The power of social media in informal learning

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Abstract

Since learning is a lifelong process, all individuals tend to learn consciously or unconsciously at anytime and anywhere. Basically, it can happen by asking a question to a colleague, by watching video tutorials to learn how to use such a word-processing program, by searching on the web or joining online communities to get information about a specific subject. Current research has shown that technology use has an important role on learning; especially on the informal learning of individuals. Besides, social media has affected the technology use in education significantly in the last decade. As a result, the change in the culture of internet technology has facilitated the informal learning activities of enthusiasts. This chapter indicates the differences between definitions of informal learning in the literature and explains the power of social media in informal learning activities relying on the current researches. The results of informal learning studies on the effect of social networking sites such as facebook, twitter, blog, forum and wiki will be examined. The future of social media in informal learning and possibilities that web 3.0 can provide for informal learning will also be discussed in this chapter.

Keywords informal learning; social media; social software; web 2.0; web 3.0

1. Introduction

We are all exposed to many things that can be end up with learning experiences in our daily life except learning by following a specific curriculum. Learning is inevitable, especially in our social and technological world. Consciously or not, interacting with people and technology enhance the knowledge that people have. These learning experiences can occur by talking with a colleague, watching a TV show about a hobby or searching on the internet, for instance. This type of out of curriculum learning is named as “informal learning”. Since it requires self motivation and enthusiasm, informal learning can be stated the most effective way of learning. According to Cross [1], people mostly learn from other people (the people around the person or the people that the person interacts) and especially at work, 80% of what employees learn is informal. Also informal learning has been seen the effect that decrease the training budget of employees at workplace. Increasing the social interaction between employees and providing them the self learning context not only lead to low budget, but also decreases the time which spend for educational classes.

According to Halliday Wynes and Beddie [12] most people are involved in some type of informal learning but some of them actually aware of it. Similarly, Livingstone [11] states that by spending a little or more time, to gain knowledge, skill or anything that interests people, everybody does some informal learning outside of schools or other educational institutions. The result of their survey shows that adults in Canada spend an average of 15 hours per week on informal learning [11].

Today the most important source to reach to information without time and place limitations is definitely the internet. Since the internet provides many opportunities not only for learning but also for socializing (that is to say interacting with people), it has become a major source and medium for informal learning. The developments on the World Wide Web have changed how we communicate [2] and as a result how we learn with technology. Particularly, with their sharing and user contribution features, social media (means of web 2.0 technologies) plays an important role on users’ learning. This media includes blogs, wikis, social networking sites, podcasts, social bookmarking, etc.

In the literature, there are many studies about the different types of social media use on learning considering the different pedagogies. Since the evaluation in informal learning is not accurately possible and hard, there are not many practices directly including the informal learning as a learning approach.

After indicating the definition of informal learning, research and studies about social media use in learners’ informal learning process will be examined in this chapter. Also the future of informal learning and social media with the emergence of web 3.0 and its possible facilities will be discussed as a conclusion.

2. Informal Learning

Since there is not a certain definition of the term of informal learning, building the definition of that term is often confusing and even seems to be more blurry [13]. For better understanding of the concept of informal learning, firstly formal and non-formal learning should be explained before defining informal learning. Usually the reason of this misunderstanding is the consideration of similarity of informal learning with non-formal learning. The context that both of learning types occur can be a reason for this misunderstanding. Although these two concepts mean different types of learning, they are both considered to occur out of formal institutions. However, the difference between the terms can be understood when the way that knowledge gathered is considered. To distinguish the concepts, formal learning will be
explained as an introduction and then non-formal and informal learning will be defined referring to the practices in the literature in this section.

All people are involved formal learning at any part of their lives. Usually it starts with kindergarten, and continues with primary and secondary school, high school, university and so on. The length of the compulsory part of it depends on the education policies of the countries. In Turkey every child who is seven years old has to start their 8-year compulsory education which includes primary and secondary school, for instance.

In this manner, **Formal learning** can be described as the provided education by an institution or the education by following a specific curriculum basically [3]. It defined in European education and policy terminology [4] as:

“Learning which occurs in an organized and structured environment (e.g. in an education or training institution or on the job) and is explicitly designated as learning (in terms of objectives, time or resources). Formal learning is intentional from the learner’s point of view. It typically leads to validation and certification.”

According to European commission [5], formal learning provides a diploma, certificate and qualifications at the end of the education process and also takes place in education and training institutions. Consequently, at school or university learning can be examples of formal learning.

