Social Media and Building a Connected College

PERSONAL INTEREST STATEMENT

The growth of social media has caused a permanent and dynamic change on college campuses. This article seeks to provide insights into the major stakeholders' opinions of this change, and how those involved can develop social channels to positively benefit from this change. Within a college, social interactions provide many of the details used to determine how different audiences view the decisions made by the college, the forward movement of the college, and the status of both its current students and its alumni. Social interactions are not limited to face-to-face anymore; the importance of the presence of active social media within an organization such as a college has grown hugely to reveal more data about audiences and their motives. In this case, that information provided the ability to personalize social experiences based on data analytics, engagement, and performance to more expressively and effectively target segmented groups.

ABSTRACT

Social media and the access of social networking platforms through a variety of media are integral parts of almost every community today. To address the debate of drawbacks and benefits of social media best practices in higher education and beyond, this article presents research examining motivation and media usage patterns in a major business school. An online survey of the college's stakeholders discovered behaviors associated with media usage, including *how* and *why* respondents use social platforms. Usage varied across education, entertainment, and human connection. Over a five 5-year period, interactions within these channels focused on by the college increased dramatically.

Social media platforms have expanded opportunities for learning and interactivity. As younger generations of digital natives use technology, they not only exchange ideas, feelings, and information (Wang, Chen, & Liang, 2011), but also exchange visuals and even money at a remarkable rate. While doing so, they influence the educational landscape as well. Roughly 64% of college students post or respond to social media during school hours (Wang et al., 2011). Students are experiencing the world through more than just books and assignments: they are learning and adapting to the world using a relatively new form of communication.

The objective of this research is to better understand social media usage patterns among the Pamplin College of Business' stakeholders (students, faculty and staff, alumni, and others associated with the college), and apply new strategies to market the college. The research examines behaviors associated with social media usage, illustrating *how* and *why* people use particular social media platforms and how Pamplin could be approached from different angles as a "business entity." Each platform has its own functional identity, much as brands have their own identities. Identifying usage patterns and user perceptions fosters an understanding of the most effective venues for providing different types of content. In 2010, The London School of Business and Finance revealed that its Global MBA content would be posted via Facebook (Perez-Carballo & Blaszczynski, 2014) and five years later, nearly 300,000 people followed their page. This success reflects the ultimate goal of studying social media: to be able to intercept the right people, at the right time, on the right platform, with the right message, and with the right frequency in order to attract a target audience's attention and maintain their engagement.

Many colleges using social media are overwhelmed by not only the possibilities that lie within owning pages on several channels, but also the responsibility of that ownership. Some colleges tend to over-regulate communications on social media, while others fail to regulate or

respond at all (Young, 2011). Other issues include the benefits of social media in assisting students in searching, finding, and reaching potential employers on their respective career paths. This requires both the students and academic departments to recognize the "dynamics, effectiveness, and potential misuse" of social media (Aluri & Tucker, 2015). Wankle (2009) discusses the accessibility of social media by a range of people (including the disabled) and multiple generations of technological learners. He references a class at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University that allowed students to use social media, which "disregarded institutional boundaries"—in a good way. The students were able to openly discuss and engage with a variety of other sources while simultaneously being exposed to modern communication theories. In the present case, through interviews with department heads and students in each department within the college, value may arise from different business college stakeholders being able to engage with each other in a similar way.

However, stakeholder consideration of social media adoption is not always accompanied by positivity and optimism. For instance, many faculty have reservations about learning how to use social media, finding time to manage social media, and the inherent lack of control associated with social media. While social media may be associated with loss of control, if used correctly, it may increase the college's potential to be a part of important virtual conversations. An early study found that 79% of college students engage in social networking for five hours a week on average (Bahk et al., 2010). Since then, with the birth of mobile media and many organizations' efforts to prioritize mobile and social media, those numbers have likely increased. Hence, higher education professionals may have few options in responding to students' social networking other than adopting the habits of students, or at a minimum, adapting to student habits. Chock (2013) notes that interactive features of a website "that allow users to engage with

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others have been found to be important to predicting whether users, particularly college students, will return to the site." In addition, it is commonly hypothesized that social media can serve educational purposes within higher education and boost the abilities of those institutions to carry students through a life-time relationship with the college, even post-graduation. By honing in on a social media "Policy Development Process," the college may in turn benefit from a wide range of stakeholders, transparency, accessibility, and all-around positive, interaction-based outcomes (Junco, 2011).

Brian Kenny, the chief marketing officer for Harvard Business School, reflects on the benefits of adapting to student social media habits:

I chose to embrace Twitter and Facebook and LinkedIn early on, because we wanted to be in those conversations rather than have them happen outside our sphere of influence. We want to know what they're saying, and we want to be able to engage in the conversation (Drell, 2011, Q&A section, para. 13).

Social media can be used to learn what people are doing and thinking and can be used to humanize each stakeholder group within the Pamplin College of Business, facilitating communication. By using social media to portray the personalities (Yan, 2011) behind Pamplin, students are given a new perspective on how their education is formed. Yan notes, "Brands that are unsupported by additional media can fail because they are not letting their stories shine through" (Yan, 2011). Embracing social media often requires a culture change. This change should not be approached with apprehension, but rather an understanding that current communication systems and content may be leveraged to intercept people where they currently live and breathe: within a digital media realm. An expected benefit of this dynamic cultural change is an increase in student engagement.

Student and other stakeholder engagement, defined by Astin as "the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience" (Junco, Heibergert, & Loken 2010), is where these benefits may be harvested. Junco also notes that frequent social media users have greater involvement in campus activities and organizations. The ability to create a sense of belonging through engagement (Yan, 2011) is undeniably important in a campus setting. By learning more and putting more content into social media, the hope for the Pamplin College of Business is that engagement—both inside and outside of the mobile world—will increase. Engagement benefits, however, are not limited to students. Other stakeholders' engagement may also increase through judicious use of social media.

At the time of this study, Pamplin had a Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn presence, but believed it was capable of surpassing other schools in social media usage. Specifically, different channels allow different facets of a university to take on different roles in students' lives. This includes departmental or disciplinary differences, as well as casual and professional differences. Erik Qualman, author of Socialnomics, illustrates the reality that the College of Business faced in terms of social media, noting, "We don't have a choice on whether we do social media, the question is how well we do it…" (2012).

