

NEADS



Preliminary Findings on Social Media Use and Accessibility: A Canadian Perspective



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Presentation Outline



- About
 - Adaptech Research Network
 - National Educational Association of Disabled Students (NEADS)
 - NEADS e-communication: current state
- Research
 - Objectives
 - Background
 - Preliminary findings
 - Next steps
- More information



Adaptech Research Network Background



- Based at Dawson College in Montreal since 1996
- Federally and provincially (Quebec) funded
- Bilingual, empirical research
 - Accessibility and use of information and communication tech (ICT) by Canadian postsecondary students with disabilities
 - Persistence of college and university students with disabilities
- Maintain library of free/inexpensive software





Adaptech Research Network Background (cont'd)

- Cross-disability focus
- Team
 - Academics, researchers, students, consumers
- Partners
 - Postsecondary student and disability service provider groups
- Methods
 - Participatory and collaborative, qualitative quantitative, archival



Adaptech Research Network Background (cont'd)

- Social media use and accessibility by college and university students with disabilities in Canada
- Postsecondary education experience of persons with disabilities in Canada
- Technology useful to students with learning disabilities in primarily French-speaking Quebec

NEADS Background

- In existence since 1986
- Supporting access to post-secondary education and employment for students with disabilities
- Consumer-based cross-disability organization
- Board of directors
 - 1 representative for each of 10 provinces
 - 1 from the territories
 - 1 open rep



NEADS

About NEADS (cont'd)



- Membership includes
 - College and university students with disabilities from across Canada
 - Recent graduates with disabilities
 - Professionals who provide support services on Canadian campuses
 - Employers

About NEADS (cont'd)



- Activities include
 - Conducting and partnering on research (e.g., social media accessibility)
 - Acting as clearinghouse on financial aid and specialized funding
 - Supporting formation of campus-based disabled students groups/advocacy
 - Assisting with transition from school to work (i.e., NOWS.CA, Job Search Strategies Forums)
 - Holding a biannual National Conference (November 14-16, 2010, Winnipeg)

NEADS e-Communication: Current State



- www.neads.ca = primary external communication channel
- Direct e-mails to members and others
- E-mail based discussion list NEADS-L stable but stale
- New e-newsletter replaces hard copy version
- Facebook group
 - Still in its infancy
 - Not leveraging it as much as we can
 - Accessibility issues with Facebook

NEADS e-Communication Current State (cont'd)



- Looking ahead
 - Goal: leverage social media that students and recent graduates with disabilities use to
 - Share organizational news and pertinent information of interest to members and non-members alike
 - Provide means for students and recent graduates with disabilities to communicate and network amongst themselves
 - Engage existing and attract new members
 - Reach out to public at large

NEADS e-Communication Current State (cont'd)

- Challenge: social media NEADS uses must be accessible and bilingual (English/French)
- Prefer to use existing tools rather than build new ones to stay mainstream
- Social media research results to inform and guide NEADS social media strategy



Social Media Study: Research Objectives



- Identify social media viewed as accessible and inaccessible
- Pinpoint benefits, accessibility problems (and solutions) experienced by users with different disabilities
- Understand the reasons why some choose to - or cannot - use specific social media
- Identify what technologies and ways students / recent graduates are connecting to the Internet
- Generate recommendations and promote social media accessibility awareness to the broader postsecondary education community

Research Background



- Unlike our other research, this study was unfunded
- Adaptech Research Network contributed project management, intellectual direction and research expertise
- NEADS contributed staffing (Chris Gaulin for coding) and helped with recruitment
- NEADS and Research in Motion provided tokens of appreciation for research participants
- Ethics approval through McGill University

Research Background (cont'd)



- Recruitment
 - E-mail discussion lists
 - NEADS database
- Participants completed an online questionnaire in Fall 2009
- Pilot-tested and test-retested

Preliminary Findings: Demographics

- Convenience sample of 723 students/recent graduates with disabilities
 - 69% females
 - 31% males
- Mean age = 30 (range 16 – 65, SD = 10)
- Represented all 10 provinces and the Yukon Territory



Disabilities/Impairments

- 723 respondents self-reported 1189 disabilities/impairments from list of 15
 - On average, 1.5 disabilities / respondent
- Top disabilities/impairments reported
 - 32% psychological / psychiatric disability
 - 29% learning disability
 - 21% chronic medical / health problem
 - 18% attention-deficit disorder (ADD / ADHD)
 - 11% visual impairment (low vision)
 - 10% hard of hearing / hearing impairment
- In contrast: 3% totally blind, 2% Deaf