Based on the definition of formal learning non-formal and informal learning are usually thought to be the out of school learning experiences. Although this view is true in terms of out of formal education experiences, there’s a difference between two notions as mentioned before.

**Non-formal learning** indicates planned learning activities of the individual out of school settings or the formal institutions which can end up with a certification. It is indicated in European education a policy terminology [4] as:

“Learning which is embedded in planned activities not explicitly designated as learning (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support). Non-formal learning is intentional from the learner’s point of view. And non-formal learning outcomes may be validated and lead to certification;”

Additionally, European Commission’s [5] definition is noted below:

“Non-formal learning takes place alongside the mainstream systems of education and training and does not typically lead to formalized certificates. Non-formal learning may be provided in the workplace and through the activities of civil society organizations and groups (such as in youth organizations, trades unions and political parties). It can also be provided through organizations or services that have been set up to complement formal systems (such as arts, music and sports classes or private tutoring to prepare for examinations).”

According to these definitions non-formal learning can be described as planned learning experiences which are provided by the civil and society organizations, sometimes may lead to certification. On-line certification courses, other social courses can be examples of non-formal learning activities.

The hallmark of **informal learning** is its more random and spontaneous structure. It can be experienced even following a formal curriculum or attending weekend classes, by asking a question to a friend or a colleague. Consequently this random structure of this learning type makes it hard to define. Definitions of informal learning in the literature need to be presented since there are many definitions which have some differences,

As Sefton-Green [6] asserted that there are many definitions of informal learning in the literature which lead researchers to be confused. The ‘informality’ can refer where, when, what or from whom we learn. Sefton-Green [6] stated that informal learning is described as location of learning, purpose of learning but the main distinction between informal learning with non-formal and formal learning is being unorganized and the setting that the learning experience occur. Hence this leads the term being a known issue at workplace settings.

Moreover in [4] the term stated as unintentional and unorganized learning which takes place at work and spending time with family or friends. Additionally, informal learning refers to experiential, incidental or random learning and usually do not lead to certification [4].

Darling [7] identifies informal learning as natural way of learning process which is based on mix of accidental experiences. He believes that when people need to learn new knowledge and skills, they need to function so they gather it naturally.

Also in [3] Trinder, Guiller, Margaryan, Littlejohn and Nicol emphasized that informal learning is not provided by formal institutions and does not lead to certification. Hence it can be intentional or non-intentional activities which results from the social, leisure or educational interactions. In addition, they state that informal learning may be structured or non-structured in terms of objectives, time or support.

European Commission [5] defines informal learning as:

“a natural accompaniment to everyday life. Unlike formal and non-formal learning, informal learning is not necessarily intentional learning, and so may well not be recognized even by individuals themselves as contributing to their knowledge and skills.”

As cited in [8], Marsick and Volpe (1999) propose that informal learning will occur where learner takes the responsibility of their learning when they need and motivated for learning in workplaces. Also Bartlett-Bragg [8] depicts the situations that informal learning occur in the workplace when the activity is not highly conscious to have a learning experience, random, linked to social interactions and also inductive process of reflection and action.

Conner indicates that [10] informal learning, which is a lifelong process, consists of the skills, knowledge and attitudes that people gain by mostly social interactions in their daily lives, or the interactions with mass media, or
library. Similarly, Digenti [9] also states that informal learning is the result of the interactions between people at workplace settings, through the construction of the atmosphere where the learning can be supported like group projects or collaborative activities.

Livingstone [11] separates adult learning sites as formal schooling, further education and informal learning. Formal schooling is defined as formally constituted activities which is hierarchically organized and often compulsory. Besides further schooling is described as further education, training or workshop which is provided by any social institution. These individual courses are typically short term and voluntarily chosen. Moreover Livingstone [11] defines informal learning as:

“any activity involving the pursuit of understanding, knowledge or skill which occurs outside the curricula of educational institutions, or the courses or workshops offered by educational or social agencies. The basic terms of informal learning (e.g., objectives, content, means and processes of acquisition, duration, evaluation of outcomes, applications) are determined by the individuals and groups that choose to engage in it. Informal learning is undertaken on one's own; either individually or collectively, without either externally imposed criteria or the presence of an institutionally authorized instructor.”

