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My Facebook World

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Abstract: In the connected world of the early 21st century, Facebook has become a mainstay for personal communication. It carries potential, however, to be employed in various other ways and in various spheres. The current article introduces some of the myriad ways it can be utilized, from the personal realm into politics, social awareness, and publicity.

Introduction

Facebook is a social network where people communicate with each other with much more ease as compared to other sources of communication such as telephone, Skype, Yahoo Messenger, Hotmail Messenger, Twitter, Line, Whatsapp, and Viber.

In Facebook, we can chat, video call, send attachments through message box within a very short time as compared to all other sources of sending attachments such as email, Skype, and various kinds of messengers.

The number of accounts, groups and pages I run in Facebook social network has grown to two, two, and four, respectively. The objectives of using various pages, groups and accounts vary from each other which will be explained in the coming page (s).

Why Do I Use Facebook So Actively?

People use the social network of Facebook for various purposes. Some use it for connecting with their family members, some use it for learning purposes, some use it for teaching or sharing their knowledge with people, some use it for advertising purposes, some use it for recruitment purposes, some use it for attaining fame, some use it for news, some use it for sports information updates, some use it for political discussions, some use it for finding new friends, some use it to be connected with their relatives abroad, some use it for flirting with each other or dating purposes, others use it for saving their personal data and or pictures and videos of their lives' important events. There are many other

uses of Facebook too which I may not be able to remember at the moment.

I use Facebook for a number of reasons which are listed as follows:

- Maintain contact with my friends
- Find new friends in Afghanistan
- Maintain contact with government officials in a friendly manner
- Express my political opinions regarding the governance, security and economic issues in Afghanistan
- Work for the unity of the various tribes in our country
- Use my account for social awareness issues for the welfare of my country
- Lead a youth council
- Encourage the youngsters towards education
- Share scholarships information and updates with the youths and friends
- Promote our cricket team
- Work for promoting and developing my personality
- Argue and discuss some national issues with the opposition
- Maintain contact with my family members
- Maintain contact with my international colleagues, friends and classmates
- Criticize the world or encourage the international community for their bad or good

Hamdullah, H. (2015). My Facebook world. *OTB Forum*, 7(2), 52-57.



Figure 1. My first Facebook account: Hamdullah Hamdard (Hamdard Zurmatai)

policies in Afghanistan

There are many other reasons, too, which depends on my country status quo. However, the main purpose is to be connected with as many people as possible in order to be able to work together with others on the public awareness issues, national interests' issues, and the defense of our country from the interference of other countries, especially our neighboring countries. Besides, I work for obtaining fame as a young politician, which will help me with my future career plans.

Why Do I Use Facebook So Actively?

I have two Facebook accounts, one by my own name for the purpose of maintaining contact with my family, relatives, friends, classmates (national and international), colleagues (national and international), news agencies, scholarships' agencies, government organizations, privates sector institutes, business companies/ firms, sports pages, music community and other social communities inside Facebook. I use my second account (which is not in my name) mainly for defending women rights in my country, addressing political issues and inviting people for unity in my country. In my second account, I do not use my name. However, I share the posts of my first account in my second account so that many people can read or watch it.

As indicated in Figure 1, my account's name is Hamdullah Hamdard (Hamdard Zurmatai). As indicated in the picture above, I have 1083 friends in this account and have 312 photos which were either uploaded by me or some friends have tagged me in

their pictures.

I created this account on April 30, 2009. At the beginning, I had to look for friends but was not able to find my real life friends easily because some of my real life friends in Afghanistan did not have Facebook accounts and others did not have access to the Internet due to two main reasons: first, the Internet was very expensive at the beginning, and second, the Internet was not available everywhere in the country, so only people who had jobs could use it at their offices. Therefore, I started to look for Afghans who lived abroad and were regularly sending friend requests to many people each day; however, I did not know them at all. In spite of having no relation with them, many people accepted me as their friend in Facebook. Gradually, I was able to find my friends on Facebook especially after my graduation from university in August 2009. After graduation the only source of active contact for all our classmates has been Facebook. However, we do have each other's email IDs too but still many prefer to communicate through Facebook as it is easier and takes no time for delivering a message to friends.

As indicated in the picture above, my second Facebook account's name is Ayesha Pakhtana (عایشہ پختنا) first created this account for the purpose of encouraging girls to education and most of my posts were for defending the women rights in our country. However, later on the number of my friends increased and reached the limit of 5000 (in Facebook, we can have only five thousands friends in an account while in groups and pages the number varies). Therefore, I thought of a second idea which



was Figure 2. The Ayesha Pakhtana account

politics. I decided to use my second account named Ayesha Pakhtana for supporting a specific party, and or criticizing the wrong decisions of the government, parliament and courts. It is worth mentioning that as a government employee, I cannot openly express myself in the media against the government, so Facebook has been the most useful method of doing so without being recognized or known. As we all know that a girl's name can attract many people so easily in Facebook, I chose Ayesha Pakhtana. Pakhtana means a girl of the Pashtun tribe, a tribe which makes up the majority of the population in Afghanistan.

My Second Facebook Account: Ayesha Pakhtana عایشه پښتنه

As it is shown in Figure 2, I have 5000 friends in this account. It might be funny, but let me say that almost all of them do not know me. They are just interested in Ayesha Pakhtana, which is an attractive name in our society and what she posts. The strange thing is that many Afghan boys have proposed marriage to me many times through this account.

