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Best practice worksheet for engagement using social media

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Deliverable 7.2
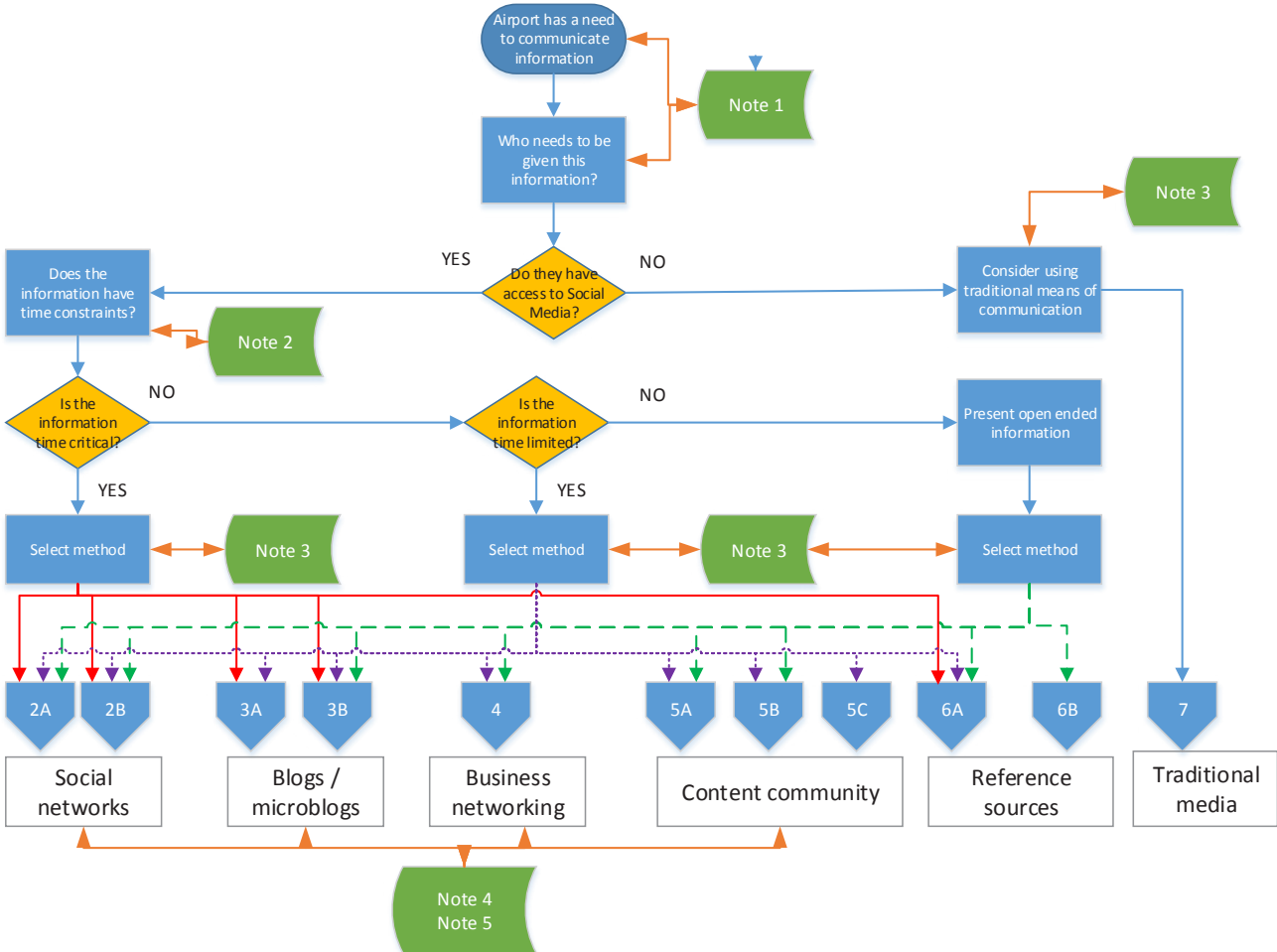
Produced in 2017 as part of the SPARA 2020 Project

PROJECT LEADER

Ranald Robertson (HITRANS)