On the other hand, Hoffman [13] indicated the characteristics of informal learning in the workplace as stated below:

- **Just in time**: Informal learning is “just-in-time”. It often happens when the learner need immediate use. At workplace or school or in any social setting asking a question about “how to do” leads to new informal learning experiences.
- **Contextual**: Informal learning happens in context where the information, knowledge or skill needed.
- **Individualized**: Since every person in any social context has different needs, informal learning is individualized to meet their specific needs. In unsteady conditions getting the knowledge for specific needs leads to informal learning to happen. Moreover, it is also individualized in terms of learner’s prior knowledge. Because prior knowledge changes the present needs of learners.
- **Personal**: Informal learning is personal since the people tend to get the knowledge from the people whom prior knowledge and skills they know and trust.
- **Chunked**: Learning events are completed in very limited time. They take minutes, at most a few hours rather than weeks, months or a term.
- **Limited in scope**: Since specific needs lead to get specific skill or knowledge, informal learning experiences are limited in scope rather than a formal training session.

When all these definitions are taken into account, it can be said that the social context is the primary characteristic and in many cases informal learning is mostly accidental. Further it can be intentional or unintentional from the learner’s perspective. However accidental learning, intentional learning and social learning terms are similar to the mentioned specialties of informal learning. As a consequence this similarity leads to vagueness and complicates the term of informal learning to be understood.

To clarify this vagueness, Hoffman [13] distinguishes accidental, intentional and social learning terms from informal learning.

**Accidental learning** takes places in unorganized or unexpected contexts usually. It can be said that learners may be exposed to such learning experiences in everyday activities. Learning while listening to colleagues, who are talking about a feature of software, can be an example of accidental learning.

**Intentional learning** starts with self motivation an intention of the learner. In the case of intentional learning, individuals who want to get desired skills and knowledge choose their learning strategies individually and pursue with their own pace. Examples of intentional learning include finding a video tutorial and start to learn a new kind of software, or checking out a book on learning a new language.

**Social learning** is defined all the learning activities which takes place in a social context [7] in other words, learning from others [14]. Because of this it covers all those instances, in which we learn with or from others [13, 14]. It naturally occurs in our daily life like at conferences, in groups, and among old friends in a café as easily as it does in classroom or among colleagues online who have never met in person [14]. To sum up social learning can include all formal, non-formal, informal or accidental learning experiences.

After differentiating the terms which are considered the same or similar, all these definitions articulated that informal learning is never ending activity (intentional or non-intentional) which occurs randomly and irregular time and space settings [11]. Generally, people who prefer informal learning activities intentionally have acceptable reasons for their choices. Stating their own learning goals and following learning activities according to these goals that is to say being personal may be the most important reason of informal learning to be preferred [Becket&Hager, quoted in 12]. Also informal learning is less intimidating when the formal learning and its assessment process are considered [12]. Since formal learning requires either of evaluation, some people feel uncomfortable due to the fear of failure in formal settings. This kind of fear of failure may emerge in formal technology learning courses for instance which lead negative school experiences. However in informal learning settings fear of failure may be hindered. As people learn naturally and try without wondering what their learning attempt lead up to, informal learning may be more encouraging and engaging way of learning for some.
Either in workplace or out of workplace settings lots of people benefit from informal learning. Halliday Wynes and Beddie [12], classify these groups as:

- Older workers and learners
- Small business
- Disengaged learners
- Migrant groups and refugees.

In addition, Community of Practice (CoP) is another group of people that naturally benefit from informal learning. CoPs consist of voluntary people who have similar interest about a topic or have the similar problems and also share their ideas and experiences interactively. Some main characteristics of CoPs are [15]:

- CoPs consists of members who are committed to the same interest and share their experience to become competent,
- In many CoPs, there are interactive relationships between members which emerge by or with joint activities to learn from each other.
- Since CoPs consist of the people from different level of common practice, they develop knowledge and a repository of knowledge which comprise of experiences, tools, solutions to common problems and best practices.

According to Wenger [16], we and all the people around us belong to a number of CoPs somehow, as they are everywhere; at school, at work or even in our hobbies. The reason of our involvement to a CoP may be pursuing the emerging developments or trying to get a knowledge in that area of our interest. CoPs can be applied in organizations, government, educational institutions, associations, social sector, international development and the web [16].

Although, the web is one of the area that have CoPs for itself, it has become the area where members of CoPs in any areas from all over the world connect, communicate, share and also keep the knowledge repository they create. Especially, emergence of web 2.0 technologies and common use of social networks affected this shift from traditional communities to web communities. Therefore, regardless of the area of interest in online networked CoPs, any network member can reach to another member, search the network’s web page or add their own experiences when they need.