By narrowing a focus to target audiences, the task then becomes the navigation through an average day, a thought process, the needs, and even the desires of each of those individual groups. Equally as important is the realization that each audience may then segment even further based on any number of variables, such as involvement and level of experience. Segmentation never ends, allowing for endless opportunities to expand on content and reveal marketing strategies specific to a college, its curriculum or its brand. It is the job of the marketer to consume data and curate a deep understanding of not only marketing strategy, but also higher

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education and its intricacies, to then build upon the dynamic nature of social media. The data analyzed here supports not only the notion that social media is now an evergreen piece of the higher education puzzle, but also the idea that information about individual usage and group usage combined creates a view of motives behind decisions, actions, interactions and ideas within the college.

This discussion supports the notion that some social media are becoming "core website[s]" or "primary source[s]" (Yan, 2011). A primary source is most naturally regarded as a respected document or physical object created under a specific time of study, serving to engage students in existing knowledge and encouraging them to think critically while analyzing information from the past. As social media are accepted as primary sources, educators may begin to more fully adapt to and accept that change as well. The idea behind this research mirrors the idea of "digital natives" and the "digital divide" that have developed in the shadow of growing mobile and social media, especially on college campuses (Bahk et al., 2010). This research not only looks at basic demographic and usage rates, but profiles social media platforms and social media users, enabling researchers to understand that while people have their own identities, social media sites likewise have their own identities. Matching up these identities by strategically placing content may fulfill needs for an organization, its stakeholders, and their efforts combined. The expectation is that organizations that embrace social media by creating an ideal mash-up of content that will enjoy a reward of not only attention (He & Zha, 2014), but also stakeholder engagement.

METHODOLOGY AND DATA ANALYSIS

Sample Selection

The sample consisted of students, faculty, staff, and alumni of Virginia Tech's Pamplin

College of Business. Two types of data were collected: quantitative survey data and qualitative

interviews. Data collection began on September 16, 2011, and continued through the month of

November.

An online survey consisting of 20 survey questions was distributed to a convenience

sample of the stakeholders of the Pamplin College of Business via college Listservs, recruitment

flyers, and word of mouth. The survey drew 1,981 responses and 1,509 completed surveys from

respondents whose affiliation with the university ranged from less than a year to 55 years.

Respondents were segmented based on stakeholder status in order to compare and contrast the

groups to discover opportunities to better connect the two with each other and with the college.

The demographic breakdown was as follows (student sample, 43% male; non-student sample,

62% male):

Affiliation: Percentage of Respondents
- Alumni: 67%
- Students (undergraduate/graduate): 29%
- Faculty/Staff: 3%
- No Affiliation: 1%
- Other: 1%
- Relative of a past, present, or future student: 0%

Figures 1-3 illustrate the characteristics of the sample in terms of age, academic level,

major of study, and other variables. Students ranged in age from 18 to over 25, with a modal age

of 21. The non-student population ranged from less than 25 years of age to over 75 years.

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Analyses

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Forty-seven percent of students indicated that they interacted with social media pages run by the college or by departments within the college, compared to twelve percent of non-students. These numbers were low, but showed potential to increase awareness of Pamplin's social media presence among students and non-students, increasing usage and interaction between both groups and with the college.

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Figures 4-9 illustrate social media usage among stakeholders, as well as reported motivations for their social media use. In addition, Figure 1 shows the ways in which educators and educational entities specifically utilized social media on a weekly basis. The advantage of representing the data this way is to discover the commonalities and differences between the two groups in order to better understand where the targeted stakeholders are. In other words, success in social media results partly from "fishing where the fish are."

However, the goal was not merely to understand each group's usage in isolation, but to connect the two based on mutual social media habits and create demand in other areas to invite the groups into each other's worlds, thereby enhancing communication and interaction. Thus, the questions of interest were not only how and why people used social media, but also how and why people used social media for conversational and informational purposes, and ultimately how the Pamplin College of Business could use social media to become part of the conversation.

Figure 5 provides an overview of the types of social media platforms the business students and non-students had been exposed to and had interacted with at least once, ranging from social networks to location-based check-ins, social bookmarking for articles, photo sharing, blogging, video streaming, and business networks. Facebook, YouTube, Skype, Twitter, and LinkedIn were in the top six platforms for both students and non-students. Differences in usage

habits included students using StumbleUpon (social bookmarking) and non-students use Google+ (a social network similar in function to Facebook but perceptually different), indicating that people use social media for information sourcing as well as connecting with people.

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By utilizing media with the highest usage rates among students and non-students, Figure 5 identifies the platforms most likely to lead to the greatest success for Pamplin. Respondents expressed interest in using social media for personal and professional communication as well as for pure entertainment. Although not one of the top reasons, it should be noted that using social media for "academic purposes" was relatively high on the list, indicating social media's potential to engage with students academically. These results also reflected an opportunity for Pamplin to leverage its use of social media. If students use social media for current events and professors do likewise, a richer classroom discussion may ensue. Specifically, faculty treatment of current events in the classroom might be enhanced by responses to students having "seen it on Twitter," generating richer academic communication between these two groups.

When comparing the top 10 reasons for using social media, students and non-students all used social media for interacting, connecting, networking, entertainment, current events, leisure, chatting, personal visibility, and promotions. Figure 6 shows the specific platforms on which marketing majors utilized social media. However, the identification of different types of social media users provides the main value in this chart. In the next section, segmentation analysis will use these findings to create profiles for platforms and users while also uncovering where different segments exist (for instance, where students of a particular major or particular academic level are most likely to be located).

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Segmentation Analysis

A primary purpose of this project was to profile social media platforms having their own functional identities, as well as to profile different types of social media users based on the platforms they use and their motivations for using those platforms. Segmentation analysis will be geared more towards consolidating the data to look at segments and clusters of users. Principal component analysis, factor analysis, and cross-tabulations were used to build these profiles.

Strategically, the goal was to understand social media platforms and how they were used to intercept people at the right time, in the right place, with the right content, and with the right frequency by answering the following questions:

- What are people's reasons for using social media and do the reasons differ by place (platform)?

- At what point in time, or a given cycle, is social media used (academic level, academic major, department affiliation, age)?

- Do social media platforms (places) have their own functional identities, meaning some platforms are more suitable for certain content than others?

- How often are individual social media platforms (places) used and, therefore, what is the appropriate use?

- What is the appropriate frequency with which to share content?

The platforms grouped together suggest that if someone used one platform in the group, they were likely to also use the other platforms in the same group. For example, if someone indicated that they used Facebook, they were also likely to use Twitter and Social Bookmarking. In addition, some people might use this group of platforms primarily for "listening," while others may more likely share the content, be it academic-related (e.g., relevant articles) or leisure-

related (e.g., celebrity gossip). Regardless of group, the College of Business could target different types of users to generate, share, and consume content. Implications for the type of content to be posted on which platform, and how often, will be discussed.

