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Social Networking, Learning, and Civic Engagement: New Relationships between Professors and Students, Public Administrators and Citizens

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ABSTRACT

Social networking is increasingly ubiquitous, and there is growing demand for professors and public administrators to use social networking to engage with students and citizens in new and more collaborative ways. However, using such tools effectively poses challenges for professors and public administrators. The focus of this paper is to explore the implications of using social networking for learning, professor-student relationships, and civic engagement. Using social networking applications in public affairs classrooms may provide an opportunity for professors to connect with students in new ways to enhance student empowerment and learning and enable students to learn how to more effectively use these tools for citizen empowerment and engagement.

New technologies, such as social networking sites Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, "are changing the way people communicate, work and play" (Giles, 2010, p. 3), enabling many of us to connect to one another more easily (but perhaps more superficially) in ways that defy time and distance. This is no less true in public affairs, where social networking is increasingly used by public administrators to connect with citizens and stakeholders. As Mergel (this issue) argues, there is growing pressure from above—through, for example, the Obama administration's goal of increasing government transparency—and below—due to the growing use of social networking applications by citizens—for public administrators to effectively use social networking tools to engage with citizens. Many see this as a potential "game-changer in citizen involvement in governance" (Hand & Ching, 2011, p. 362).

Yet, research on the use of social networking by public and nonprofit administration practitioners shows that the potential to use social networking as a collaborative forum for civic engagement has largely been missed in practice:

social networking "tools are still largely used in one-way, asymmetric manners, despite the availability of more collaborative spaces" in a Web 2.0 environment (Bryer & Zavattaro, 2011, p. 332; see also Hand & Ching, 2011; Brainard & McNutt, 2011). The reasons for this may include online social networking tools that merely replicate existing social relationships (Thorne & Kouzmin, 2008), legal constraints regarding records management (Wilhusen, 2010), privacy and ethical concerns; administrative costs (Bryer & Zavattaro, 2011), lack of access by government employees (Evans-Cowley & Hollander, 2010, p. 405), or a general lack of training.

Using social networking applications in more formal learning environments may provide an excellent opportunity to enable public administration and affairs students to learn how to more effectively use these tools for civic engagement. It also may open up opportunities for professors to connect with students in new and exciting, although perhaps tenuous, ways to enhance student learning and relationships. Mergel (this issue) provides an excellent example of ways to integrate social networking into a class geared to this purpose. The focus of this paper is to explore the implications of using social networking for learning, professor-student relationships, and civic engagement more generally. The paper first describes the landscape of social networking and its growing use. Next, it examines the implications of using social networking for learning and professor-student relationships. Finally, the paper concludes by linking these implications back to the potential for public administration students to use social networking for empowering and engaging citizens.

The Growing Use of Social Networking

Social networking via the World Wide Web has several defining characteristics. Of primary importance is that it involves users generating their own content individually and collaboratively (see Box 1). Social networking sites include individual profiles with identifiable "handles" and personal information about users; the ability for participants to list other users/profiles as "friends," or "contacts," or some equivalent that is displayed on individual profiles for other users to view so they can traverse the network through friends of friends of friends; and the space for participants to leave comments on others' profiles for everyone to see. Thus profiles include both an individual's self-expression and what other "friends" say about that individual (Boyd, in Mason & Rennie, 2008). Users in this context refers to participants in a particular social networking application or site. Nonusers refers to those who do not use a particular social networking site. Users of, for example, Facebook, would have an account and check their page more or less frequently than other users.

Box 1.

Overview of Select Social Networking Sites

Facebook is a social networking site that allows users to construct a "profile" page containing personal information. A user can become "friends" with other Facebook users and, through this link, share status updates, photos, links, and other information. Users have control over who they "friend" (they must approve requests to be friends) and what information is shared with friends and others. Through my Facebook account, I have reconnected with dozens of "old" friends and have gotten to know more about new acquaintances (sometimes more information than I really wanted), including public administration colleagues. See my profile at http://www.facebook.com/aeikenberry.