In fact, the web provides great opportunity for informal learning to the people who do not belong to a community or a social network and want to benefit it. Searching engines are the most necessary tools on the web for instance however they direct the user to the web sites or usually to the forums, blogs, social networking sites which are the main sharing platforms on the web. These Web 2.0 tools facilitate informal learning as well as sharing and communication. Despite the fact that primary scope and aim of the most of these Web 2.0 tools are to socialize, they also contribute to learning activities. Asking to followers with a tweet on twitter or to the friends by status sharing how sync your email to your phone and learning from your followers of friends can be the instances of informal learning in this social web 2.0 era. However the interaction between the users is not compulsory to learn informally. It can happen by reading a web site, a forum topic or a blog entry.

Next section focuses on web 2.0 tools called “social media” and explores the ways that it is used in learning and its possible applications in education.

3. Social Media

The way we acquire information, communicate with others and our social lives have changed as technology have changed. Newspapers and TV was used to obtain news but in these days many people prefer using internet to read news or watching videos. Moreover, new social media allows us to comment on, to share and also link to anything that we see on the web while creating our own content or more importantly collaborate with others.

Today, decrease on the costs of computers and increase on the availability of high-speed internet access, combined with free and easy-to-use editing software led anyone to create a live blog website within minutes of deciding [19]. With the Web 2.0 it became a lot easier for people to create their own content including images, video, text or audio. Web 2.0 tools and services do not require advanced technical or web design and development skills to create our own content on the web.

Although there are multiple definitions of the term “Web 2.0”, it is usually defined as a second generation, or more personalized form of the World Wide Web that emphasizes active participation, connectivity, collaboration and sharing of knowledge and ideas among users [21]. Although there isn’t a big difference between Web 1.0 and Web 2.0, Web 1.0 represents a “web as information” model and Web 2.0 represents a “web as participation” model of web activity [25]. In other words, while first generation web was about technology Web 2.0 is about the content creation and sharing.
According to Mayfield [19], basically there are seven kinds of social media:

- **Newsreader on the personal homepage (Google or Yahoo) or specific RSS reader software on the computer** [19].
- **Technology (Really Simple Syndication).** RSS allows people to subscribe to the blogs or other web sites and notifies the
- **On the other hand, social media does not only facilitate content creation but also the distribution of it with RSS**
- **Blogging which allow the creation and exchange of user generated content** [18, 24].
- **Consequently, the term social media is the Web 2.0 based tools for personal expression and communication,**
- **including blogs, podcasts, video and photo sharing sites, social networking sites, social bookmarking sites, and micro**
- **blogging which allow the creation and exchange of user generated content** [18, 24].
- **On the other hand, social media does not only facilitate content creation but also the distribution of it with RSS**
- **social media has been used for education, advertisement, marketing or just networking purposes.**

To describe social media, it’s better to define the term “media” firstly. Media is the means of communication which
conveys meaning and message to the audience and includes a content medium like pictures, sounds, videos, or text [18].
While old versions of media allows only one way communication (like watching TV), new generation social tools allow interaction between people [18]. Since all human beings are characteristically social, it can be said that social media is the new way of conveying meaning and information to an audience or discussing in the new era [18, 19].

Basically, social media refers to all the Web 2.0 tools that are used for sharing and collaborative creation of information by individuals or communities [23] and have the characteristics listed below [19]:

- **Participation:** Social media has the contribution facility which enables people to participate to the events or give feedback on the discussions.
- **Openness:** Most social media services are open for the people who are interested to participate, although they usually require an account to create content. They allow voting, comments and the sharing of information or the content.
- **Conversation:** While traditional media is unilateral (content is transmitted to an audience) social media is two-way conversation.
- **Community:** CoPs or the communities which share common interests, such as a love of photography, a political issue or a favorite TV show could benefit social media to communicate effectively.
- **Connectedness:** Most kinds of social media are connected to other sites, resources and people with links.

Today you can share a blog entry or the news with a social media while reading it.

Consequently, the term social media is the Web 2.0 based tools for personal expression and communication, including blogs, podcasts, video and photo sharing sites, social networking sites, social bookmarking sites, and micro blogging which allow the creation and exchange of user generated content [18, 24].