CBA



Specialized Software Used

- On average students used between 1 and 2 different types of specialized software
- Top 5 technologies reported
 - 44% software that improves writing quality
 - 24% software that reads what is on the screen
 - 17% dictation software
 - 15% scanning and optical character recognition
 - 12% software that enlarges what is on the screen



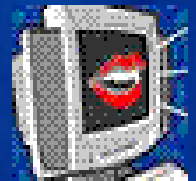
Accessing the Internet: How

- On average, each student accessed the internet 7 ways
- Browsers
 - 73% Internet Explorer
 - 60% Firefox
 - 19% Safari



Accessing the Internet: How

- Laptop computer 85% VS desktop 53%
- Wireless internet access 72% VS high-speed 67% VS dial-up 3%
- Cell phone with no adaptations 48% VS with adaptations 2%
- Smartphone with no adaptations 15% VS with adaptations 2%
- A gaming console (e.g., Wii, Xbox) 21%
- Handheld / PDA device (e.g., iPod touch, Palm Pilot, Pocket PC) 8%



Social Media



- Hours spent engaged in social media, on average
 - 12 hr/week non-school related activities
 - 6 hr/week school-related activities



Social Media Activities

- Within the past month...
- Based on 23 activities
 - 91% watched a video on YouTube
 - 79% used MSN / Windows Live Messenger, Skype, Google Talk or another instant messaging service
 - 79% searched for someone they knew on Facebook, MySpace, etc.
 - 76% added someone they knew using Facebook, MySpace, etc.



Social Media Activities

- Within the past month...
- Based on 23 activities
 - 69% updated their status on Facebook, MySpace, etc.
 - 61% uploaded a photo/video to Facebook, MySpace, etc.
 - 57% read a blog



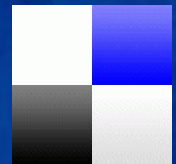
Social Media Activities (cont'd)

- 29% listened to a podcast
- 24% contributed to a blog
- 24% read a Twitter post
- 21% added someone they did not know / had never met before using Facebook, MySpace, etc.
- 19% participated in multiplayer online gaming



Social Media Activities (cont'd)

- 16% used www.last.fm or similar music site
- 14% shared content (e.g., a link to a website) using Digg, Delicious, or another social book marking service
- 12% replied to/shared someone's Twitter post
- 11% uploaded a video to YouTube



Social Media Accessibility – Most Accessible



- Five most accessible based on 20 social media
 - MSN / Windows Live Messenger
 - Facebook
 - YouTube
 - Yahoo! Messenger
 - Skype



Social Media Accessibility – Least Accessible



- Five least accessible based on 20 social media
 - Digg
 - Classmates.com
 - Disaboom
 - SecondLife
 - InternSHARE.com



Most Popular Social Media Used

- Top results based on 20 social media (723 respondents)
 - 708 said Facebook
 - 706 said YouTube
 - 692 said MSN / Windows Live Messenger
 - 687 said Skype
 - 686 said MySpace
 - 685 said GoogleTalk
 - 685 said Flickr
 - 682 said Twitter



Social Media Opinions

- Participants rated their agreement with statements based on a 6-point scale with
 - 1 = strongly disagree
 - 2 = somewhat disagree
 - 3 = slightly disagree
 - 4 = slightly agree
 - 5 = somewhat agree
 - 6 = strongly agree



Social Media Opinions (cont'd)



- I use social media to stay connected to people I already know
 - 74% strongly agreed
- I believe that developers of social media sites consider my needs as a person with a disability
 - 29% strongly disagreed
 - 24% somewhat disagreed
 - 17% slightly disagreed

Social Media Opinions (cont'd)

- Social media helps me feel less isolated
 - 33% strongly agreed
 - 25% somewhat agreed
- Accessibility is an important consideration that determines whether I use a social medium
 - 30% strongly agreed
 - 20% slightly agreed



Next Steps

- Adaptech Research Network
 - Analyze remaining results and disseminate findings
 - Identify funding opportunities and partners to leverage and expand upon the research
- NEADS
 - Develop and implement a fact-based multi-year social media strategy
 - Leverage data to advocate for accessible social media use in postsecondary education



More Information

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Questions