LinkedIn is in some ways like Facebook, but oriented for professional networking. Like Facebook, users have a profile and request "connections" with other users who must approve the request. Users share professional information about themselves, such as employment history, and can share updates and information. I use LinkedIn to stay in touch with past students and colleagues with whom I'd like to interact with on a professional level. See my profile at http://www.linkedin.com/pub/angela-eikenberry/7/65a/29a.

Both Facebook and LinkedIn also allow users to create "fan" pages for the organiza-tions they represent. For example, I manage our school's Facebook and LinkedIn fan pages. We use these group pages to communicate with students, alumni, and other friends of the school on a regular basis—sharing event information, news of interest, job openings, and so on. See the UNO School of Public Administration Facebook fan page at http://www.facebook.com/unospa.

Twitter is somewhat different from Facebook and LinkedIn. Its focus is not as much about sharing personal information about the user (though some of this occurs) as it is about sharing general information and commentary through tweets of 140 characters or fewer. Most users of Twitter allow anyone who would like to follow them without prior approval, and tweets are publicly visible by default—so unlike Facebook, Twitter makes it hard to know how many people are reading your tweets. Users subscribe to other author tweets—called "following"—often re-tweet messages to expand the number of readers, and communicate with anyone else on Twitter by addressing the tweet to the person @twittername. I "follow" people who know a lot about my area of research and other interests, people in my community, news and other organizations I'm interested in or want to learn about, and interesting people. See my twitter stream at http://twitter.com/aeikenberry. See also the School of Public Administration's twitter feed at http://twitter.com/unospa.

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Social networking is part of a larger group of social media tools that allow for the creation and exchange of user-generated content. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010, p. 60) list at least six types of social media: collaborative projects (such as wikis and social bookmarking applications), blogs, content communities (sharing of media content between users such as Google docs and YouTube), virtual game worlds, virtual social worlds (such as Second Life) and social networking sites (such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter). Use of social networking tools has grown tremendously in recent years: a 2011 study from Pew Research Center found, for example, that 65% of U.S. online adults used social networking platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, or LinkedIn (Madden & Zickuhr, 2011). This represents a rise from 56% in 2007 (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 59) and includes a diverse set of participants. According to Madden and Zickuhr (2011):

> Among internet users, social networking sites are most popular with women and young adults under age 30. Young adult women ages 18–29 are the power users of social networking; fully 89% of those who are online use the sites overall and 69% do so on an average day. As of May 2011, there are no significant differences in use of social networking sites based on race and ethnicity, household income, education level, or whether the internet user lives in an urban, suburban, or rural environment. (pp. 2–3)

While social networking is increasingly ubiquitous, public administrators interested in engaging citizens might be concerned about a digital divide among users and nonusers. Because 100 million households in the United States alone lack broadband access, and 46% of the poorest households do not own a computer, taking advantage of social networking applications may be more difficult for some citizens (The Digital Divide, n.d.). Mergel (2010) also points out:

> Most of the popular social networking sites that are promoted in government right now are not compliant with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act and it is extremely difficult for screen readers and other aids to navigate Facebook (Twitter is an exception because it's solely text-based)…Social networking sites might increase the digital divide, leaving people behind who could hugely benefit from tapping into networks that can help them connect to government, help themselves and share information. (paras. 8–9)

In addition, Radovanovic (2011) found in a recent study that inequalities in the networked world are emerging, such as "the lack of digital and media literacies; critical thinking and communication skills in order to navigate and evaluate data

online; an information and knowledge gap; and collaboration and participatory inequalities" (para. 2). Awareness of these issues and how to address them and navigate the networked world are becoming more pressing and are a good reason for integrating the use and understanding of social networking into public affairs curricula.

Nonetheless, the use of social networking and other social media is quite pervasive among university students in the United States. Stutzman (2006) found 90% of undergraduate students at one college used Facebook regularly. Researchers at Michigan State University (Ellison et al., 2006), in a survey of 800 random Michigan State University students, also found 94% of the undergraduates surveyed were members of Facebook. Age and year in school were significant predictors of membership; younger students and undergraduate students were more likely to belong to Facebook. Although graduate students are not as likely to use Facebook, data suggest one of the fastest-growing age groups of Facebook by total users is 26- to 34-year-olds and women over the age of 55 (Smith, 2009). The largest group of Twitter users is 18- to 34-year-olds, and most LinkedIn users are 35 years old and over (quantcast.com). Even if students have had a good deal of experience using social media and social networking, it has often been for personal use and not seen or used consciously as a tool for learning, professional development, or civic engagement. Given the networked environment we all live in, learning how to better use these tools—no matter our age, generation, or experience level—is needed.