WORK PACKAGE LEADER

David Gray (Robert Gordon University)
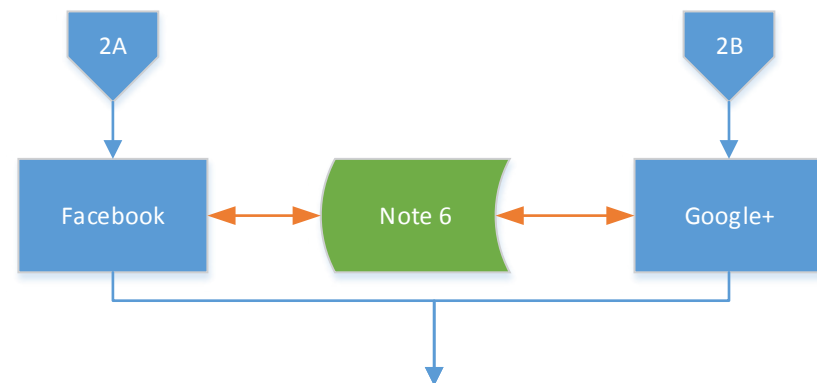
PROJECT MANAGER FOR WP7

Lyndsay Bloice (Robert Gordon University)

AUTHOR

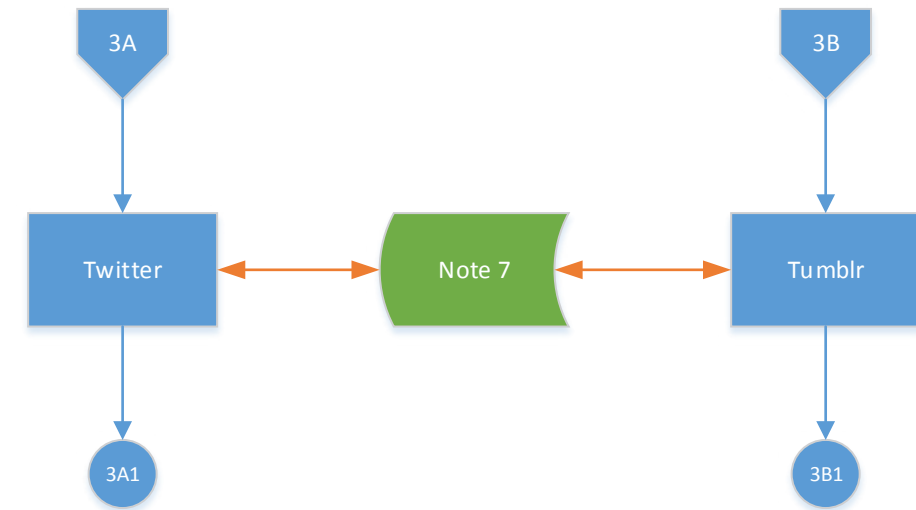Andy Grinnall (Robert Gordon University)

Social networks

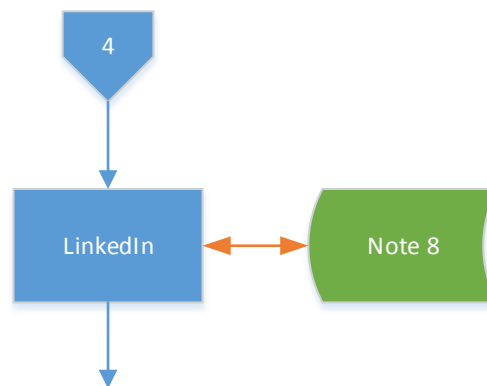| Time constraint	Communication scenario	Examples	Actions
Time critical	Unplanned events happening now or in the immediate future	• Delays to flights due to weather conditions • Runway closure for urgent repairs • Accident on airport approach road • Power failure impacting baggage handling • Café closed because of staff illness	• Post made as soon as the issue is known about • Updates made to report on progress, or the lack of it (consider whether a single edited post containing all updates or individual posts for each update is the best approach) • Advise on the end of the incident • Respond in a timely fashion to comments and questions
Time limited	Planned events with a defined end point	• Busy periods such as public holidays and the start of school holidays • Infrastructure improvements in and around the airport • Industrial action by airport or airline staff • Special offers in airport retail outlets • Commencement of new routes	• Initial post to advise on expected timeline and impact of planned activity • Progress updates when there is news to report and/or updates at regular intervals • Notification that the event has been completed • Respond in a timely fashion to comments and questions
Open ended	Information that is unchanging or changes only infrequently	• History of the airport • Staff profiles • Parking and other airport facilities • Public transport options • Contact methods	• Consider whether Social Networks are a suitable option for this type of information • Post links to information on other platforms such as airport website and video sharing sites • Post updates when necessary