On the other hand, social media does not only facilitate content creation but also the distribution of it with RSS technology (Really Simple Syndication). RSS allows people to subscribe to the blogs or other web sites and notifies the newsreader on the personal homepage (Google or Yahoo) or specific RSS reader software on the computer [19].

According to Mayfield [19], basically there are seven kinds of social media:

- **Social Networks:** Social networking sites are the communities which allow people to create personal pages and connect with friends to share content. They are usually used for staying in touch with current contacts and build a new network by connecting to the people who are already a member of the network. The most popular social networks are Facebook MySpace, Bebo, LinkedIn and Xing.
- **Blogs:** Basically, blogs are online journals with entries that the most recent first appears that allows people to easily publish content including various kinds of media like image, video as well as text. Besides, readers can comment on these blog entries and subscribe with RSS. There are a number of features that make blogs noteworthy and different from other websites but the most important one is that it does not require advanced technical skills to have a personal page. With using the blog services anyone can have a blog concerning any kind of topic.
- **Wikis:** Wikis are the web sites which allow collaborative content creating. The opportunity to edit or contribute to any content about any topic makes these web sites collaborative. The best-known wiki is Wikipedia and Also there are different services on the web that enable creating wikis.
- **Podcasts:** Podcasts are audio and video files that are available to download by subscription, through services (like iTunes). ‘Vodcast’ is another type of file that describes the specifically video services. People can download podcast files to their computers, laptops, mobile phones or mp3 players. Hence, subscription feature and the mobility facilities make a podcast so powerful as a form of social media.
- **Forums:** Forums are the oldest form of social media which have already existed since even before the term ‘social media’ was revealed. Forums are the most powerful and popular element of online communities,
especially CoPs. They are online discussion areas for the people who share often specific topics and interests. It can be cars, music or technology, for example.

- **Content communities:** Although content communities look like social networks, they are created to organize and share particular kinds of content. Users have to get an account to register and then they can make connections with their friends as well as uploading and sharing content. The most popular content communities are Flickr which tend to form around photos, del.icio.us to share bookmarked links and YouTube to share videos.

- **Microblogging:** Microblogs are the blogs that combines social networks, messaging and blogging. Since blogging is limited up to 140 characters and can be distributed through the mobile phone network and owing to these featuresmicroblogging have the characteristics of instant messaging. Twitter is the most popular microblogging tool recently and mobile use of it has been getting more common. It has been used for different purposes. The users of it vary from TV channels to advertisement campaigns or individual use. Powone and Jaiku are the other notable microblogging tools, which offer various different features.

- **Virtual Worlds:** Although they are always thought as online games in fact, virtual worlds like Second Life are 3D environments which allow people to create a new identity socialize and live in an online world. Users have to register to enter the virtual world and download the software on their computer. After creating their avatars, they can travel around the world of Second Life. The citizens of these online worlds can meet new people and create a social network on their own. Since Second Life has features to facilitate and encourage social interaction, it is considered to be a form of social media by some.

With Web 2.0 technologies, new kind of interaction that makes collaboration and information sharing easier has emerged [15]. Having ease of creation of the content with participation facilities, second generation of web encourages the social interaction and collaboration between users. When web 2.0 is considered in terms of education and learning, it can be seen clearly that web 2.0 tools have strong effect on learning. Using Web 2.0 technologies in daily life, internet users can learn and share their ideas through blogs, forums, virtual peer-to-peer network sites (professional or non-professional), wikis, bookmarking and sharing tools, tagging, own content creation and distribution portals, etc. which allow them to act as a learner or a teacher [15, 20]. Mostly, these learning-teaching activities are informal and the features of web 2.0 tools have an important role on out of curriculum learning-teaching activities as they provide the social context for information to be reachable and shareable when it is needed.

The next section includes the research about the social media use in informal learning. Since there are not many studies which involve informal learning as a learning approach, some studies which include social media use in learning are discussed in terms of informal learning characteristics.

### 4. Informal Learning with Social Media

Although the literature is limited about the research in informal learning with social media, existing research shows that technology has been widely used for the learning activities. Futurelab report results that 79% of adults use technology for learning in their leisure time and they reported that the internet has 50% usage rates [25].

According to Sefton-Green, by using technology some young people are actively teaching themselves a range of skills and competencies. They assume the role of learner-teacher by becoming a member of communities or practice and practice of learning which usually takes place on forums or social networking sites [6].

The results of the research which was conducted with first year undergraduates at a British University using an online survey [27] showed that although students thought and used the Facebook for socializing and communication purposes they used it while working on the project group to collaborate and for learning purposes informally.