Usage by university professors is somewhat lower but still mirrors the increasing use of social networking sites among students. According to a survey published in 2010 (Kolowich, 2010), of the 939 professors surveyed from Pearson's network of two- and four-year colleges, about 80% of professors used social networking. Nearly 60% kept accounts with more than one social networking site, and a quarter used at least four sites (see Box 2). More than 30% used social networks to communicate with students, but less than 10% used interactive social networking for classes. Faculty teaching online courses were more likely to have social networking accounts and use them to communicate with students.

In one of the only studies specifically focused on public administration faculty, Bryer and Chen (2010) found in a survey of 57 individuals from 28 universities that nearly 70% were using social networking tools. The most popular social networking services used among the faculty surveyed were Facebook and LinkedIn. The majority used Facebook for personal communication and LinkedIn for professional connections. These respondents took advantage of these technologies to "interact with students, help them with job seeking, facilitate group projects, organize student association networks, and promote their courses, programs, and conferences" (p. 248). However, while almost half of the respondents encouraged their students to participate in

Box 2.

How I Use Social Networking

I started my social networking "experiment" of sorts as part ethnographic research, part curiosity. I wanted to stay current in the classroom and understand how new media are being used by public and nonprofit organizations. I use social networking mostly to communicate with friends and family (on Facebook), professional colleagues and students (on LinkedIn), and varying groups (on Twitter). I have not required the use of these social networking sites in my courses, but I do encourage students to follow the school's pages on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter. I also introduce the topic of using social networking as part of the curriculum in most classes. After working on this paper, I plan to integrate these tools more consciously into coursework. I also do not ask current students to connect with my personal profile through these sites; however, if they ask, I usually accept being connected on LinkedIn and occasionally on Facebook.

After a few years of using Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter, social networking has become part of what I do each day to communicate with old and new friends and get and share information with colleagues and students. Through social networking, I feel connected to a broad range of people and information in a way not possible in other venues or in prior times. I also have the chance to share different things about myself, my interests, and my opinions in a new way. It has mostly enhanced my relationships with colleagues and friends (although in some cases made relationships more strained when we disagree about certain topics), led me to new research opportunities and media exposure, and generally made me feel more connected to people and events around me, especially at the local level.

The somewhat unique thing about this form of communication, I believe, is that more than ever before, when I post to one of these networks, I have to consciously think about who I am, how different aspects of my life intersect and overlap, and what part of me I want to convey or represent in that posting. This is no doubt something that occurs in all forms of communication (Goffman, 1959); but it seems to be especially evident in the social networking realm, perhaps because it is a more permanent and more public presentation of my identity.

Using social networking affects how I think about relationships with my students. Every time I post something on Twitter, LinkedIn, or Facebook from my personal account, I am forced in some way to consider how it will be interpreted by my students. The difficulty is that it is impossible to know for certain how what I share will be interpreted. Anecdotally, I feel my relationship with some students has been strengthened because we find out we share similar interests and so on. I personally enjoy being able to get to know my students better. Using social networking already

matches my teaching style in many ways, so I see it as an extension of my persona in the classroom. On the other hand, a student is unlikely to tell me if what I posted upset him or her, or otherwise compromised our professional relationship, since I am still in some ways an "authority figure" to them. Because in my case the use of these tools so far has been optional, students can always choose not to interact with me through social networking. This would be trickier if I required the use of these tools in the classroom. However, by creating special user accounts or group pages and through privacy settings, some degree of separation between the personal and the professional might be maintained.

social networking activities, only 7 out of 41 required them to do so.1 Most of the participants in Bryer and Chen's study did not have an assessment strategy specifically designed for social learning, believing that it should be an optional part of the class.