Blogs and microblogs

Twitter

3A1

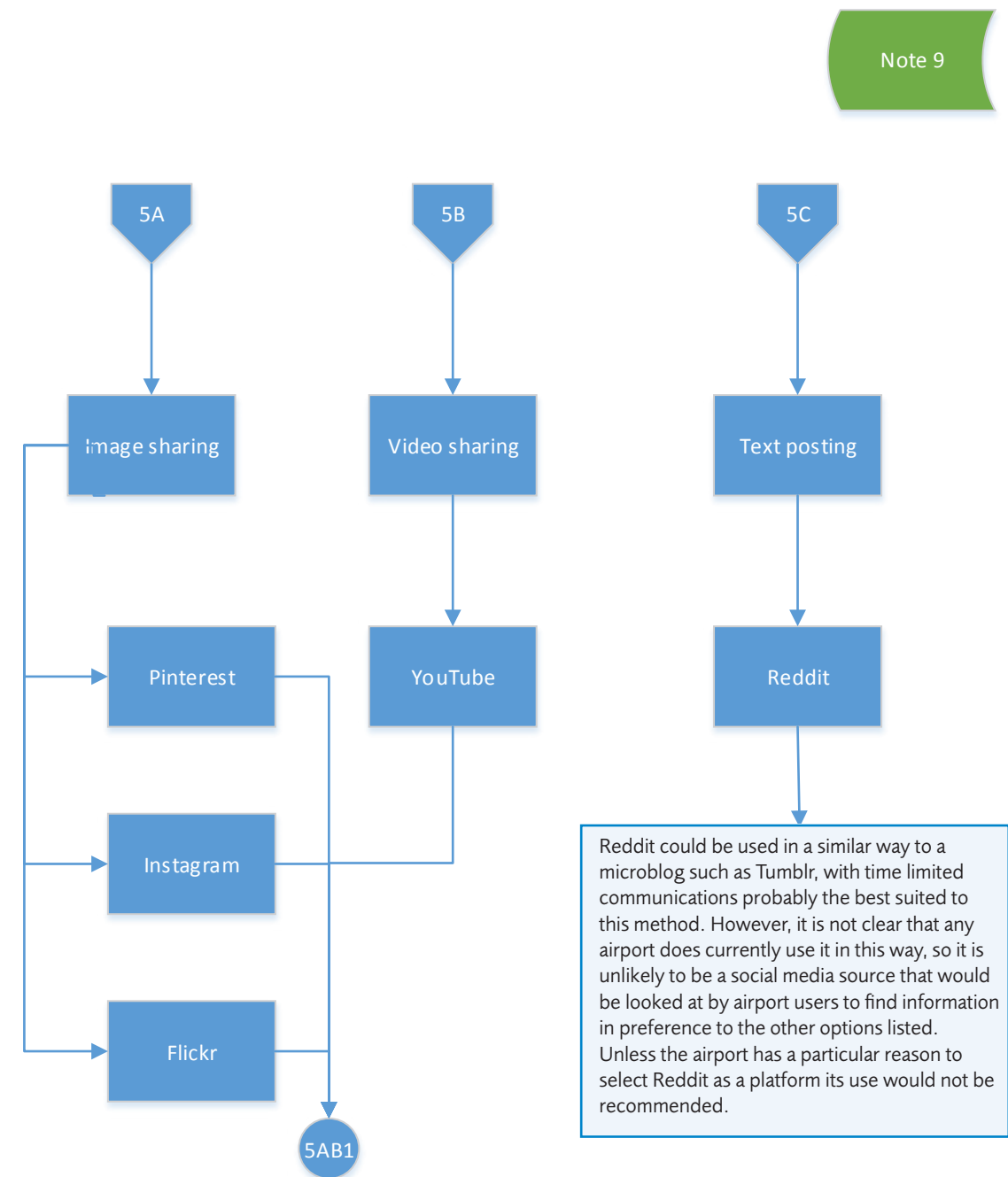| Time constraint	Communication scenario	Examples	Actions
Time critical	Unplanned events happening now or in the immediate future	• Delays to flights due to weather conditions • Runway closure for urgent repairs • Accident on airport approach road • Power failure impacting baggage handling • Café closed because of staff illness	• Initial Tweet made as soon as the issue is known about • Further Tweets with progress updates • Advise on the end of the incident • Respond in a timely fashion to comments and questions • Use hashtags in your Tweets, perhaps one for the airport and one for the specific event • Use URL shortening to link to other platforms if you need to communicate more information than can fit into a Tweet
Time limited	Planned events with a defined end point	• Busy periods such as public holidays and the start of school holidays • Infrastructure improvements in and around the airport • Industrial action by airport or airline staff • Special offers in airport retail outlets • Commencement of new routes	• Initial Tweet to advise on expected timeline and impact of planned activity • Tweet updates there is news to report, using a hashtag to locate with previous Tweets • Notification that the event has been completed • Respond in a timely fashion to comments and questions • Use URL shortening to link to other platforms if you need to communicate more information than can fit into a Tweet
Open ended	Information that is unchanging or changes only infrequently	• History of the airport • Staff profiles • Parking and other airport facilities • Public transport options • Contact methods	• Twitter is not really a suitable platform for this type of communication, other options should be considered instead