Further discussion about some of the main social media tools will be undertaken to improve understanding about what the different platforms are, who uses them, how people currently use them, and how they can be used in the future. These functional identity profiles address the place questions and lead into discussion of the frequency with which posting content is appropriate and necessary, as well as the type of content appropriate for each platform. Moreover, recommendations for when and where to position college-specific content are provided. Finally, the time variable shows who will be reached and who has the potential to be reached. With each subsequent variable, in that order, the worlds of social media and Pamplin come together for a 360-view analysis of strategic digital strategy within education.

Users

As data was further reduced to make specific recommendations, a first step included identifying who used each channel in order to ensure appropriate and relevant content for each platform. The cross-tab tables were created by examining social media platforms and user demographic variables, such as academic level and academic major for students, or age for non-students. The goal was to intercept the right people at the right time in their lives. These tables display specific networks of interest.

Figure 7 illustrates what 'intercepting' people at the right time means. Here, academic level is shown and some differences can be seen between the grade levels. While all levels used Facebook and Twitter, seniors were more likely to use LinkedIn. Hence, an opportunity exists to encourage underclassmen to join professional networks earlier in order to market themselves and

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consider jobs and especially internships sooner rather than later.

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Likewise, Figure 8 shows academic majors by the platform tools they use. This chart reveals interesting differences in usage by major. Marketing and finance majors were the heaviest social media users, as well as business information technology majors. Additionally, knowledge of platform usage by business undecided majors is important. If the majors under consideration are known, undecided students may be directed to platforms used most by students in that major, thereby getting relevant exposure sooner. The boxes highlighted in yellow represent the major with the highest reported usage of a platform, while the red boxes represent the major with the lowest usage. This provides information on where to focus promotional efforts for increasing student bases, such as increasing the number of hospitality and tourism management majors and economics majors on LinkedIn. Steering students to these platforms may not only help them personally, but may also help the College of Business in terms of future development and outreach. Hospitality and tourism management majors are visual users, as seen by their use of photo-sharing platforms. How might their content be more widely shared with the college and the world? The answer may be in providing outlets for user-generated content on Pamplin's social media accounts.

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Figure 9 answers the final question about non-students. Where are faculty and alumni harvesting their social activity? Here, the demographic variable of age was used with platform and although social media usage was inversely proportional to age, social media appears a viable

environment to interact with younger alumni and faculty for internships, externships, jobs, class-related content, etc. Findings also suggest that if the College of Business created the content, faculty and alumni would come. For example, some qualitative sentiments for older faculty and alumni are that faculty and alumni use social media to "keep up with the kids," "keep up with the dynamic business environment," and for business prospecting. Thus, if the College of Business created the content, there would likely be usage, even for those apprehensive about using social media in general. Since non-students are using Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn to relatively high degrees, opportunities exist for Pamplin and its students to connect with non-students for invaluable, two-way interaction.

Place: Functional Identities

Based on usage numbers and capabilities, the following platforms were chosen as the main platforms for strategic focus. A brief description of how each platform is typically used is provided and analysis is based on respondents' reasons for using social media and the data on their expressed and perceived functions of these platforms. By understanding these *functional identities* based on broad and general usage, sound recommendations for the type of content that might thrive on each platform—as well as the appropriate frequency with which to post content—can be made.

Facebook:
- Content: Facebook is the platform most widely used by both students and non-students as an avenue to interact with friends as well as an outlet for personal expression and visibility. In other words, Facebook is good for posting personal information, but also for posting content that one would like others to see (content ranging from entertainment to academic in nature). Facebook has the potential to be a forum for gathering peer reviews when "shopping" for schools, majors, classes, etc. Content that thrives on Facebook is

more personal and visual in nature, such as stories about people and pictures of peers and
recognizable places (especially those with nostalgic ties, fun events, funny stories, etc.).

- Functions: social, personal, informational

Twitter:
- Content: One disconnect between students and non-students in their Twitter usage is that
  students use Twitter as an information or news source for current events or class-related
  information. If faculty were aware of what students learn through Twitter, they might be
  able to more effectively anticipate classroom discussion through trends, then be able to
  add additional educational or informational resources to the mix, making for a richer
  learning environment. Information that thrives on Twitter is short and functional in
  nature, capable of providing a brief snippet of relevant, useful information without the
  necessity of reading an entire article, but with a provided link if one wishes to do so.
  Hashtags (#) and "@ mentions" provide additional information about trending topics and
  links to Twitter accounts for people, companies, and brands.

- Functions: social, entertainment, informational

LinkedIn:
- Content: The main function for LinkedIn is to facilitate business-related activities and
  provide relevant content. Of interest here are the other platforms that students (versus
  non-students) most closely identify with LinkedIn. For students, Google+ is perceptually
  similar in function, while for non-students, Facebook is perceptually similar. That said,
  respondents look to these media for potential internship or job opportunities to post or
  pursue.

- Functions: Business

Figure 10 provides a visual representation of how the platforms are interrelated. This leads to

a discussion of the different appropriate frequencies for each of the functions, as well as their

content. Social media platforms sharing a circle are similar in function, and therefore, similar

information can be posted on all the tools within a circle and with the same frequency. For the

purposes of parsimony, the three platforms chosen for the College of Business and described

initially are portrayed: Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn.

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Frequency and Content

After identifying different functional identities, it is possible to identify the appropriate

frequency and content for each segment. The following discussion grows out of Figure 11, and

illustrates not only the appropriate frequency to post on the platforms that share circles, but also

the type of content that should thrive based on matching functions. Specific creative content

ideas are also discussed in terms of which platforms they would be placed and how often to do

so. Before showing which content belongs where and how often, a brief description of ideas for

contents is noted.

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Content Creations:

- Pamplin Voices: "Showcases" and "Day in the Life" activities where students, faculty, and

  alumni are interviewed, spotlighted, etc. Showcases are more informal, with the aim of

  getting to know certain people while acting as student, faculty, or alumni of the month. Day

  in the Life is also meant for increasing understanding of what a typical day is like in someone

  else's shoes, so people can watch and see, for instance, how freshmen differ from seniors and

  how accounting majors differ from marketing majors.

- Dean's Blog: One key recommendation is to humanize the different stakeholder groups to

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enhance more comfortable interaction and communication. One way to do this is to have a Dean's blog, or blogs for department heads, so those in authority can reach out to students, giving students a chance to feel connected with those with whom they normally would not interact.

- Speaker Series, Lecture Series, and Interview Series: This content consists of more scholarly content by faculty and alumni.