This optional approach makes sense considering some of the problematic issues associated with integrating social networking into coursework for student learning and professor-student relationships as noted later; however, it may be that in today's networked environment, coupled with the potential benefits of social networking, integrating it into our curriculum can no longer be a choice. We must all learn how to navigate what Castells (2010) calls "the network society," where a "rapidly growing social demand for the networking of everything" (p. xxv) meets the "transportation of space and time in the human experience" (p. xxxi). The implications of the network society affect how public administrators can or should interact with citizens and how professors can or should interact with students. Understanding one may lead to understanding in the other.

SOCIAL NETWORKING AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS EDUCATION

McSwite (2009) suggests that in the network society, we are entering "a new stage in the ongoing evolution of human consciousness" (p. 79, emphasis in original). This new stage contains more uncertainty about the values that underlie morality, decisions about ethical conduct, and personal identity. As Catlaw (2006) describes this context, "'what has been' no longer provides the moral and normative content for 'what should be done' in any general way" (p. 261). Society today is increasingly characterized by the dissolution of traditional authority, parameters, and support systems. This change has been described as a shift from the traditional to post-traditional. That is, post-traditional philosophers—and increasingly, individuals in society—see the world from a social constructivist perspective. They challenge the "myth of the given," believing knowledge and tradition are socially constructed human choices. The implications of this post-traditional society have been profound for

public administration. We see it in changing work patterns and organizational structures, and the dissipation of power held by public administrators in the shift to network governance (Marshall, 2007). Citizens give less trust and legitimacy to the traditional public administration model with its emphasis on an apolitical, institutionalized, and bureaucratic expert-driven civil service (Peters, 1996).

Similarly, in the traditional classroom, the authoritarian professor model (Freire [1970] called this the "banking" model of education) once dominated and clear boundaries between the role of professors as distant experts and students as supplicant learners were established; students "tended to acquire information more passively from authority figures" (Barnes, Marateo, & Ferris, 2007, p. 2). However, today's students have developed ways of thinking, communicating, and learning that do not fit well with this traditional model (cf. Oblinger & Oblinger, 2005; Prensky, 2006; Tapscott, 1998). Students increasingly demand more independence and autonomy in their learning (Barnes et al., 2007, p. 1) and have a greater desire for active, engaged learning experiences (Glenn, 2000; Hay, 2000; Oblinger & Oblinger 2005). The upside is a more engaged and motivated learner. The downside is that these students appear less likely to accept delayed gratification and have shorter attention spans in learning (Barnes et al., 2007, p. 3). This trend away from the traditional model has been under way for quite some time in public administration and affairs through various modes of active learning (cf. Eikenberry et al., 2009; O'Leary, 1997); however, social networking may offer additional or new possibilities for such autonomous and engaged learning as discussed later.

One outcome of this student-empowered learning environment is that the power relationships between professors and students are in the process of being reformulated. Professors, while still maintaining the power to give the final grade, can—through openness to these new learning styles—encourage a more democratic and participatory classroom that may help inform students' behavior outside of the classroom and in their relationships with citizens. There are always power differentials in democratic society, so the classroom is a good experimental testing ground for democracy in action. The point is to make this power open to influence and change by those whom it affects and to "constitute forms of power that are compatible with democratic values" (Mouffe, 1996, p. 248).

Social networking may help bring this outcome about in several ways. According to Mason and Rennie (2008, pp. 4–14), the benefits of social networking include the following:

1. Users have the tools to actively engage in the construction of their experience, rather than passively absorbing existing content.
2. Content is continually refreshed by the users rather than requiring expert input.
3. Social networking supports collaborative work, thereby allowing users to develop the skills of working in teams.

4. Shared community spaces and inter-group communications are a massive part of what excites young people and therefore should contribute to users' persistence and motivation to learn.
5. Social networks can be excellent tools for allowing learners to clarify concepts, establish meaningful links and relationships, and test their mental models.
6. Social networking provides a public forum in which the "process of concept formation, refinement, application and revision is fully visible to student peers and teachers. By providing a comprehensive record of how concepts take form through multiple clusters of knowledge, such media can promote more complex and lasting retention of course ideas among students." (p. 6)

These benefits are all relevant to empowering students and citizens in a democratic society and align well with many of the competencies we often hope to teach in our public administration and affairs programs. Salamon (2002) suggests, for example, that in a network governance environment, public administration students need to learn negotiation and persuasion, enablement skills, and communication across networks. Indeed, Bryer and Chen (2010) found about half of public administration faculty surveyed thought social networking enhanced social interaction and sharing, public awareness, research skills, and group work; increased engagement; gave students a broader scope; provided a venue for less threatening discourse and accommodated multiple ways of learning; allowed faculty to get to know students; and "spoke the language" of students.

