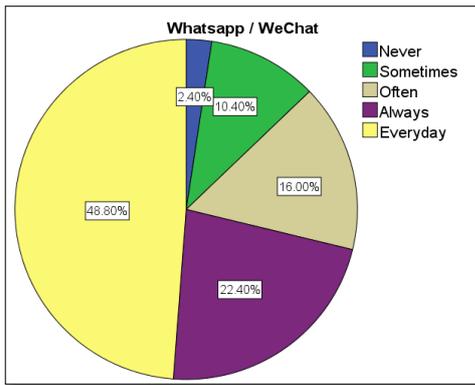


Figure 20. Whatsapp / WeChat

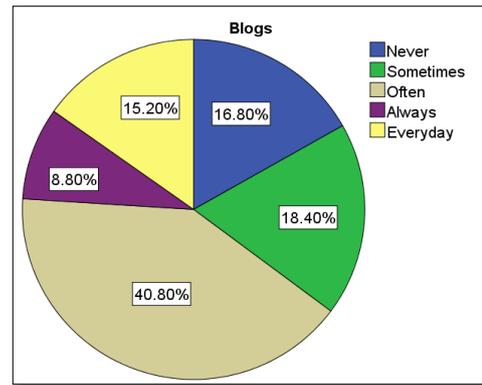


Figure 21. Blogs

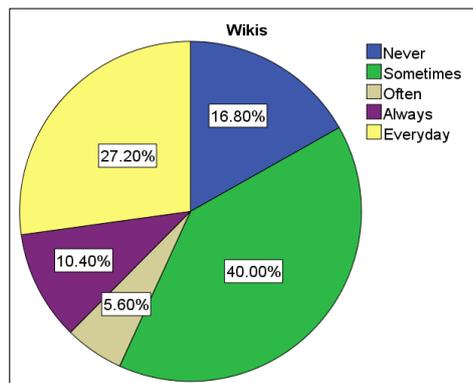


Figure 22. Wikis

From the pie charts, we can see different levels of usage for different types of new media technology. The use of social media is extensively more frequent than the use of regular Web 2.0, such as UniMAP Portal and Emails. The students mostly used Facebook, Instagram, and chat-based applications such as Whatsapp/ Wechat. These three major social media in the world are being accessed everyday by a majority of students, and this shows that the students are more interested and comfortable in using simple and user-friendly applications in connecting with others. Other Web 2.0 based applications such as Blogs and Wikis however are being used moderately, and this could indicate that the students accessed those sites in order to complete their tasks. Or in other words, the students use them only when they need to. This contradicted with the use of social media mentioned before, where they use them every single day to connect with friends and family. An extensive study on the purpose of usage for each application should follow, in order to further research on why they are selecting those applications and their intention of use for each.

## 6. Conclusion and Future Recommendations

The internet, which started with a simple browsing and e-mail experience, has now turned into a mechanism to creatively disseminate information (Hasim & Salman, 2010). Nwagwu, Jadekannbi, & Bello (2009) listed six purposes they perceived that students could use the internet for which are education, health, leisure, business, social and entertainment. They also stated that the infusion of the internet into higher education has intensified access to archived information sources from various parts of the world, thus it forms a first port of call for students and others when they seek for information, and as a result, institutions of higher learning are investing much to exploit the advantages of the information infrastructure for the benefit of the students. Other than solely for educational purposes, the students' activities when using the new media technology may benefit to their studies as well. For instance, the students may improve their reading, writing, and critical thinking skills through using new media technology, such as blogs, or forums.

There a lot of ways to cater the technological needs of the students. The institutions may use new media technology, namely social media to make the students actively engaged and increasing their communication skills. Other than that, they must also promote the implementation of attractive learning by using online videos and music, or interactive graphics to improve and enhance students' understanding and creativity. The institution should also put some measures to ensure that new media technology facilities in the university is adequate in catering the needs of the students, be it for educational or personal purposes. With that, it is hoped that the young generations will be able to keep moving forward towards the technological sophistication for a better future.

### **Acknowledgement**

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