Content and Frequency Recommendations for Platforms Resulted in the Following

Personal:

- Frequency: Platforms in this category can be updated multiple times a day. For example, many users check these platforms more than 10 times a day, so posting on Facebook up to four times a day may be appropriate. Updating blogs depends on the type of content, whether it is a personal blog or a blog for class-related content.

- Content: This may include but not be limited to the following: Photos, Voices (both Showcases and Day in the Life, but mostly of students), internship postings, and postings of events.

Social:

- Frequency: Similar to the personal circle, platforms in this category can be updated multiple times a day. Of all the platforms, Twitter functions as the bulletin board, or news feed. Thus, Twitter updates of 10 times a day would not be unusual, and may be welcome, so long as the updates provide pertinent and timely information.

- Content: Content that thrives on these platforms is short in length, such as quick tips, branded viral campaigns, and overall visual and video imagery.

Informational:

- Frequency: Frequency in this circle depends on the type of content. For example, Twitter, as noted, can be updated multiple times a day.

- Content: While entertainment content should be shorter in length, content in the informational circle can be longer in length. For example, full-length lectures, guest speakers, and interviews would thrive here. Announcements linking to this content are appropriate for Facebook, but research-related content may not be the best use for Facebook as an informational medium. Rather, internship and event announcements may be most appropriate for Facebook. Twitter is potentially the tool with the largest reach for the broadest content in this circle. Announcements and links to information on other social media platforms for any and all content can be posted on Twitter, reflecting its virtual bulletin board function.

Business:

- Frequency: These platforms are checked daily by some, but too much information in business media may feel like spam, so the recommended frequency for posting to these media is two to three times per week.

- Content: Articles related to the College of Business, research-related articles, and current events should thrive here. Many survey respondents said they would like to see some internship and job postings here, as well. Finally, Voices for Alumni—especially *of* alumni—should be placed here because alumni like to see what other alumni are doing (and similarly, students might like to see what their lives could be like when they exit college with a particular degree). Study abroad programs can use Facebook Places to geo-tag (adding location tags to posts for greater impact) pictures and videos. Facebook Places can also be used inside Pamplin and at college-related events (such as recruiting

events), and pictures and videos can be added.

Time: People Profiles

The next section identifies the different types of people who used social media based on the preceding analyses, including what they used and why they used it. Using cross-tabulations and factor analysis, five profiles were identified. This final profiling analysis enabled the College of Business to target students, faculty, and alumni for specific tasks, generating and sharing content.

As displayed in Figure 12, the ladder begins with the Builder. This is a person who is motivated by current events, networking, and cultural understanding, while placing value on education. Builders are more mature users who become responsible for generating content. Next is the Sharer, a person who is more inclined toward interaction, entertainment, leisure, and peer influence. The Listener shares many characteristics with the Sharer, but is focused within the underclassman, high social-using group. Both Sharers and Listeners regularly use social channels for academic purposes. Intimate interaction comes easier to the Streamer, who utilizes social media for personal use and not academic use. Finally, the Professionals are those who rely on social media for personal visibility. They may utilize social media to create or take part in business-oriented opportunities like networking and check-ins.

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Website Recommendations

The final portion of the survey asked respondents for their opinions regarding a new Pamplin College of Business website and sites for individual academic departments within the college. The following points were either mentioned multiple times or represented points of particular interest. The website that stood as a proxy for feedback was the marketing

department's new website because it was the only College of Business website that had been recently updated. The overall consensus was that the college needed new web pages, and the feedback about the proxy website was that it was user-friendly and more engaging. Although this was the marketing website, students and alumni affiliated with other departments said they would return to the site to read articles, blogs, and business college news in general. Ideas for the website included:

- Job information: Students and non-students alike wanted more job and internship postings on the Pamplin or department websites. Many alumni requested a portal where they could interact with students themselves. Overall, an increase in access was requested.
- More frequent updates
- Typical job descriptions (what students could do with specific degrees)
- Relevant academic calendar material on front page (such as force/add forms, course requests, and timetable links). Activities calendar, to align with academic calendar (announce speakers, visiting companies in atrium, and the like).
- Showcase more students and student work: This is important as students relate with other similar students. More student-relevant material allows for a more personal experience for students, as well as nostalgia for recent alumni who may be more likely to donate.
- Facebook icons on the main College of Business page: Share buttons, social media icons, could be placed directly on the front page, ensuring students are going to the official college social media pages as well as instilling trust in those using social media accounts.

- Amazon.com personalization and customization model: One idea included making the College of Business experience more interactive and customized, with profiled information based on usage.

- Identical placeholder design for the college and its department layouts: One recommendation voiced during research was for all the sites to have similar layouts for finding material more easily.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

Two major managerial implications—each producing long- and short-term effects—were drawn from the initial results of this research. First was the development of an admissions campaign as a response to Pamplin's declining admissions statistics. Through the utilization of Facebook and its geo-targeting program, Pamplin was able to target specific zip codes outside the state of Virginia and hone in on an age range of 16 to 18 year-olds, providing them with custom content and a specific call-to-action. Those zip codes included 16 cities within a 250-mile radius, including Richmond, Charlottesville, Washington, D.C., and others. Age and zip code were not the only key data points involved in this deployment, however. Specific interests were also a focus, with an aim of finding Facebook users who wanted to know more about the following and related topics: recruitment, James Madison University, Radford, University of Virginia, Virginia Tech, high school, college, graduation, application essay, university, and college admission.

In 2015, the Facebook admissions campaign—complete with a brief, but excitement-evoking video—saw massive results. With just $200 spent on paid Facebook promotions, the post saw 53,740 people in paid reach and 67,776 in total reach. This included 190 actions on the post, including 107 link clicks, 57 post likes, 20 page likes, 5 shares, and 1 photo click. In

addition, results were seen outside of Facebook and the College of Business. From 2014 to 2015,

Virginia Tech received record-breaking numbers of undergraduate applications for admission

(Matthiessen, 2015). With almost 22,500 freshman applications received by February 2015,

there was a 7.6% increase over the previous year. The same pattern followed for the 2015-2016

admissions process, which saw a 12% increase in applications.

The effects of this campaign were more widely spread than originally intended, positively

encompassing the campus as a whole and providing evidence to the turn-key role that viral

media activity can play in communities such as colleges. All of Virginia Tech's colleges

experienced this increase in applications, most notably the Pamplin College of Business, which

saw a 16% increase in incoming applications.