Tumblr

3B1

Time constraint	Communication scenario	Examples	Actions
Time critical	Unplanned events happening now or in the immediate future	• Delays to flights due to weather conditions • Runway closure for urgent repairs • Accident on airport approach road • Power failure impacting baggage handling • Café closed because of staff illness	• Tumblr is not as well suited as Twitter for time critical communications as posts are not as explicitly pushed to users, although it is possible to set up a link to Twitter or Facebook so that posts are sent as a Tweet or a status update. • Post made as soon as the issue is known about • Updates made to report on progress, or the lack of it (consider whether a single edited post containing all updates or individual posts for each update is the best approach) • Advise on the end of the incident • Respond in a timely fashion to comments and questions
Time limited	Planned events with a defined end point	• Busy periods such as public holidays and the start of school holidays • Infrastructure improvements in and around the airport • Industrial action by airport or airline staff • Special offers in airport retail outlets • Commencement of new routes	• Initial post to advise on expected timeline and impact of planned activity • Progress updates when there is news to report and/or updates at regular intervals • Notification that the event has been completed • Respond in a timely fashion to comments and questions
Open ended	Information that is unchanging or changes only infrequently	• History of the airport • Staff profiles • Parking and other airport facilities • Public transport options • Contact methods	• If used for this purpose try to make it easy for readers to find the information they are looking for by including a search facility and links to various parts of the blog (for instance, by date, or by content type) • Post links to information on other platforms such as airport website and video sharing sites • Post updates when necessary

Professional business networking

4

LinkedIn ←→ Note 8

Time constraint	Communication scenario	Examples	Actions
Time critical	Unplanned events happening now or in the immediate future	• Delays to flights due to weather conditions • Runway closure for urgent repairs • Accident on airport approach road • Power failure impacting baggage handling • Café closed because of staff illness	• Not suitable for time critical information
Time limited	Planned events with a defined end point	• Busy periods such as public holidays and the start of school holidays • Infrastructure improvements in and around the airport • Industrial action by airport or airline staff • Special offers in airport retail outlets • Commencement of new routes	• Particularly useful for notifying airport vacancies • Include brief job description and closing date • Link to application method (usually either airport or agency website) • Remove once closing date has passed • Consider posting about successful applicant once they take up the post
Open ended	Information that is unchanging or changes only infrequently	• History of the airport • Staff profiles • Parking and other airport facilities • Public transport options • Contact methods	• Useful to provide staff biographies Can be done through individual profiles, airport profile, or both

Content community

Note 9

5A → Image sharing

5B → Video sharing

5C → Text posting

Pinterest

YouTube

Reddit

Instagram

Flickr

5AB1

Reddit could be used in a similar way to a microblog such as Tumblr, with time limited communications probably the best suited to this method. However, it is not clear that any airport does currently use it in this way, so it is unlikely to be a social media source that would be looked at by airport users to find information in preference to the other options listed.
Unless the airport has a particular reason to select Reddit as a platform its use would not be recommended.

