

Virtual Users in Social Networks and their Involvement in Religious Perception: a Case Study on Undergraduates of University of Kelaniya

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Abstract: Social network is one of the most used communication media between people in nowadays. Human beings are influenced social networks through attitudes, behaviors, and social norms. Alternatively referred to as a virtual community or profile site, a social network is a website on the Internet that brings people together in a central location to talk, share ideas and interests, or make new friends. This type of collaboration and sharing of data is often referred to as social media. (computerhope.com) This study focuses on the usage of social network for serving, and publishing religion perspectives among users. This was measured using survey spread over 100 students focusing on social network usage, purposes, and religion effects. Participations were randomly selected among the undergraduates of University of Kelaniya. The results indicate that, students use more than one social network such as: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc. The students almost use Facebook 97%. Students discuss different type of questions while using social network and religions topics discussed by 51%. According to the results, posting religious photos by the users, they wish to express their religious perception according to their personal attitudes. This means that the social network is highly used as a way to serve and publish religious perspectives among users. Buddhist, Muslims and Catholics are the major users who involve in virtually in religious disseminations in Sri Lanka. During the special religious days, most of the users in social networks share creative ideas with religious advices. Not only that but also, there are some extremist ideas which condemn other religious visions and practices. This condition creates a negative social interaction between the virtual communities. The research indicates that the extremists' influences on religious perception among undergraduates' is not much as in the outside society. Finally, social media is a mode of expressing religious beliefs and it can create an image on religion during this digital era.