Platforms for Lifelong Social Learning

Link to this doc:
https://bit.ly/Social18oct (last updated on Sat 19 October, 2024)

1. Introduction

1.1 What are popular social learning platforms?

Reddit, Discord, (and Slack and Substack) have emerged as prominent platforms that help people keep updated with information in their professional or related areas. These platforms offer opportunities for individuals to engage in discussions, share knowledge, and connect with like-minded learners from diverse backgrounds.

1.2 Why should we care about these as educators from formal institutions?

Created by learners outside of traditional academic settings, these communities often go unnoticed in our circles, yet they provide valuable insights into how individuals self-organise to acquire knowledge and engage with new information. We can also get insights into the *zeitgeist* of a city or society.

1.2.1 Questions for us educators

1. What is the motivation of people who run and join these communities?
2. How can our learners explore these spaces?
3. Can I create a community for my interest area?
4. Can I use these spaces for gathering market intelligence?

2. Reddit

It's like a giant online community where people from all walks of life gather to ask and answer questions. From science and tech to history and art, there's a subreddit for pretty much everything. Think of Reddit as an all-encompassing forum (from the early days of the internet). Reddit is also the default search engine for many younger people.
https://www.digitalinformationworld.com/2024/10/reddit-new-frontier-in-search-engines.html#google_vignette

2.1 Key Features of Reddit

1. **Diverse Communities:** Reddit fosters diverse communities, enabling users to connect

with individuals from various backgrounds and perspectives but similar interests. Users are anonymous, so tend to open when posting comments.

See this community for nurses and people joining the nursing practice in the UK https://www.reddit.com/r/NursingUK/

Have your institution's students created a Reddit community?

2. **Informal Environment:** These platforms provide an informal environment where participants can ask questions, share insights, and engage in discussions without the pressure of formal settings. For example, this open discussion on tech bootcamps https://www.reddit.com/r/askSingapore/comments/1ak4kr4/subsidized_technology_bootcamps_in_singapore_what/ (the insights here may help some of us working on adult programs)

Another example: This AMA (Ask me anything) https://www.reddit.com/r/AMA/comments/1eetybc/im_a_russian_high_school_female_ama/

Get a feel for the mood in a city/country https://www.reddit.com/r/askSingapore/comments/1el0mcr/sg_redditors_howre_you_coping_with_future_anxiety/

3. **Access to Experts:** These platforms often host experts and professionals who contribute to discussions and share their knowledge. This provides users with opportunities to learn from experts in their fields, gaining valuable insights and practical advice.https://www.reddit.com/r/india/comments/1ecjdfp/hello_rindia_we_are_bloomberg_journalists/

2.2 Tips for using Reddit

1. **Sign Up with anonymous id:**
   ○ Go to the Reddit homepage and click on the "Sign Up" button.
   ○ Enter your email address, create a username and password, and select an anonymous username.
2. **Search for Communities:**
   ○ Use the search bar at the top of the homepage to find communities (subreddits) that interest you.
   ○ Subreddits are organized by topic, so you can easily find communities about your favorite hobbies, interests, or news topics.
   ○ Once you find a community you're interested in, click on it to join.
3. **Posting questions and evaluating Information:**
   ○ Provide context when you post a question. For example "I am travelling to Hanoi

with students who are learning about social work. We are looking for an NGO that works with street kids and is open to having overseas guests." is a much better question compared to "Does anyone know a NGO in Hanoi that works with street kids".
- Look for evidence to support the claims being made. Are there links to sources to back up the information?
- Look at the post history of the user who has answered a question. You can click on the username to get these details. Example: https://www.reddit.com/r/AskElectronics/comments/1g589nx/comment/lsd3338/ (click on the username here to see the user's history on Reddit) . The Karma system on Reddit is a way for users to earn points for their contributions to the community. The Karma system is designed to encourage users to post high-quality content and to participate in discussions in a positive and constructive way.

4. **Use Reddit's Features**
- Use the upvote and downvote buttons to indicate whether you like or dislike a post.
- Save posts to read later.
- Follow users to keep up with their posts.

5. **Stay Safe:**
- Be careful about what personal information you share on Reddit.
- Never give out your password or financial information.
- If you see something that concerns you, report it to the moderators.
- These are open forums. Expect some snarky comments on your comments. Need to have a thick skin.

Tryout: Doing quick research on Reddit.

How I get quick demographic data on Apple Vision owners.

https://www.reddit.com/r/VisionPro/comments/1ecxx5f/how_old_is_everyone_who_owns_a_avr/

I the entire above post on Chat GPT and asked it "Give me the count of ages according to the decades."

Here is the result:
https://chatgpt.com/share/67113a5c-e8f4-8008-84da-e14e65448f9b

3. Discord

Discord, a popular communication platform, has evolved into a hub for social learning through its server feature. Discord servers can be created around specific topics, enabling users to interact with others who share similar interests. These servers often host voice and text

channels where discussions, Q&A sessions, and virtual study groups. Some tech communities used Slack instead of Discord but the mechanisms are similar.

3.1 Getting Started with Discord as a user

1. **Finding Servers:**
   - To find servers, click on the "+" icon in the left sidebar and select "Discover Public Servers."
   - You can browse through the featured servers or use the search bar to find specific servers.
   - Once you find a server you're interested in, click on the "Join Server" button.
   - https://discodus.com/ discord server search engine.
2. **Channels:**
   - Each server is divided into channels, which are text and voice chat rooms.
   - To view the channels, click on the server icon in the left sidebar.
3. **Text Chat:**
   - To send a message in a text channel, type your message in the text box at the bottom of the channel and press Enter.
   - You can also use emojis by clicking on the emoji icon next to the text box.
   - To mention a user, type "@" followed by their username.
4. **Voice Chat:**
   - To join a voice channel, click on the voice channel's name in the sidebar.
   - Once you're in a voice channel, you can speak by pressing the spacebar or by clicking on the microphone icon.
   - To mute yourself, click on the microphone icon with a slash through it.

3.2 Motivations for starting a Discord Server

Creating a Venture Capital community
https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/how-why-i-created-venture-community-discord-lachezar-zanev/

Singapore artist on why they created a Discord Community
https://www.businessinsider.nl/i-started-a-discord-community-for-asian-artists-and-writers-during-singapores-harshest-covid-lockdown-it-helped-keep-me-and-my-creative-spirit-going/
Read the summary of above article (via Gemini) https://g.co/gemini/share/bc29d33e00a1

3.3 Setting up a Discord Server for your community

https://support.discord.com/hc/vi/articles/360041360311-Blog-How-to-use-Discord-for-your-classroom

4 Substack Newsletters

Substack is a platform for people to create newsletters and connect directly with readers. Benefits include staying informed and building a community. These newsletters cover diverse topics with unique perspectives. To find newsletters, browse the directory, check trending ones, and read descriptions.

Try out:
Go to https://substack.com/search/ and search for "Singapore Sustainability"

Contact

Preetam Rai

preetam_rai@np.edu.sg