The next step of applying implications from this research entailed enhancing Pamplin's

social presence from a business perspective while remaining educationally impactful. This came

in the form of a new flagship program, PRISM (Pamplin Re-Inventing Social Media). Launched

in 2011, this organization was developed to serve as the official virtual brand and voice for the

Pamplin College of Business. The organization was tasked with managing all social media and

analytics for the college, which began a new type of progress that the college had not recently

seen. In the evolution of the College of Business and of Virginia Tech as a whole, PRISM not

only reinvented social media—it began and continues to lead the regeneration of communication

between the institution and its stakeholders. Specifically targeted to students in their freshman

through junior years, PRISM is an interdisciplinary, faculty-led, student-run organization that

operates as a separate entity on the Virginia Tech campus. The average 3.4 GPA of those

accepted into this competitive grouping of students is a testimony to PRISM's focus on academic

excellence and applied knowledge. Through the inclusivity of students from all colleges across

the university, the organization is able to harness the goals and motivations of many Virginia Tech entities, marking a new point in the evolution of the constantly-expanding institution.

PRISM is the only organization of its kind on the Virginia Tech campus and equips students to lead the development, marketing, and measurement of Pamplin's website and social media presence. In addition, members also work with an array of real world, multi-industry clients on marketing, social media, and gaming projects. These opportunities occur mainly through involvement with local companies and alumni connections, in hopes of further applying students' skills and knowledge. The organization runs on $70,000 a year, based on grants and client contracts.

All PRISM students have access to Salesforce's Social Studio, a publishing, listening, and monitoring tool that builds knowledge in analytical assessment, forecasting, brand image, and overall ROI. As a direct result, two leading students from PRISM are able to attend the Dreamforce Conference each year, which hosts 150,000 social media and data professionals for discussion on technology, social evolution, analytics, and more. Further funding will help enable more students to attend the annual conference, enhancing students' experience with Social Studio, improving data analysis skills, and providing opportunities to apply knowledge in real-world settings.

In addition, PRISM continuously works with the Pamplin College of Business Admissions team to reflect a new model and track the "life of the student." This is achieved through working with new tools within Salesforce and assessing Adobe and its CRM platforms. It is PRISM's goal to attend an Adobe conference on digital marketing to learn and apply findings to Pamplin and real-world clients.

Since its inception, over 200 PRISM students and alumni have been placed in professional marketing, advertising, and social media firms. Now in its sixth year, the organization continues to report 100% job placement for graduating members. In addition, the organization saw great success in 2016 when it was awarded a 2016 Telly and a 2016 Muse Award. As the organization grows at an increasing rate, it continues to engage in new processes. This includes improving everything from the interview process and account management tasks to employing a team structure similar to that of a multi-service agency. With the ongoing support of Pamplin, Virginia Tech, and many involved alumni, PRISM is able to lead the university in social talent and keep the College of Business at the forefront of social research and development.

FINAL CONCLUSIONS & FUTURE RESEARCH

The findings and implications explained in this research enable the Pamplin College of Business and its individual academic departments to use social media with more purpose and to create effective strategy in order to engage stakeholders. Henry Ford's apocryphal statement that if he were to ask his customers what they wanted, they would have told him "a faster horse" is most relevant in this case. The power in social media and the college's ability to harness that power to interact with its stakeholders represent as fundamental a change as the creation of the horseless carriage. As with the adoption of the horseless carriage, understanding stakeholders' social media attitudes and behaviors is essential to maximize their effective incorporation into higher education's strategic planning. With this in mind, a 360-degree analysis of the data was performed and discussed to further understand attitudes associated with social media usage by stakeholders of the College of Business. Based on this analysis and the findings above, qualitative techniques were employed, including focus groups that used projective techniques

and open discussion to further identify the motivations underlying social media consumption patterns.

The findings also played a key role in the development and beta testing of Pamplin's social media dashboard, leading to more effective and productive social media behaviors by the college to engage and interact with its constituents. Since this testing and the launch of PRISM in 2011, the College of Business has been able to improve on the functionality of social media with immediate results and critical insights.

With the growth of mobile and social interaction, the business college has observed growth through the use of a wide breadth of social techniques. LinkedIn engagement increased by 20%, while Facebook likes grew by 35% since the start date. Twitter has shown the most promising return, as followers have sparked with a 158% increase over the past five years. Future research will focus on understanding the meaning of Pamplin's brand as a whole, as well as continuously tracking and assessing usage and attitudes toward the college for continuous improvement and innovation.

Embracing social media has enabled the business college to propel itself into a proactive mindset rather than a reactive mindset, offering an overall better experience within the college. Using social media is more efficient and cost-effective in the long run, and has allowed Pamplin to tap into emotional connections for fundraising, engaging alumni, improving visibility in digital and traditional media, and creating top-of-mind awareness for the college's brand. Ultimately, this gives students, faculty, and alumni who participate in building the college's social media a rewarding experience that stays with them well beyond their years at the university. This has also led to more satisfied constituents, greater development opportunities, and potentially increased rankings. Building relationships, engaging members, leveraging current

communication systems, and using different channels together have created an unparalleled,

unified voice within the Pamplin College of Business.

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FIGURE 1
Polling Sample – Social Media Posts Per Week

FIGURE 1

Polling Sample - Social Media Posts Per Week

SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS PER WEEK
NON-PROFIT/EDUCATION

Legend:
- All Posts
- Posts with Images
- Tweets
- Facebook Posts

< 1: 41%, 56%, 45%, 52%
1—3: 19%, 15%, 17%, 20%
3—10: 21%, 19%, 24%, 20%
10 +: 18%, 6%, 16%, 7%

Average number of posts published per week

31
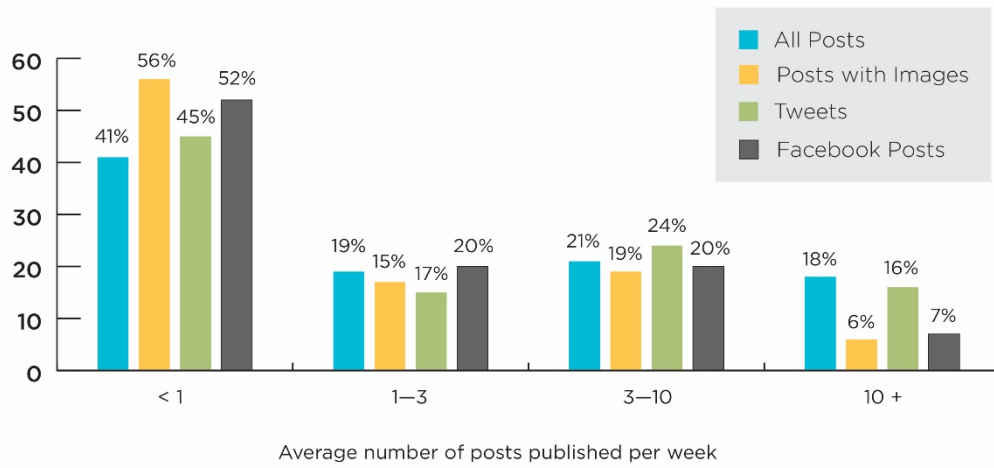
FIGURE 2
Polling Sample – by Department