Image and video sharing

5AB1

Time constraint	Communication scenario	Examples	Actions
Time critical	Unplanned events happening now or in the immediate future	• Delays to flights due to weather conditions • Runway closure for urgent repairs • Accident on airport approach road • Power failure impacting baggage handling • Café closed because of staff illness	• Not really suitable as a stand alone option, although may be used to enhance other communication methods such as Twitter.
Time limited	Planned events with a defined end point	• Busy periods such as public holidays and the start of school holidays • Infrastructure improvements in and around the airport • Industrial action by airport or airline staff • Special offers in airport retail outlets • Commencement of new routes	• Useful as a record of progress on tasks such as infrastructure projects • Publicity for introduction of new facilities, airlines and routes
Open ended	Information that is unchanging or changes only infrequently	• History of the airport • Staff profiles • Parking and other airport facilities • Public transport options • Contact methods	• Repository of historical images and film of the airport • Images of airport staff

Reference sources

Note 10

6A

Airport website

6A1

6B

Wikipedia

Because of the open nature of Wikipedia it is important that the airport should regularly review content and correct/delete anything that is discovered to be wrong. Where possible include links to external reference source (for example, to the airport's website) to provide readers with the ability to verify information.

6B1

Airport website

6A1

| Time constraint	Communication scenario	Examples	Actions
Time critical	Unplanned events happening now or in the immediate future	• Delays to flights due to weather conditions • Runway closure for urgent repairs • Accident on airport approach road • Power failure impacting baggage handling • Café closed because of staff illness	• Useful if the website has a news section, and particularly so if there is a 'breaking news' facility displayed on the home page • Provide greater detail than is possible in the 140 characters allowed in a Tweet • Ensure updates and resolution are posted
Time limited	Planned events with a defined end point	• Busy periods such as public holidays and the start of school holidays • Infrastructure improvements in and around the airport • Industrial action by airport or airline staff • Special offers in airport retail outlets • Commencement of new routes	• For a large scale or lengthy action could consider a dedicated page, otherwise include on news page • Initial post to advise on expected timeline and impact of planned activity • Progress updates when there is news to report and/or updates at regular intervals • Notification that the event has been completed • Respond in a timely fashion if comments and questions are enabled, either directly on the website or through contact page / email address
Open ended	Information that is unchanging or changes only infrequently	• History of the airport • Staff profiles • Parking and other airport facilities • Public transport options • Contact methods	• The website would normally be the airport's key repository for this type of information

Wikipedia

6B1

Time constraint	Communication scenario	Examples	Actions
Time critical	Unplanned events happening now or in the immediate future	• Delays to flights due to weather conditions • Runway closure for urgent repairs • Accident on airport approach road • Power failure impacting baggage handling • Café closed because of staff illness	• While it would be possible for airline staff to add this type of information to Wikipedia it would probably not be a good use of resources, and would require regular visits to ensure currency, so it is not a recommended platform
Time limited	Planned events with a defined end point	• Busy periods such as public holidays and the start of school holidays • Infrastructure improvements in and around the airport • Industrial action by airport or airline staff • Special offers in airport retail outlets • Commencement of new routes	• While it would be possible for airline staff to add this type of information to Wikipedia it would probably not be a good use of resources, and would require regular visits to ensure currency, so it is not a recommended platform
Open ended	Information that is unchanging or changes only infrequently	• History of the airport • Staff profiles • Parking and other airport facilities • Public transport options • Contact methods	• A Wikipedia page (or multiple related pages) is a good source for general information about the airport, particularly for airport history

Traditional media

Note 11

7

Newspapers | Local radio | Local TV
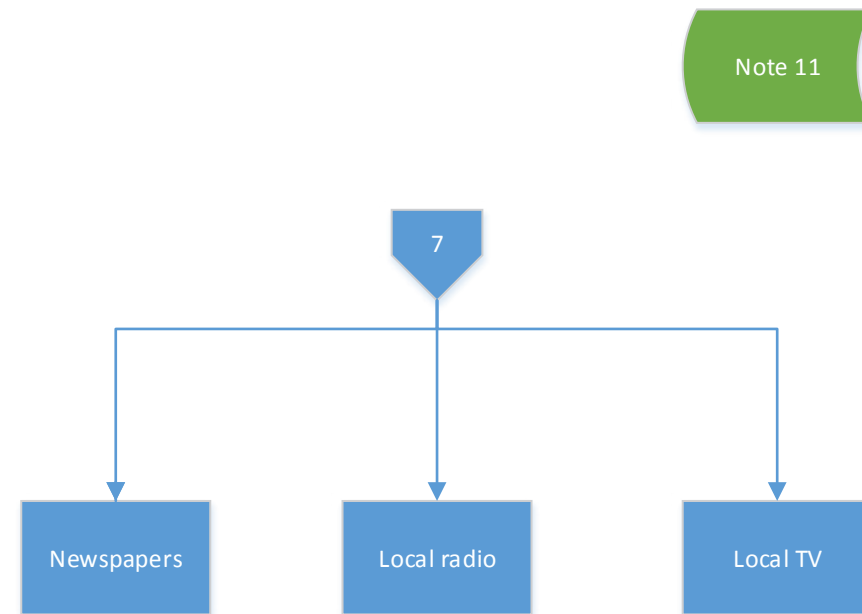
Note 1:

It is likely that all airports will have some people who are not social media users, although the proportion may differ depending on location, and may also differ between types of information to be communicated. For example, ONS (2016) data show that UK social media use is at 63%, but highly skewed towards the younger end of the age spectrum (91% for those aged 16-24 compared to 23% for those aged over 65).

Note 2:

Time constraints definition

1. Time critical – unplanned events happening now

2. Time limited – planned events with a defined end point

3. Open ended – information that is not time sensitive

Note 3:

The categories of social media methods are adapted from Halpern (2012). The original definitions cover the first 4 categories, with reference sources (airport website and Wikipedia) and traditional media (e.g. local radio, TV, newspapers) added.

Note 4:

The social media platforms selected on the subsequent pages are based on a list of the 15 most popular social networking sites (eBizMBA, 2017) which collates results from several ranking sources. 10 of the top 11 sites have been chosen (the site in position 7, VK, was excluded as it caters primarily to Russian speakers). The ranked list is (at April 2017):

1	Facebook	Social networking
2	YouTube	Content community
3	Twitter	Blog/microblog
4	Instagram	Content community
5	LinkedIn	Business networking
6	Reddit	Content community
7	Tumblr	Blog/microblog
8	Pinterest	Content community
9	Google+	Social networking
10	Flickr	Content community

Note 5:

In most cases the social media platforms allow responses to posts made by the airport (in some cases it is not possible to turn these off). It is important that the airport monitors these responses in a manner appropriate to the time constraints applicable to the given communication, and if necessary provide feedback. Grančay's (2013) analysis of airline Facebook pages identified that 75% were bi-directional (with a large majority of those including airline replies to customer comments) and 25% were one way from the airline to the customer. Any comments that are illegal, offensive or breach other roles should be deleted (and if necessary reported to the platform owner and/or the police).

Note 6:

Two social networking sites appear in the top 10 of the most popular list, Facebook and Google+. Approximately 90% of traffic is on Facebook, with Google+ a long way behind with around 10%.

Note 7:

Twitter and Tumblr are the two sites from the list that are in the blogs/microblogs category. Halpern (2012) categorises both as microblogs, which is certainly true of Twitter with its 140 character length, although URL shortening has allowed more content to be included in a single Tweet. Tumblr is often used in the style of a microblog, with users posting "short sentences, individual images, or video links" (Kaplan and Heinlein, 2011), but there is nothing to prevent it being used as a traditional blog with longer posts. The three largest platforms for traditional blogs are Blogger, Wix and WordPress.

Note 8:

LinkedIn is the only professional business networking platform in the top 10, and is regarded as the 'go to' site for individuals to create business networks. In Europe XING offers an alternative, particularly in German speaking countries. One limitation to these networks is that they are not well suited to communications from businesses rather than from individuals representing those businesses, there are other platforms that are better for this but none of them are major players in the social media arena at this time.

Note 9:

Content community platforms are one of the commonest forms of social media sites. In this analysis there are three types:

- Image sharing sites – Pinterest, Instagram and Flickr

- Video sharing sites – the vast majority of user posted videos appear on YouTube, although some other social media sites offer video sharing, such as Facebook, Instagram and Tumblr.

- Text posting – the primary site in this category is Reddit, which has a subreddit area for posts by and about airports

Note 10:

While not falling within the recognised definitions of social media reference sources (in this case the airport's own website and entries in Wikipedia) can offer an alternative communication method to the other platforms described and may be easier for some people to access.

Note 11:

As described in Note 1 it is almost certain that some people who use or have an interest in the airport will not have access to social media, or indeed any online communication means. As there is a significant correlation between age and social media use each airport's understanding of the demographic of its users should inform whether traditional media should be considered as an alternative means of communication.

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