The evolving knowledge society and the emergence of information and communication technologies in our lives present complex challenges for educators and policymakers worldwide. Education requires adjustments to these changes in learning and teaching, in the shattering of boundaries, as well as in providing new meaning to emerging educational paradigms facilitated by uprisng interfaces.

One of the most salient examples of the need to address unfamiliar educational scenarios is social networking sites (SNS). SNS-based communication plays major roles in this change, extending the scope and settings in which teachers and students communicate beyond school boundaries in terms of time, space and definition of roles. This may affect, in turn, mutual perceptions and beliefs, thereby changing student-teacher relationships, and may be followed by an even greater change in traditional, pedagogical as well as social, structures in schools.

SNS implementation in elementary and secondary schools is only in its very early stages. Teachers may perceive opportunities for utilizing SNS in education as a threat or as a challenge; hence, they might object or agree to explore new available options, respectively. This decision may be affected by numerous parameters, related to issues such as the teacher’s characteristics (personal, professional or both), educational agenda, attitudes or motivation. Furthermore, teachers who choose to use SNS might find themselves confronting some new, unexpected scenarios, in which personal or professional dilemmas arise. This requires support for teachers, not only in deciding whether to interact with their students via SNS, but also on how to use it wisely and continuously for their needs, considering today’s need for new literacies.

School authorities and policymakers have been pondering about their position regarding student-teacher SNS-based communication, adopting different educational approaches, often banning teacher-student communication via SNS altogether. Public discussion on teacher-student communication via SNS reflects the complex nature of this issue, and overall demonstrates the difficulty in adapting novelties in large-scale systems and organizations. Trends in this field pose new challenges, which require evidence-based decision-making.
This special issue (SI) of Education and Information Technologies will present and discuss various points of view on SNS in education, focusing on the roles and needs of teachers in elementary and secondary school in the SNS-era. The SI will address truly relevant, timely issues, which teachers, administrators and other stakeholders tackle on a day-to-day basis. The SI will discuss contemporary issues concerning novel educational paradigms and will reflect new student-teacher relationships, from pedagogical, social, emotional and ethical points of view. Education and Information Technologies is a key international voice in the growing field of education and information technologies and is indexed in 18 major databases, including Scopus and Google Scholar.

We welcome research, conceptual, and position papers of the highest quality. Manuscripts should follow EIT guidelines and are to go under rigorous double-blind peer review. (See Author Guidelines at: http://www.springer.com/computer/general+issues/journal/10639). All topics refer to elementary and secondary schools.

Topics of interest include, but are not limited to:

- Teaching and learning in the SNS era
- Informal teaching and learning via SNS
- Socio-cultural aspects of SNS usage in teaching
- Teachers' attitudes to and use of SNS
- Teacher-student relationship in SNS
- Ethical issues regarding SNS usage by teachers in educational contexts
- Teachers' digital competencies and literacies in SNS usage
- Challenges of SNS usage for teachers' pre-service and in-service professional development
- Policies and policymaking regarding SNS usage in education

Important Dates

Papers submission: December 1st, 2014
Author notification: March 1st, 2015
Final version submission: June 1st, 2015
Publication of SI: Late 2015

Submission procedure

Manuscripts should be submitted via the Editorial Manager, at: http://eait.edmgr.com. Please pay attention to choose "SI: Teachers and Social Networking Sites" under "Select Article Type".

Selection and Evaluation Criteria

- Significance to the readers of the journal
- Relevance to the topic of the special issue
- Originality and quality of ideas and research themes
- Significance to theory, policy and/or practice
- Quality, clarity, and readability of the article
- Quality of references and related work

Please send all inquiries regarding the SI to: sns.teachers@gmail.com
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