FIGURE 2
Polling Sample - by Department

MAJOR/DEPARTMENT

■ Students　　■ Non-Students

Department	Students	Non-Students
ACIS	14%	20%
BIT	11%	9%
Undecided	6%	3%
ECON	5%	4%
FIN	16%	22%
HTM	8%	4%
MGT	16%	24%
MKTG	34%	20%
Prospective	9%	10%
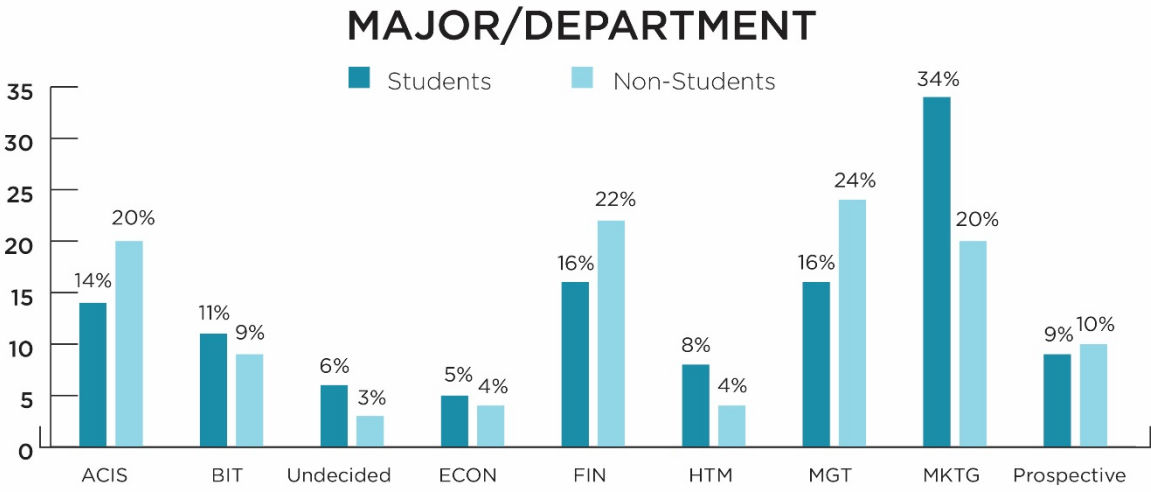
FIGURE 3
Polling Sample – by Age

FIGURE 3

Polling Sample - by Age
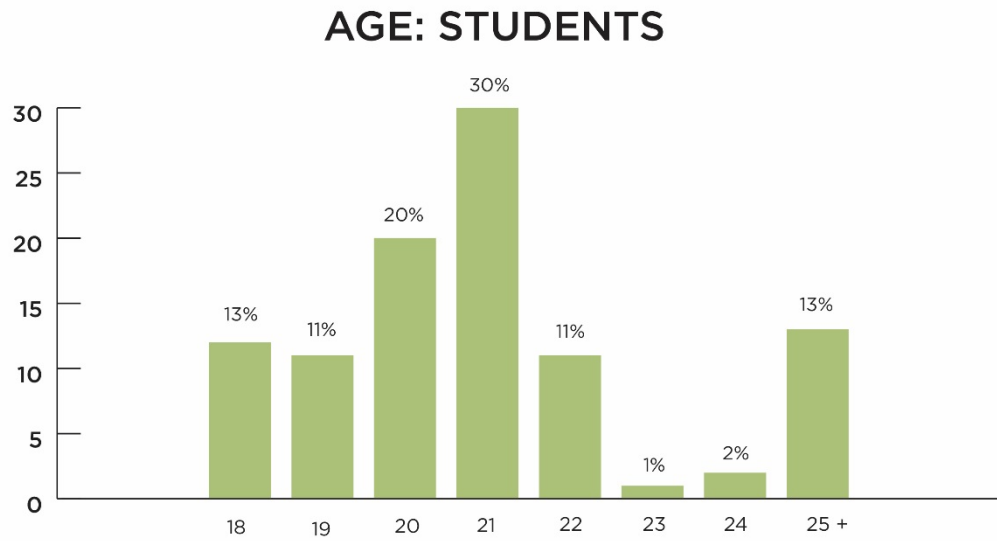
AGE: STUDENTS

FIGURE 4
Polling Sample – by Age

FIGURE 4

Polling Sample - by Age

AGE: NON-STUDENTS
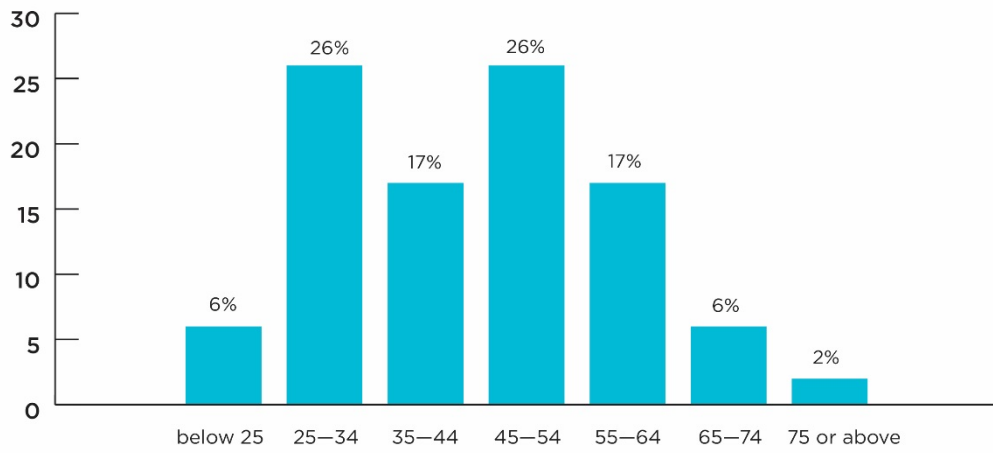
FIGURE 5
Social Media Tools Used

FIGURE 5
Social Media Tools Used

Which social media tools have you used?