Due to the relative newness of social networking, it appears that little empirical data exists to show the degree to which social networking actually makes a difference in learning or democratic outcomes. As some indication of social networking's potential to affect learning, studies have shown distance and hybrid or blended learning to be as effective as, or more effective than, face-to-face teaching when it comes to learning outcomes (cf. Dowling, Godfrey, & Gyles, 2003; Motiwalla & Tello, 2001; Strickland, 2009; Wilson & Whitelock, 1998). On the other hand, in a recent study that sought to connect Facebook usage and academic achievement, Karpinksi and Duberstein (cited in Ophus & Abbitt, 2009) found a significant difference between users and nonusers of Facebook on both GPA and average hours spent studying. Facebook users had a GPA between 3.0 and 3.5 (out of 4.0) while nonusers typically had a GPA between 3.5 and 4.0. With regard to hours spent studying per week, Facebook users averaged between 1 and 5 hours per week, while nonusers averaged between 11 and 15 hours per week. As Ophus and Abbitt (2009) conclude, "though Karpinksi and Duberstein note that these differences do not imply causality, the relationship found is striking" (p. 641).

Still, the literature has consistently shown that informal contact between professors and their students and between fellow students is positively associated with personal, social, and intellectual outcomes as well as students' overall satisfaction with their college experience (Cox & Orehovec, 2007; Halawah, 2006; Kuh & Hu, 2001; Myers, Martin, & Knapp, 2005), which may contribute to higher levels of student persistence and retention (Li & Pitts, 2009, p. 175). Cain (2008, p. 2) suggests Facebook, for instance, is a tool that aids students in finding their "fit" within a college community. This may be especially important for a growing number of distance education students who do not physically come to campus (Lester & Perini, 2010).

Simultaneously, a by-product of using social networking tools may be the blurred boundaries created between the personal and professional, especially between the professor and student. Such blurred boundaries were already instigated by more active learning approaches; however, social networking may extend the blurring of such boundaries even further because of the collaborative knowledge creation and sharing (and simultaneous loss of control to create this knowledge by any one individual) that takes place.

The implications have received mixed reviews from students and professors. In a 2006 survey of students (Hewitt & Forte, 2006) in two large courses at a mid-sized public research university (136 students surveyed) that examined how contact on Facebook was influencing student perceptions of faculty, two thirds of students reported they were comfortable with faculty on the site. Among the students comfortable with faculty usage, positive comments tended to focus on the alternate communication channels afforded by the site and on the potential for students to get to know professors better. However, the study also found one third of students surveyed did not believe faculty should be present on Facebook at all. Of the students not comfortable with faculty usage of Facebook, some had concerns about identity management and privacy issues and indicated the student-faculty relationship should remain professional and should not be familiar or sociable. That is, students expected social networking to be social, not educational (Carvin, n.d.). In assessing their findings, the authors of the study note:

> It appears that part of many users' experience on social networking sites is a perceived loss of control over performance as they address broad, unknown audiences that may include peers, supervisors, subordinates, parents and—especially in the case of academic communities— professors and mentors. Social networking sites like Facebook offer tradeoffs to community members who must balance the potential social gain associated with new opportunities to establish ties and the social pain of relinquishing some control over the presentation of self. (Hewitt & Forte, 2006, p. 2)

Like students, professors who use social networking sites like Facebook have to struggle with letting go of control, negotiating multiple identities, and staying vigilant as to proper personal and professional etiquette. Bryer and Chen (2010) found that among public administration faculty, student and faculty privacy issues were a major concern. As opposed to e-mails and other more traditional modes of communication, the "conversations" that take place through social networking sites are often more public (at least within the network) and so may more easily "be recorded indefinitely, can be searched, replicated, and altered, and may be accessed by others without the knowledge of those in the conversation" (Cain, 2008, p. 2). In addition, Beckenham (cited in Bryer & Chen, 2010) discusses her concern about "perceived preferential treatment or inappropriate or too informal relations between instructors and students due to familiarity on online social networks" (p. 245).

