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INTRODUCTION

In principle Twitter is available to anyone who has access to the internet, providing a communication platform accessible to a wide variety of users. Whilst Twitter’s restriction of 140 characters or less per message gives rise to excessively abbreviated terminology, reducing the semantic accessibility of postings; the limitation is ideal for those who find typing arduous or who use inordinately time-consuming input devices, forming the message letter by letter using a head switch and infinite patience. It is suggested that social media offers significant benefits in terms of democratisation, levelling out the effects of accessibility issues. The persona behind the tweet is usually accepted on trust by other users. Those who subscribe to this view believe Twitter offers the effects of accessibility issues. The persona behind the tweet is usually accepted on trust by other users. Those who subscribe to this view believe Twitter offers

"It's a personal thing, social sites are something I am not interested in."  

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RESULTS

When asked about the use of social media for their client, rather than themselves, the number of respondents (who used social media personally) who would not suggest any form of social media rose from 15.3% to 28.3%. The majority of respondents, however, felt that they would, in at least some circumstances, recommend social networks to clients (see Figure 4). The most popular recommendation was Facebook, followed by Twitter.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Of the four social networks that we chose to include in our survey-based work, we found that the most popular overall both for everyday use, work-related usage and recommendation was Facebook, followed by Twitter. Myspace, which was placed in our survey primarily as it is an example of a site that no longer attracts widespread use, predictably receives little interest. We speculate that the work-related interest in Twitter may be attributable to the ease of sharing links for new papers, developments in research, articles, etc.

Views on social networks were sharply split. Factors in the decision of whether or not to recommend social sites included:

- Familiarity with specific social sites
- Personal perception of informational value of social sites for specific purposes (such as support in obtaining grants)
- Discomfort with the format
- Provenance and reliability of information

The concept of social networks as acting as support or subject-related communities was referenced only infrequently.

Of most interest for our hypothesis were the comments received both from respondents with disability and from survey respondents in extended discussion. The high profile of accessibility issues (access to PC, appropriate input mechanism, etc.) suggests that if nothing else, more could be done to provide support to enable greater access to information resources.

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