The study that was conducted in the University Of Applied Sciences Of Upper Austria revealed that microblogging can be new form of communication which supports informal learning. The students of the study used their microblogging platform throughout their course. All postings tracked and analyzed by the researchers. According to the results although the formalization of the use of the tool restricted the informal activities, the use of the microblogging tool enhanced the informal communication and social interaction in the group work [28].

Similarly, the results of a project report [3] indicated that students were socializing with each other and creating communities, supporting each other through those communities, creating and sharing resources and organizing their learning as well as their groups via Web 2.0 technologies like Myspace, Bebo, Youtube, Wikipedia and Flickr.

Miller [30] conducted informal meetings with voluntary students to discuss lecture materials by leading students to have informal learning experiences. Then he broadcast these recordings as podcast to all students. Podcast listeners’ reactions were positive and they felt more connected to the course.

On the other hand, social media is also considered as an effective tool for informal learning at workplace settings. Survey conducted by Expertus Inc. & Training Industry Inc. [26] indicates that 50% of respondents (working adults who takes formal training in their institution) said that informal learning technologies (such as web 2.0 tools like blogs, social networking or forums) in their learning programs was critically important and 39% reported that it was somewhat important. Consequently, the majority of the employees thought informal learning technologies are important. Among
the 50% of respondents who said informal learning was critical, their primary reasons were those, when it is compared with formal learning: “Enhances learning by making it more integrated with a job and reinforces formal training; Accommodates learner’s schedules, geographic locations and learning styles; Takes less time; Saves money; Provides immediate access to information; Leads to better participation in learning; Is expected by younger workers and Is sometimes easier to get support”

The research results on informal learning and the use of Web 2.0 within SME (small-medium enterprises) training strategies suggested that web 2.0 activities and interacting through CoPs enhances the communication between the employees who are taking the training programs informally [15]. Consequently, although the limitation in the literature exists, it can be asserted that web 2.0 tools support informal learning by creating and sharing the content and with their social interaction and communication features.

5. Conclusion

Informal learning and social media have been examined in this chapter. There are many definitions of informal learning in the literature although they are not certainly different from each other. Generally it is defined as the learning experiences which occur out of curriculum settings and do not end up with diploma or certification. Additionally, non-formal learning which also occurs out of school settings usually thought as similar to informal learning. Non-formal learning can be differed from informal learning with its curriculum based structure. In other words, non-formal learning is defined as the learning experiences that happens at informal institutions which is curriculum based and can end up with certification. However, the hallmark of informal learning is its social context. Intentionally or non-intentionally informal learning activities generally take place in a social context which leads people to interact. Suitably as a means of new technology, social media has an important effect on informal learning. Social media represents Web 2.0 tools like blog, wiki, podcasts, social networks, content communities or microblogs which allow people to create and edit content collaboratively, share, communicate, interact and develop network. In technological world social media is the provider of social context for learners. Despite the fact that, the literature is limited in terms of research on social media use in informal learning, according to existing studies and the features of social media, it can be concluded that while the learning experiences are not formalized, social media have a huge power which is usually unrealized by the learners.

After Web 2.0 technology we have to face the third generation of web ‘Web 3.0’. Web 3.0 is also called as Semantic Web which makes categorizes the information by tagging it with meaningful descriptors and relations. Thus in the Web 3.0 era it will be possible to reach various kind information on the web which is presented by the software agents that reads this tags and decides instead of users and combines the information that the user need [29]. It will change how we learn. Web 2.0 gave us to participate, create and socialize opportunities. The web is going to be social for a long time, but according to Ohler [29] the way we socialize is going to change. With Web 3.0 Learning Networks or CoPs will be developed around subjects, not services as we do now. Personal learning agents identify relevant information from any source and provide an information collage which is suitable to user’s educational goal [29]. This tool will decrease the time that we spend by searching and reaching information, instead it will increase the time we spend on trying to understand it. However these features have not been experienced by users yet, according to Ohler [29] they are inevitable.

Based on these arguments it can be said that in Web 3.0 era, the knowledge acquisition and construction will be more informal. The Semantic structure can remove the information exposition effect of the web and more dedicated, meaningful, effective learning experiences can occur. The networks that will be developed around specific learning goals can allow learners to socialize and share the needed information which enables effective knowledge creation and sharing at school, home and at work. Consequently, the informal learning will become more widespread with the power of new social media.

References