Critics also worry about a breakdown in the traditional place of expertise, authority, and scholarly input in the real or virtual classroom. The fear by some, especially in transitioning from a traditional expert-driven model of education, is that professors may be seen "less as intellectual leaders who are to be respected and more as simply gatekeepers (even impediments) on the students' path to educational completion and the desired better job" (Lippmann, Bulanda, & Wagenaar, 2009, p. 200). They also express concerns about trust, reliability, and believability in the online world. As Mason and Rennie (2008) note, the Web contains a plethora of unauthenticated, unfiltered information and many of us, students in particular, "lack the critical skills to penetrate this mass of undifferentiated material. In short, traditional notions of quality in higher education seem to be abandoned in the move to web 2.0 learning" (p. 6). This critique of social networking actually makes a very good case for integrating its use into the classroom. What better way for students to learn to critically assess these new media tools than through the public administration and affairs curriculum?

Some may argue that these concerns have existed for some time with the growing use of course management systems (CMS) such as Blackboard—these too, to some degree, provide similar opportunities for increased student-to-student and student-to-professor interaction in a more public forum. However, there are some major differences that do not necessarily raise the same issues regarding violation of professional boundaries, privacy, and so on. This is because "CMS is built on asynchronous, top-down, and one-to-many models of communication (and power)" (Hanley, 2011, p. 11). That is, the professor (or perhaps the CMS owner) has nearly complete power and control over the discourse, including being able to choose when to limit or open up options for interaction. On the other hand,

the internet is rebuilding itself around different models of communication, meaning, and authority. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Wikipedia, Flickr: these avatars of "Web 2.0" put the unlimited production and circulation of text—written and visual—at the center of the net. This new architecture of participation exploits several key principles: openness—membership in communities and access to tools is inclusive and egalitarian; "ad hoc" meritocracy—value and status are earned rather than designated; granularity—objects or totalities are built out of miscellany, always re-visable and re-iterated; the commons—cultural production is communally governed. (Hanley, 2011, p. 11)

In other words, professors (and everyone else participating) have less control over what is shared and with whom, how conversations are structured, and so on. This means a great deal more openness but also a greater blurring of roles in the classroom and exposure to unforeseen difficulties and ethical dilemmas. With each post, professors and students (re)create their individual and shared identities (Goffman, 1959). Boyd (2007) describes social networking sites, such as Facebook, as mediated public sites in which persistence, searchability, replicability, and invisible audiences are unique properties.

By using the class as a case (Feldman & Khademian, 1999), social networking in the classroom may provide an opportunity for professors to model democracy. If we hope students will practice democracy outside of the classroom, including encouraging more citizen participation, we need to model the processes of democracy—deliberative discourse, active participation, empowerment, and so on—in the classroom. A similar argument has been made for practicing workplace democracy (Bachrach & Botwinick, 1992; Haque, 2000; Pateman, 1970). The model of democracy envisioned here is one that is participatory, deliberative, and extra-formal (Barber, 1984; Bogason, *Kensen*, & Miller, 2004; Pateman, 1970). It is a democracy that includes a high level of interaction among citizens and between citizens and government, not necessarily part of the formal electoral process; what Barber (1984) describes as "strong democracy."

As noted in the introduction, there are many who see social networking as having a great deal of potential for public administrators to engage citizens; but this potential has yet to be fully realized. Research suggests that participation on the Internet exerts a positive influence on political and civic participation (cf. Weber, Loumakis, & Berman, 2003, p. 39) and that, when used with public meetings, can lead to greater knowledge, commitment, and satisfaction levels for citizens (Conroy & Gordon, 2004). However, Conroy and Evans-Cowley (2006) point out that, in part, "the rate of utilization and willingness to accept new methods may be based on the demographics of a community" (Conroy & Evans-Cowley, 2006, p. 399). Certainly, the digital divide issues noted earlier call for

public administrators to be cognizant of citizens' access, capabilities, and demand in their own communities. Nonetheless, in many communities, "there is a growing expectation on the part of citizens that there will be online participation opportunities" (Conroy & Evans-Cowley, 2006, p. 399).

