

Seven Ways Social Media Will Change in 2010

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Social media exploded in 2009. Twitter alone grew over 900% this year according to Nielsen Online. Meanwhile, Facebook continued to colonize the world - adding another 50 million users for a total of more than 350 million active users in 180 countries – and 50% of them log onto Facebook every day.

So what will social media be like in 2010? It will get even more popular and more exclusive and it will get more mobile. Here are some trends we could see in the upcoming year:

1. Social media will look less social

As the popularity of social networking grows it will become more exclusive – even “anti-social.” Not everyone will be able to fit on someone’s Twitter list or Facebook friend page and as networks begin to fill with noise, it is likely that changing user behavior will become more common. Maybe it’s not actually less social, but it might look that way as we want to get more value out of our networks without all the clutter.

2. Social Media Goes Offline

One of the biggest potentials of social media is for it to not only connect people online, but facilitate connections offline as well. 2010 will see an increase in location aware applications that blur the line between the web and the real world with networks like Four Square and others.

3. Big Corporations Scale Down

There are a few big companies that have scaled social initiatives beyond marketing or communications initiatives. Twelpforce by Best Buy provides customer support on Twitter. The employees are managed through a custom built system that keeps track of who participates. This is a sign of things to come. More companies will try to cut costs and/or serve customers more effectively through social technology in 2010.

4. Smaller Businesses Ramp Up

More small businesses will see the big bang-for-the-buck they get with social media marketing and capitalize on it next year. Social media marketing is a great equalizer that allows small companies to compete more effectively with large ones.

5. Your company will have a social media policy

If your company doesn't already have a social media policy in place with specific rules of engagement, it just might have one in 2010. From how to conduct yourself as an employee to what is considered competition, it is likely that you will be seeing a corporate memo about how the company views social media and your participation in it.

6. Mobile devices becomes a social media lifeline

With approximately 70 percent of businesses or workplaces banning social networks and with the simultaneous sale of smart phones on the rise, employees will feed their social media habits with their mobile devices. The old cigarette break will become a "social media break." As a result, we will see better mobile versions of our favorite social drug of choice.

7. More Social Sharing Means Less Email

Recently, the New York Times iPhone application added sharing functionality that allows users to easily broadcast an article across social networks. Many websites already support this, but you will probably see an increase in this user behavior as it becomes more mainstream. More people will share on these networks instead of using e-mail.

What do you think? Where do you see social media going next year? We would be interested in hearing your thoughts and comments.

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