■ Students ■ Non-Students

Facebook: Students 95%, Non-Students 75%
YouTube: Students 85%, Non-Students 70%
Skype: Students 80%, Non-Students 45%
Twitter: Students 55%, Non-Students 31%
LinkedIn: Students 44%, Non-Students 65%
StumbleUpon: Students 43%, Non-Students 6%
MySpace: Students 42%, Non-Students 16%
Google+: Students 36%, Non-Students 30%
Tumblr: Students 22%, Non-Students 4%
Flickr: Students 13%, Non-Students 14%
Blogger: Students 8%, Non-Students 7%
FourSquare: Students 7%, Non-Students 6%
WordPress: Students 5%, Non-Students 8%
Instagram: Students 5%, Non-Students 2%
RSS: Students 4%, Non-Students 10%
Digg: Students 3%, Non-Students 3%
Delicious: Students 2%, Non-Students 2%

FIGURE 6
Social Media Platform Usage Among Marketing Majors
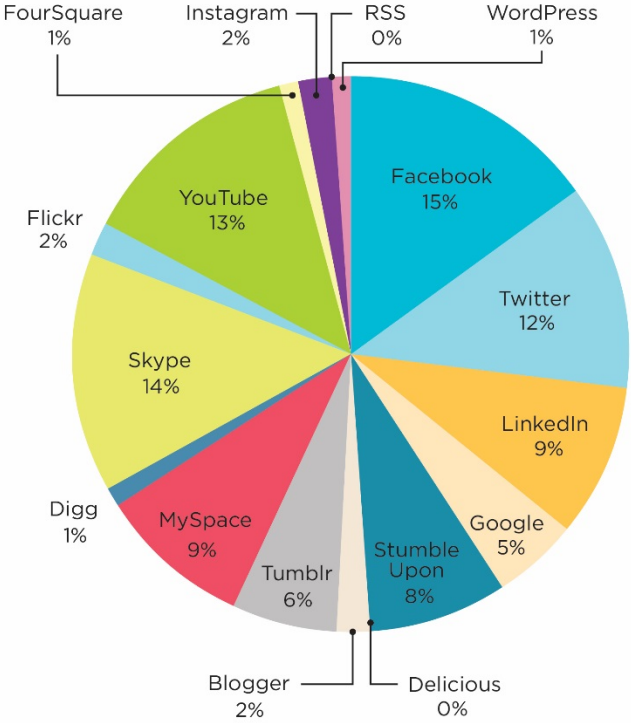
FIGURE 7
Social Media Platform Usage by Academic Level

FIGURE 7
Social Media Platform Usage by Academic Level

	Freshman	Sophomores	Junior	Seniors	Grad
Facebook	X	X	X	X	X
Twitter	X	X	X	X	
LinkedIn				X	X
StumbleUpon		X	X	X	
Blogger				X	X
Tumblr	X	X	X	X	
Skype	X	X	X	X	X
Flickr					X
YouTube	X	X	X	X	X
Foursquare				X	X
Instagram			X	X	
Wordpress	X	X			

FIGURE 8
Social Media Platform Usage by Major (students)

FIGURE 8
Social Media Platform Usage by Major (students)

	BUS	ACIS	FIN	MGT	MKTG	HTM	BIT	ECON
Facebook	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Twitter	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
LinkedIn		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Google+		X			X			X
StumbleUpon	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Blogger				X	X*	X		
Tumblr	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Skype	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Flickr					X	X	X	
YouTube	X	X*	X	X	X	X	X	X
Foursquare			X		X*	X*		
Instagram					X*		X*	
Wordpress	X*			X*	X*		X*	

FIGURE 9
Social Media Platform Usage by Age (non-students)

FIGURE 9

Social Media Platform Usage by Age (non-students)

	<25	25—34	35—44	45—54	55—64	65—74	75+
Facebook	X	X	X	X	X	X	X*
Twitter	X	X	X*				
LinkedIn	X	X	X	X	X		X*
Google+	X	X				X	X
StumbleUpon	X						
Blogger	X*						
Tumblr	X*						
Skype	X	X	X*	X	X		
Flickr	X*	X*					
YouTube	X*	X	X	X	X	X	
Foursquare	X*	X*					
Instagram	X*						
RSS	X*	X*	X*				
Wordpress	X*	X*	X*				

FIGURE 10
Social Venn Diagram

FIGURE 10
Social Venn Diagram
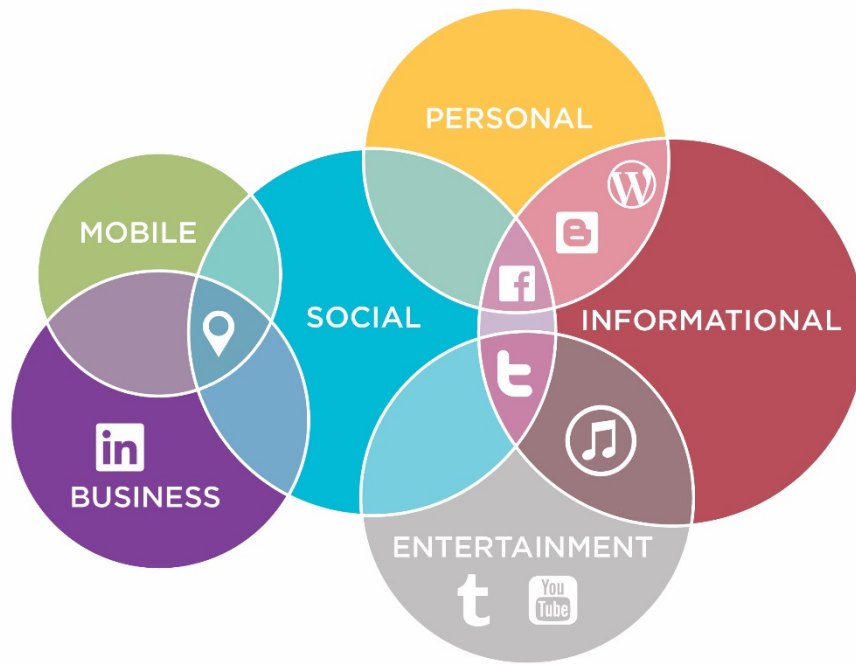
FIGURE 11
Content via Social Terms

FIGURE 11

Content via Social Terms

Information: can post content that is more scholarly, such as research in these mediums, aside from Facebook, which is used for other reasons like to 'inform.' It can also be longer in length.

PERSONAL

Social: Anything that has a smiling face goes on SOCIAL platforms, specifically Facebook and YouTube

- Depends on purposes (class, soapbox, etc.)