Indeed, just as social networking might open up a whole new level of possibility for engaging students, it also offers this opportunity for engaging with citizens. As Noveck (2009) argues, with new information technologies, such as social networking, participation could be extended beyond deliberation or input to collaborative governance; public administrators could now consult with and take advantage of the expertise of many more people (Noveck, 2009). This does not eliminate more traditional modes of participation; Noveck (2009) argues that not everybody needs to participate in the same policy arena or in the same way. It is necessary to create many diverse spaces for public participation, in such a way that most people have opportunities to engage with government. Case study research by Evans-Cowley and Hollander (2010) indicates that online social networking works best as part of a broader participatory process; change is more likely by enabling civic participation in person and online.

CONCLUSION

The review of the literature discussed in this paper implies that the jury is still out on the value of social networking for enhancing learning; however, there seem to be several potential benefits to its use, including providing experience in collaborative work, promoting more complex and lasting retention of course ideas, and empowering students. Social networking may be most beneficial in indirectly helping professors build relationships with students (and students building relationships with one another), which in turn may help students to do better in school. Using social networking does raise the need to rethink our relationships with students. It will not work well in a "traditional" professor-as-the-expert, top-down classroom model. Students demand and need something different. Professors can embrace this technology and use it wisely. As Kapp (in Mason & Rennie, 2008) suggests:

> We can contemplate whether "real" learning happens with Web 2.0 technologies, we can be philosophical about the value of informal learning versus formal learning, we can tout the virtues of "collective wisdom" but in the end…none of that matters. What matters is that kids are already using Web 2.0 technologies comfortably and effectively. If we old folks (over 30) don't figure out how to effectively use these tools to help the younger generation learn what they need to be successful in our baby boomer-run companies, government agencies and other large organizations then we…will be irrelevant. (p. 7)

Perhaps the more important point to consider is that citizens increasingly expect more transparency in government and a chance to be engaged in the governance process. While the digital divide clearly still exists, our students need to figure out ways to engage students online and offline. Social networking can help them to do this, but they need to learn how to use these tools effectively. Our students and alumni struggle today in their government and nonprofit agencies to figure out how to best (and legally) use social networking to communicate with constituents. By several indications, they are not doing it as well as they might and missing opportunities to engage citizens in governance. Will our students be irrelevant to citizens if they do not learn how to use these tools more effectively? What is our responsibility as public affairs educators to address the needs of students and prepare them for the current and future workplace? Is it incumbent on us to educate them regarding issues surrounding social networking? Based on the analysis presented herein, the best answer seems to be yes.

Using social networking as a pedagogical tool in the classroom should be done thoughtfully and with clear learning outcomes and process models in mind. Just as public administrators should consider the value and limitations of social networking with citizens, the use of social networks as a pedagogical tool on their own in the classroom is likely inadequate. Engeström (2005) suggests they should be an adjunct to other tools. In addition, Ophus and Abbitt (2009) suggest, "it is likely that students will be more accepting of social networking systems for teaching and learning when they perceive that their privacy is not threatened" (p. 646). Including instructions for students on how to use Facebook (or other social networking tools) in such a way that students do not give up their privacy to a degree that is uncomfortable may serve to alleviate these concerns. Faculty can also educate themselves on ways to do this. The important thing, it seems, is that students learn to critically reflect on their use of social networking and how it fits with their own self-perceptions and career and life goals and interaction with citizens. Once out in the field, students will need to know the proper uses and limitations of social networking, as well as how to use it effectively to engage with citizens.

FOOTNOTE

1   "One respondent indicated that registering with LinkedIn is one of their program entry requirements for freshman students. All of her students use LinkedIn to connect with classmates and alumni. In classes, students are required to post questions for alumni and keep an active dialogue. Such activities help students to link their classroom study with real world practices, enrich their learning experience, and prepare them for better career opportunities" (Bryer & Chen, 2010, pp. 248–249).

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