

Glossary of Social Learning Lingo

“Prior to the Internet, the last technology that had any real effect on the way people sat down and talked together was the table.”

—Clay Shirky

Activity Feed: The rolling list of status updates and recent additions to a social network conveying what people are doing or feeling in real time.

Astroturfing: The formation of citizen groups or coalitions that appear to be grassroots based but are primarily conceived, created, and/or funded by corporations, industry trade associations, political interests, or public relations firms.

Backchannel: Real-time text communications among audience members using something like Twitter or a local chat room during a live event. Coined in 1970 to describe listeners’ behaviors during verbal communication, today back-channel represents an audience who is now connected in real time, learning with each other and the world all the time.

Blog: An online journal (web log) that usually provides information or commentary on a particular issue, event, person, or topic.

Blog Posts: Primarily text, yet can contain photos, illustrations, videos, and links to other websites.

Bloggers: Writers of blogs, they typically welcome comments and interaction by and among readers and themselves, all of which can be as interesting as the original post.

Brandscraping: When someone mentions a brand (or even an associated hashtag) prominently in social media to draw attention to themselves rather than for the intended purposes of the brand.

Cloud: The phenomenon of storing data and locating services and infrastructure on a remote server accessible by the data owner from any device with an Internet connection. Social media data live in the cloud.

Collaboration: Enhancing the exchange of insights and expanding ideas on-demand and in real time; also defined in practical terms as solving problems in teams.

Collective Intelligence: Wisdom that emerges from the collaboration, collective efforts, and/or competition of many individuals. Collective IQ is a measure of collective intelligence, although the two are often used interchangeably.

Communities of Practice: Groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.

Community Manager: An online conversation facilitator who builds, grows, and manages online communities, often around a company, a brand, or a cause.

Crowdfunding: The practice of funding a project or venture by raising numerous small amounts of money from a large number of people, typically via the Internet.

Crowdsourcing: Soliciting content, ideas, and skills via the Internet from people who are passionate about a topic and who are willing to contribute their resources to further the work.

Curation: The careful selection of items for collection and sharing; once used mostly in art museums (exhibits) and radio stations (play lists), today, curated collections of great online resources help people learn quickly through social media.

Derp: Internet slang signifying stupidity or acting foolishly. It's used as a label, an epithet, as in, "He's a derp."

Enterprise Social Network (ESN): A social network designed specifically for people within a business enterprise, with enhanced security and department or role-specific forums. Many such systems are available and the market for them is growing and competitive.

Geofence: A virtual barrier representing a real geographic area through a software program. Dynamically generated around a specific location or predefined by physical boundaries, it can send trigger notifications when a device enters or exits the boundaries defined by the geofencing administrator.

Geotagging: Adding location-based data to media such as photos, video, or online maps that can help people find services based on locale.

Hashtag: The # symbol preceding a word or run-on phrase within social media to bring attention to a topic or emotion that can be indexed, searched on, and followed by anyone, even those who don't follow the people using the tag.

Influencer: Subject matter expert respected for his or her opinion, with the capacity to shape the opinions of others.

Keyword: A subject or descriptive term that identifies the topic of text, used to index documents for retrieval by search engines or other aggregators. A keyword can appear in the body of the text, subject heading, or pay-per-click advertising.

Link Shortening: Converting a long web address to a short link, which can more easily be shared across social media and can be tracked to see how many people clicked it.

Mashup: Assembling unique items to create something new. Producing new results from pre-existing bits and pieces can result in new songs, new software, new courses, and new job roles.

Meme: A cultural theme that emerges over time as it's passed from one person to another. Memes generally circulate through graphics or photos and their accompanying explanatory or declarative texts that are shared repeatedly on social media. One popular and unexpected one is Rickrolling, the practice of misdirecting a link to a video of a Rick Astley song from 1987. Internet memes relevant to business include "Ain't nobody got time for that" and "Too soon?"

Metadata: Frequently referred to as "data about data," there are structural metadata and descriptive metadata. Both are used to describe the content

and the context of files and objects such as web pages, blog posts, and photographs. Metadata are used primarily to facilitate search and discovery of relevant information.

Microsharing: Short bursts of text shared across social network activity feeds. They are usually limited to a finite number of characters—often 140 because, along with a 20-character header, they fit the 160-character limit of SMS (TXT) messages; also referred to as microblogging.

Online Community: A virtual, online space where people can share content and engage around specific topics with colleagues, business partners, customers, and subject matters experts—anyone with the permission and interest in building on what they know, as well as discovering new perspectives. Often used synonymously with social network, online communities allow anyone within the space access to anyone else in the space.

Open Source: A software production and development methodology that allows unrestricted access to the end product, including its source code; in contrast to proprietary software, which requires ownership or a structured relationship with the owner, such as a license, in order to access the end product.

Photosharing: A type of social network where people can upload, manage, and share photos publicly or with their networks. Popular sites include Flickr and Instagram. Pinterest uses images to link to content.