INFORMATIONAL

SOCIAL

- Photos
- Pamplin Voices (Day in the Life and Showcase links to YouTube and Tumblr—links to mostly student ones, popular faculty, and YOUNG alumni for Facebook
- Internships

Podcasts
- Full length lectures
- Full length interviews
- Full length speakers

- Pamplin Check-in's
- Study abroad geo-tagged pics and videos

THE BULLETIN BOARD
- Announcements of posting of content on other social media pages and links to that content (links to Facebook, iTunesU, YouTube, LinkedIn
- Announce events (speakers, atrium visits, galas)
- Research article links and current events

- Pamplin Voices (Showcases mostly alumni)
- Pamplin related articles
- Job and internship postings

BUSINESS

- Pamplin Voices (Showcases and Day in the Life): AND added content by letting the featured people write something
- Study abroad stuff that is less formal
- Dean's blog

- Short interviews and speakers or just teasers that direct to iTunesU
- Virtual Tours
- Talk Shows like Brand the Future (that are short)
- More formal Study abroad content (like the Lugano video)
- Pamplin Voices (Day in the life and showcases of ALL groups (student, faculty, alumni)...the announcements just vary by platform but all shown here

ENTERTAINMENT

FIGURE 12
Social Workflow Dashboard

FIGURE 12

Social Workflow Dashboard

BUILDER

Motivation
- Networking
- Current events
- Educational value
- Academics
- Cultural Understanding

*On the left you will see the logos of the social media platforms they are likely to use, as well as their motivations for using them.

Builders are likely to consist of a small percentage of students, likely upperclassman, faculty, and alumni who generate or build content. Sources of content include:
- Study abroad programs-geo-tagging
- Class related content
- Alumni guest posts
- Peer reviews and advice

*Indirect Mentorship between Builders, Sharers, and Listeners.

SHARER

Motivation
- Current events
- Entertainment/Leisure
- Chatting
- Interacting with friends
- Peer reviews and "shopping"

Sharers and Listeners use the same social media tools for similar functions, however, Sharers are more likely to connect people through content while the Listeners are mainly consumers of the information.

These two groups likely use social media not just for social purposes, but for academic purposes as well. The Sharers are likely to be key opinion leaders among the respective student, faculty,and alumni target groups and are vital in the success of the college's social media because they extend reach and are looked to by the Listeners for information.

LISTENER

Motivation
- Same as Sharer

Characteristics
- Most likely underclassmen
- Make up 90% of social media use

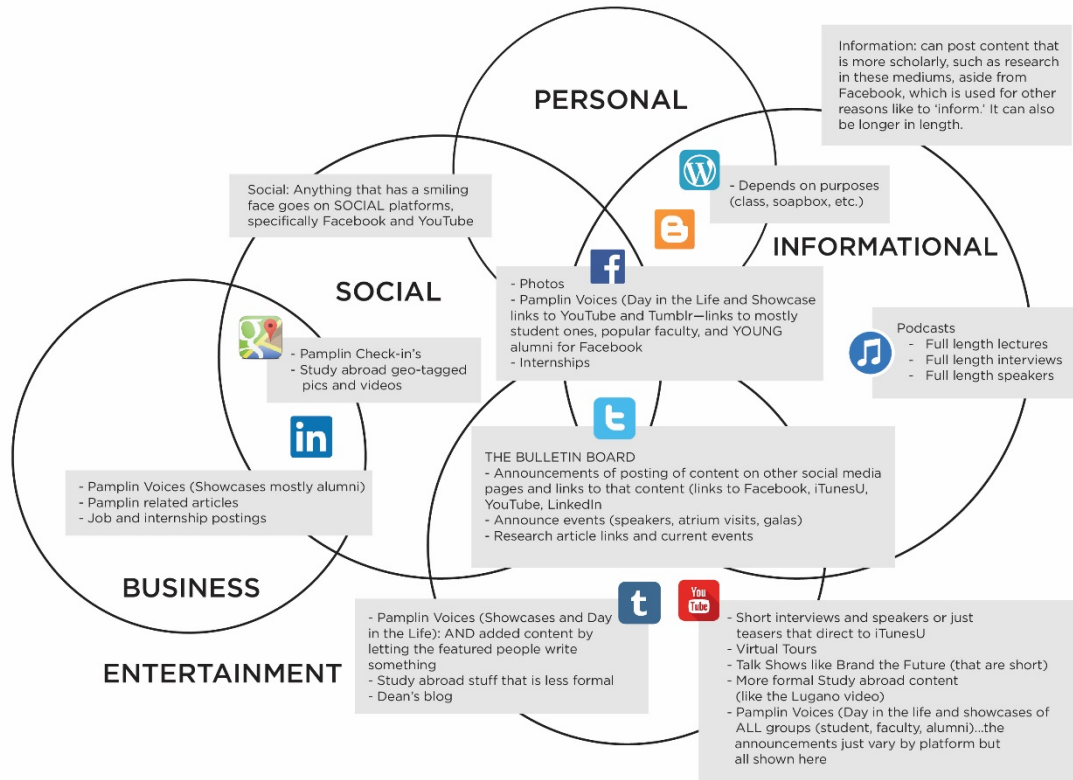Sharers are most likely to be upperclassmen and underclassmen are likely to be the Listeners so there is opportunity for "indirect mentorship" if the underclassmen listen to the upperclassman through social media. Bridging the gap between grade levels for guidance with classes, internships, etc.

*What is meant by "indirect mentorship" is that members of different groups can learn form each other by simply interacting or following each other on social media.

STREAMER

Motivation
- Entertainment
- Leisure
- Chatting
- Interacting with friends

Sharers prefer more intimate interaction, such as face to face interaction. This group does not use social media as much for academics as they do for purely personal entertainment and socializing with friends outside of the academic sphere. However, they are still important to the college because communications about the college are bound to take place in these arenas and they can be useful in helping to keep it on top of mind.

*Less business and more personal

PROFESSIONAL

Motivation
- Networking
- Personal visibility
- Outlet for personal Expression
- Check-in's

Professionals are creating, maintaining, or repositioning their "brand images." In a way, they are like the Builders because they are generating content, but to enhance their resumes. This group also uses social media to connect with and follow companies and brands of interest for familiarizing themselves with the company or brand and by getting their name out there and starting a conversation, hopefully enhancing name recognition when it comes to an internship and job search.

Interestingly, students identify LinkedIn and Google+ as being perceptually similar whereas faculty and alumni identify LinkedIn and Facebook as being perceptually similar.

*Likely to be upperclassman and alumni, which is where the "Indirect Mentorship" comes in. Upperclassman can mentor the lowerclassman by helping build awareness about the importance of starting to think about jobs earlier and how to go about building their resumes and networking sooner rather than later and how to go about the internship and job search. Likewise, alumni can provide these services to upperclassman as well as to lower classman. Rich networking will result.