



ECHOES BY
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How social media shaped my teaching experience

I
 My introduction to social media happened in August 2007. My childhood friend, Abhijit Chowdhury – Mithu – visited and gave me a “Facebook tutorial”.

Looking back, 2007 seems a generation ago. Facebook was in its infancy competing with Orkut and Myspace. During that competition, Facebook was defining the social media landscape, making it an integral part of our lives across generations as it has become today.

Before social media, I could electronically communicate with my students, via emails. However, internet access was not as good as it is today. Google Drive was not available till 2012. Sending large files in a single email was a fiddle; most email portals did not have the capacity. Facebook did have Groups in 2007. The groups in those days did not have the features of adding files and videos.

All this constrained collaborative learning. Learning was within the classroom only.

II
 As internet access became easy and Facebook became the all-in-one platform in social media, it was possible to keep up with my students. Soon, Facebook would be connected directly with Messenger, Instagram and WhatsApp, broadening its dimensions.

Parallel to this development, other databases started to develop. Specialised search engines for reference texts also began emerging. This was the missing link.

Sharing links to and from other platforms became easy. Mobile phones developed, and became affordable. Internet access in Bangladesh started to take its present form.

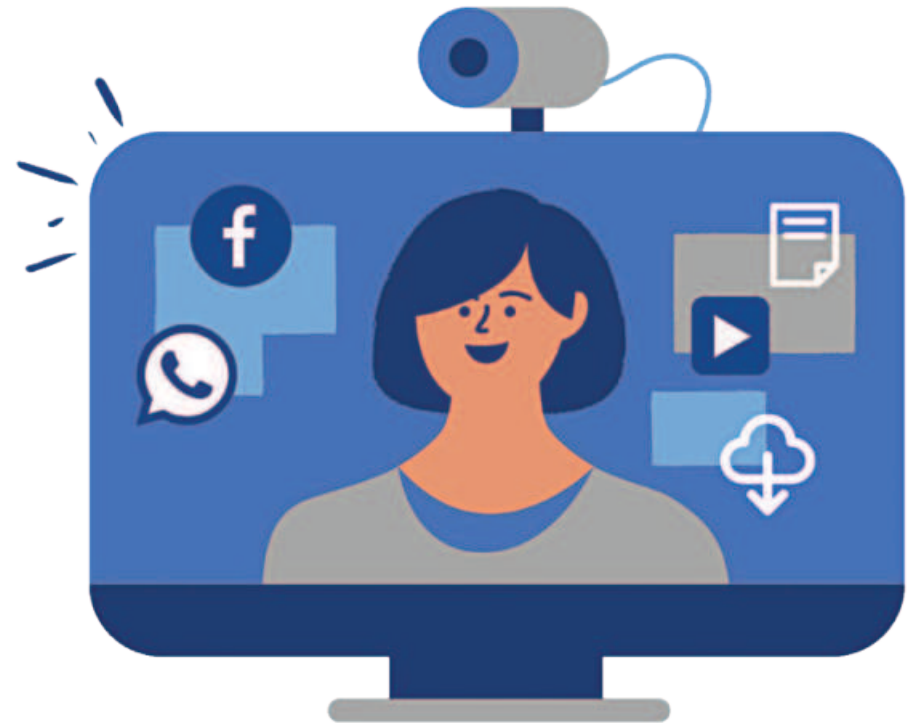
By 2012, Facebook Groups were ready to be used as a platform for collaborative learning. This led to a new experience for myself as an educator.

III
 When it comes to tech, I observe and/or discuss with young people. Today’s youth are a step ahead of us. If you treat them like adults, they respond like adults.

There are shy students in class who won’t ask questions. With Facebook Groups, all students started asking questions. Discussions became collaborative. When you write in text, you tend to think before writing. I could identify where my gaps were in a particular course. All of a sudden, the students and I were interacting intellectually. I was learning the ins and outs of different platforms from my students.

When the pandemic struck, Zoom, Google Meet, Facebook Live and others became the “new normal” platforms. I never liked online classes, but they opened a window none of us knew was possible. Social media went a few steps ahead. Different platforms could be synchronised.

As universities open up, hybrid classes – if they can be well-planned, executed, and monitored – hold a prospect in shaping teaching in our universities, colleges, and schools in the future.



DESIGN: KAZI AKIB BIN ASAD

IV
 All technology is a double-edged knife. One edge heals, while the other can cause damage if not managed properly. The proliferation of social media has become integral to our lives during the pandemic. It has made large-scale cooperation possible.

At the same time, it has been intrusive

on our privacy and mental health. We need to find that fine border line that divides technology from creation and destruction.

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Start using LinkedIn as a teenager

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As a high-schooler, you might think that LinkedIn is for corporate hotshots only. Well, you might be wrong.

With 39 lakh active users in Bangladesh alone, LinkedIn is the world’s largest professional network. Having opportunities to network, learn, make connections, and get jobs, it might seem somewhat contradictory as to why the minimum required age for opening an account there is 13. In reality, LinkedIn is for everyone, everyone who wishes to create a professional presence online.

Here are five reasons why teenagers like us can, and should, use LinkedIn.

START NETWORKING

Today, knowing people with varied interests goes a long way. And what better way to do that than starting early? With LinkedIn, you have the opportunity to connect with mentors and peers. Surfing their profiles, you can find inspiration and plan better. Widening your professional cloud and



gradually growing connections lets you engage and learn in countless ways, which might possibly lead to making newer connections, learning and planning from an early age.

EXPLORE

With LinkedIn, you can filter out jobs,

courses, companies, and even people who are passionate about the same subjects as you. You can learn about opportunities you didn’t know existed just by exploring profiles. Even if you aren’t passionate about a subject, you can discover just about any job, company, event, group etc. in any subject of your interest, potentially making that your passion and heading on.

EARLY START TO YOUR PROFESSIONAL CAREER

With 1.5 million jobs and internships exclusively targeted towards students, trying out for a post through LinkedIn might be completely worth it. Besides, an organised profile makes any student come off as more dedicated and driven in any application. In a world of CVs typed out in pasher golir mamar dokan, why not try saying “Yes” to showcasing your recommendations, ECAs, skills and experiences through an accredited and acclaimed platform?

KEEPING TRACK

Properly maintaining and documenting

your achievements on LinkedIn doesn’t only let you enrich your profile gradually, but seeing those further motivates you to work harder. Sixty percent of college admission officers and employers try googling the name of an applicant while evaluating them. And when googling a person’s name, the algorithm always projects LinkedIn on top of any other social media platform. So, updating your LinkedIn profile might just give you that extra boost.

STAYING UP TO DATE ABOUT RELEVANT INFORMATION

Although other social media might cater to you with news and opportunities about various subjects you are interested in, none does it as exclusively as LinkedIn, maintaining its status as a professional networking site. Students can access information about their dream schools and companies of interest for internships. LinkedIn has also invested heavily in its online course offerings to provide more avenues for professional and personal growth, including vital courses such as how to save or manage finances.