Platform: A framework or content management system that runs software and presents content. WordPress, for example, serves as a platform for a community of blogs and other content. In a larger context, the Internet is becoming a platform for applications and capabilities through the availability of cloud computing.

Rating System: A feature within online platforms that allows people to uprate or downrate postings or content, sharing their likes or dislikes. Some networks use stars for rating. Others use Like buttons. Reddit is one social network that makes the up and down ratings central to their engagement.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO): Elevating certain words in a website so that search engines rank them higher than similar sites. It seeks to affect unpaid or “organic” search results.

Sentiment Analysis: A metric that identifies and measures the tone of a conversation across a social network, usually by categorizing it as positive, negative, or neutral.

Social Business: Connecting people to people, information, and insights within an organization.

Social Capital: The good will and positive reputation that flows to a person through his or her relationships with others in social networks.

Social Graph: A data structure that represents the interconnection of relationships in an online social network between people, places, and the things those people interact with online.

Social Learning: Participating with other people to make sense of new ideas, learning with them and from them online or side by side. Social learning naturally occurs at conferences, in groups, and among old friends in a cafe as easily as it does in a meeting or among colleagues online who have never met in person. We experience it when we go down the hall to ask a question and when we post that same question on Twitter or Facebook, anticipating that someone will respond.

Social Media: A set of Internet-based social technologies designed to engage two, three, or more people. What makes this special is that most interaction supported by technology is either narrowcast (one to one), often with a telephone call or an email message; niche cast (one to small groups), for instance using email distribution lists or small-circulation newsletters; or broadcast (one to many), as in large online magazines or a radio show. In more general terms, social media refers to any online technology that enables people to publish, connect, converse, and share content online.

Social Media Optimization (SMO): A set of practices for generating publicity through social media, online communities, and social networks. The focus is on driving traffic from sources other than search engines, such as from the referrals by friends and colleagues. In marketing, generally referred to as earned media.

Social Network: Online space to connect with people, similar to an online community (the terms are often interchanged). Technically, a social network consists of people who personally know one another but may also include people with whom you have loose ties that closer friends can strengthen through your mutual connections. Popular social networks are Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram.

Social Network Analysis (SNA): Mapping and measuring relationships and information flow among people, groups, organizations, computers, and websites, referred to as nodes, and their relationships or connectedness, referred to as ties.

Social Profile: A personal page within a social network that displays information about that person such as interests, expertise, location, connections, updates, and links to authored content.

Social Technology: The broader set of automated solutions that enable social media and social interaction, including the Internet itself; also referred to as social tools.

Social Tools: Software or platforms that enable participatory culture. Examples include social networks, blogs, podcasts, forums, wikis, shared videos, and shared presentations. Social tools leave a digital audit trail, documenting an online journey and leaving a path for others to follow and share.

Trackback: A link used to facilitate communication across blogs. When one blogger refers to another blog in his or her post, the trackback will notify the owner of the original post that the blogger has referred to and linked to his or her post. Each blog post has a permanent link address (a permalink), which directs the reader to a specific entry within a blog.

Trending Topics: Typically defined by an algorithm designed to identify topics that are currently being talked about online more than they had been previously.

Troll: Internet slang for someone who posts irrelevant, inflammatory, or off-topic messages in an online forum to provoke others into an emotional response or to generally disrupt on-topic conversation.

Tweet: A 140-character update shared across Twitter. RT stands for Retweet, whereby you share what someone else has tweeted. DM stands for Direct Message. A TweetChat is an organized gathering of people using a specified #hashtag to consolidate group tweets, creating a virtual chat room that's visible to any twitter user following that tag. A Tweetup is a gathering of people using an agreed-upon hashtag while they meet in person.

User-Generated Content (UGC): Refers to all forms of materials such as blog posts, reviews, podcasts, videos, comments, and more designed by the users of the content (such as employees or customers).

Videosharing: Embedded capabilities or dedicated social networks designed for people to upload, manage, and share recorded digital videos or streaming video publicly or with their personal networks; popular platforms: YouTube, Vimeo, and Vine (for looping videos no longer than six seconds).

Virtual Event: A live event, such as a trade show or job fair, that takes place across the web in real time, often using a virtual environment designed to emulate a face-to-face event of the same kind.

Web 2.0 (and Enterprise 2.0): Easy-to-use, socially focused, and commercially available software that moves services, assets, smarts, and guidance closer to where they are needed—to people seeking answers, solving problems, overcoming uncertainty, and improving how they work. It is software that facilitates collaboration and informs choices on a wide stage, fostering learning from a vast, intellectually diverse set of people.

Wiki: A web page or collection of documents designed to be edited by multiple people and requiring little, if any, knowledge of markup language, thereby facilitating collaboration on page content. Wikipedia is an example.

Work Out Loud (WOL): Sharing ideas, learning, and what you are working on in an open, generous, and connected way.

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