My Facebook Groups

Group is usually used in Facebook for sharing opinions, ideas, news etc. among a specific group of people. Therefore, I have created two groups in

Facebook for such specific purposes. It is worth mentioning that I am a member of many other social groups too.

My First Group in Facebook: Zurmat Youth Council (د زرمات د ځوانانو شورا)

Zurmat Youth Council (د زرمات د ځوانانو شورا) is the only group we use for sharing the plans, activities, and decisions of the Zurmat Youth Council, and sometimes we use it for public awareness purposes, too. However, we often witness various posts by the members which are irrelevant to the agenda or purpose of the group. At the moment, there are 674 members in this group which comprises the majority of the educated youths in our district Zurmat. The main objective of creating this group was to encourage and motivate the youths of Zurmat district towards education and to stop them from joining the armed opposition of the government (Taliban). We have been very successful in this regard as many of the youngsters are now with us. They talk to us and listen to our advice for the welfare of our people.

My Second Group in Facebook: RANA رڼا

This group was created for decision making purposes among the leadership members of the Zurmat Youth Council (Figure 4). We are only six members in this group. All the members are educated people and they play key role in our decision making process on the issues relevant to Zurmat youths.



My Facebook Pages

I run four different pages for various purposes. A page is usually a very good way of advertising, promoting and marketing purposes in Facebook. It is easy to create and run pages in Facebook.

My First Page in Facebook: DAI Logistics/ Consultancy

This page belongs to my business firm which is called Dove Afghan International Logistics/ Consultancy. I share the information about the services we provide through our consultancy firm.

As indicated in the picture below, 133 people have liked the Page many of whom are working with various government and donor organizations in Afghanistan.

My Second Page in Facebook: Zurmat Cricket Team

This is our cricket team, the Zurmat Cricket Team. Zurmat is the name of our district and most of the players in this team are from Zurmat. The objective of creating this page has two parts: 1) to

promote and market our team in the region, 2) to encourage and motivate youngsters towards sports and avoid them from addicting to narcotics.

My Third Facebook Page: Hamdullah Hamdard (politician)

I created this page to take steps into politics. I am naturally interested in politics and very often I am involved in our country's politics. So far I have only 289 Likes on this page, which means that 289 people are following me through Facebook on my page. I have not shown any kind of support through my political page. I have only shared some issues from well-known organizations' websites which were very useful in attracting more people to like my page.

My Fourth and Last Page on Facebook: پاته

This is my most recently created page. The purpose of creating this page was to invite the Afghan people towards unity and brotherhood. Recently in the past, we witnessed some discrimination, and injustice based on tribe, language and religion. Therefore, I thought it is my responsibility to work for the



unity of my country people. I thought Facebook can be the most useful way as the majority of our youngsters and politicians are using it.

Conclusion

Using Facebook has been very useful for me, my people, and my country. We are updated of any kind of good and/ or bad news immediately after the occurrence of events or incidents, even faster than any news agencies' websites. Besides, it has helped me improve my writing skills as I write very often when I am in Facebook. If I compare myself before I started using Facebook with now that I use Facebook very actively. Very few people in the past knew me, most of who were my students, classmates, colleagues, and some cricket players in the capital city Kabul. But now many people in almost all the provinces are connected with me. We do not know each other personally but we are still connected through Facebook and we respect each other as very good friends. I have created a place in the hearts of my people which is a great achievement for me as a youth.

Finally, Facebook is a very effective and useful social media website and I would recommend it to everybody. However, it has its own disadvantages if not used properly but I do not want to reflect on the disadvantages here.



About the author: Hamdullah Hamdard holds a two-year master's degree in public policy from the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies in Roppongi, Tokyo. He currently works as a policy analysis and development expert at the Ministry of Finance, Afghanistan. He previously worked with UNDP, World Bank, The Asia Foundation Afghanistan, European Commission on different positions for 11 years plus he worked part time with private capacity building sector as an English language and computer teacher for 12 years, and he now is an active member in the Civil Society in Afghanistan, the Zurmat Youth Association, Jiont Jirga of the Loya Paktia Youth Associations, and Transformation Circle. An avid sportsman, he plays cricket, volleyball, football, pool, and chess.



Appendix

Mr. Hamdullah's Facebook pages and groups can be accessed at the following addresses.

Accounts

Hamdullah Hamdard (Hamdard Zurmatai)

<https://www.facebook.com/zurmatai#!/zurmatai>

Groups

Zurmat Youth Council د زرمټ د ځوانانو شورا

<https://www.facebook.com/notifications#!/groups/127467434004154/>

RANA (رڼا)

<https://www.facebook.com/zurmatai#!/groups/127937227366262/>

Pages

DAI Logistics/ Consultancy

<https://www.facebook.com/notifications#!/Dai.Logistics>

Zurmat Cricket Team

<https://www.facebook.com/ZurmatCricketTeam>

Hamdullah Hamdard

<https://www.facebook.com/notifications#!/HamdardHamdullah>

Community پاڼه

<https://www.facebook.com/notifications#!/pages/%D9%BE%D8%A7%D8%AA%D9%87/687438791294753>