

## Trends Analysis

Universities have always been concerned with the success of their students. Graduation rates are used by potential students to evaluate schools, along with other statistics, such as acceptance of alumni to graduate programs. As such, there is much impetus to ensure that students are doing well in their classes, so that they will graduate on time and be accepted into prestigious graduate programs.

Professors are beginning to upload students' grades on assignments and tests to MyUCLA before quarter-end grades, allowing the university to track a student's progress even before grades are finalized. Access to this data provides the opportunity to intervene before a student's GPA is affected.

Meanwhile, an ever-increasing number of students are putting an ever-increasing variety of information about themselves onto social media sites. According to business professor and social media scholar Erik Qualman, "Social Media has overtaken pornography as the No. 1 activity on the web."<sup>1</sup> This includes Facebook - which had 250 million active users in 2009, and was growing at a rate of 700,000 users a day<sup>2</sup> - LinkedIn, Twitter, Google+, foursquare, spotify, etc. Online reference managers with social media functionality, such as Zotero, gather data about user interests and academic reading and citation behavior. These sites gather all sorts of information on users from where they are to what they are reading and doing online.

As of January 30, 2012 eighteen commercial companies offered social media content aggregation services<sup>3</sup>, providing the capability to link the disparate data silos of social media information. Social media data aggregation and analytics is becoming an area of major interest and development as companies strive to profit from the possibilities of big data. Tools for aggregating and deriving meaning from social media data are highly likely to evolve to sophisticated realms within the next ten years with highly advanced inferences being made from extant data. Advancements in the development of semantic web technologies and services such as FOAF and SIOC will provide the opportunity not only to derive greater meaning from the data but to "use ... SPARQL queries instead of proprietary APIs" to "interlink data and find relationships between content"<sup>4</sup>.

Current trends in data mining used to provide tailored "environments" or provocations such as those "personalized search" algorithms used by Google, personalized services provided through Facebook, and social context based personalization suggest that analytic-based personalized services, derived from aggregated data, may eventually become a common element of local information services offered in many organizations including universities.

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<sup>1</sup> "Statistics". Socialnomics. Retrieved 24 April 2012.

<sup>2</sup> Smith, Justing. 2009. Facebook Now Growing by Over 700,000 Users a day, and New Engagement Stats. Accessed from <http://www.insidefacebook.com/2009/07/02/facebook-now-growing-by-over-700000-users-a-day-updated-engagement-stats/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://net-savvy.com/executive/social-media-analysis/professional-strength-social-media-aggregator.html>

<sup>4</sup> Bolgars, Uldis, Alexandre Passant, John Breslin. Data Portability with SIOC and FOAF.