Social media for Agricultural Knowledge sharing

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Information and Communication Technology is ruling the world in all walks of life and access to mobile phones and internet facility is growing in India at a rapid rate in recent years. However, the access to internet based technologies have confined primarily to the urban areas. Rural communities have not been able to gain to the same extent from IT. As a means of agricultural technology transfer to farmers, information technology has had a limited impact.

Over the years, Radio and TV have vastly increased their reach, as also reception facilities and played a major role in communicating with an audience with low literacy skills. The traditional electronic media played a key role in rapid and effective dissemination of general information and advice to farming communities. This includes market information; market led production planning, on farm and posts harvest management/value addition, e-contracting, market networks and market intelligence. The World Wide Web especially portals, web sites and other pull technological services are also contributing to the technology transfer of general information / knowledge.

Communication technologies that enable or facilitate user-to-user interactivity and interactivity between user and information. i.e. "one-to-many" model of traditional mass communication with the possibility of a "many-to-many" web of communication.

New media: Consists of a number of technologies that facilitate interactions among stakeholders using a variety of web- or mobile-based tools and technologies. “Web 2.0” and “social media” are umbrella terms that encompass the various activities that utilize digital technologies, social engagement, and content delivery. Such activities involve many technologies and communication methodologies including, but not limited to, blogs, photo and video sharing services, social networking, geospatial mapping tools, discussion forums, and wikis. These technologies may enable social tagging and bookmarking and mobile messaging. Most technologies described as "new media" are digital, often having characteristics of being manipulated, networkable, dense, compressible, and interactive. Some examples may be the Internet, websites, computer multimedia, video games, CD-ROMS, and DVDs. Wikipedia, an online encyclopedia, is an example, combining Internet accessible digital text, images and video with web-links, creative participation of contributors, interactive feedback of users and formation of a participant community of editors and donors for the benefit of non-community readers. Facebook is an example of the social media model, in which most users are also participants.

Why social media for agricultural extension?

¨ Globalization and Modernization

¨ Challenges and Opportunities across the world

¨ Sharing of knowledge across the world

¨ Public Expenditure in Extension could be reduced

¨ Effective utilization of available platforms

¨ Penetration of smart phones even in villages

¨ Accessibility of connectivity

Social Networking

There are countless social networks on the web that allows you to share information and knowledge. The following are some of the tools that help you to do social networking

GoingOn Community Platform — Emphasis on educational use

BuddyPress — Create a social network on the WordPress platform

Elgg.org — An open source social networking platform

Crowdvine — Build a self-hosted or professionally set up community around your conference or other event.

KickApps – Add social networking capabilities and other social media elements to your existing website.

Blogging

Blogging is one of the best Blogs allow you to keep your customers up-to-date on company news. They allow you to have conversations with your audience. They serve as platform elements for professionals looking to build exposure and gain a solid reader base.

Blogging platforms to set up your *own* new blog.

The list below includes both hosted and self-hosted (you need your own hosting account) platforms.

WordPress.com – Free hosted solution

WordPress.org – Free self-hosted blog platform

WordPress MU – Create a multi-user blog network using WordPress.

Blogger

Social Bookmarking / Sharing

Social media is about more than conversations. It's also about empowering members of your community to share what you have to

offer, or "vote" if you will. There are several sharing, aggregation, and social bookmarking tools available to let them do that. Some of the social bookmarking tools are given here below.

1. **Delicious**
2. **Digg**
3. **Reddit**
4. **StumbleUpon**
5. **Sphinn**
6. **Slashdot**
7. **Newsvine**
8. **AddThis**
9. **ShareThis**

WhatsApp as a tool for sharing of agricultural knowledge

WhatsApp Messenger is a cross-platform mobile messaging app and it is a platform to share real-time information which allows user to exchange messages, audio, video, photographs. It allows users to create groups, broadcast / send unlimited images, video and audio media messages simultaneously to one person, or to a group. WhatsApp Messenger requires a smart mobile phone with internet data access.WhatsApp is the largest community of users of any IM client on any device, ever, has been on the rise since its inception. With over 600 million users it is the most popular application for Instant Messaging, and has found mainstream acceptance and popularity now world over.

Steps in using WhatsApp as a tool for Effective and efficient sharing of Agricultural Technology to select farmers.

· Scientists and farmers have to be trained in the use of Instant Messaging application namely WhatsApp in creating, sharing, recording and

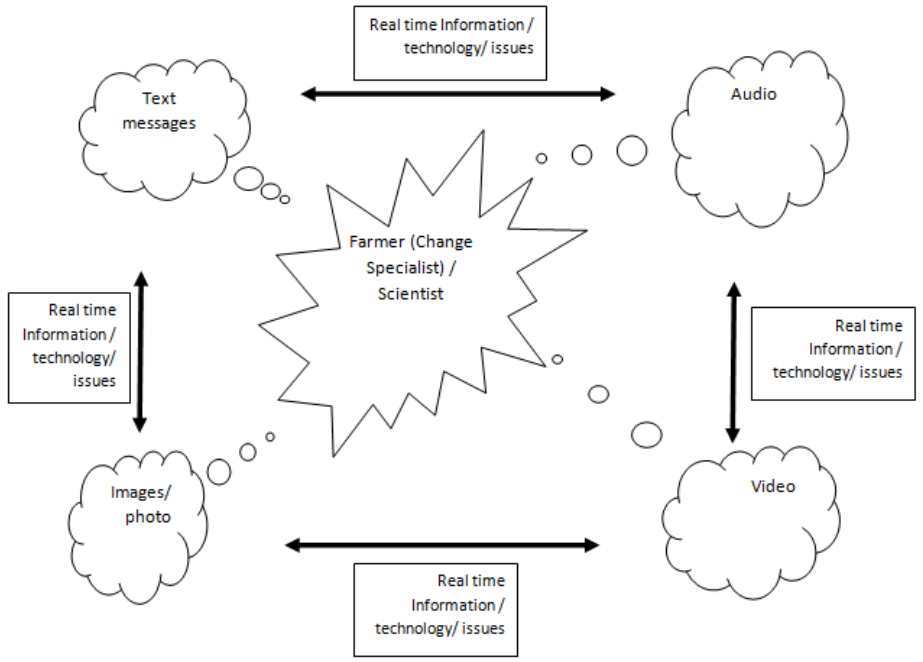
retrieval of agricultural information/ technology.

· Access to be made to necessary hardware and connectivity namely availability of Smart Mobile devices and Internet connectivity to all the stakeholders (Farmers/ Scientists) involved in the project

· The knowledge sharing process has to be documented by all the stakeholders

· The reusability of shared knowledge retrieved from this extension model by for research and extension may be studied and the constraints faced by the users in using WhasAPP may be documented.

Model depicting the Technology sharing model through WhatsApp



Document, Video, and Photo Sharing Services

The following social media tools that allow users to share information,

videos, photos, and other images in addition to their thoughts.

1. **YouTube**
2. **Flickr**
3. **Vimeo**
4. **Scribd**
5. **Picasa Web Albums**
6. **DocStoc**
7. **MetaCafe**
8. **Blip.tv**
9. **Daily Motion**
10. **PhotoBucket**

Podcasting

Podcasting is a tool where in audience could be effectively reached through a podcast or other type of audio show. Few of the podcasting tools are given herebelow.

1. **PodBean**
2. **BlogTalkRadio**
3. **Audacity** – Free recording software
4. **Podomatic**

Online / Social Learning

Social media can be used to integrate online courses and other learning materials to your site. The following are the social and online learning tools for social learning through online.

Moodle

Blackboard

Articulate e-Learning Software

Joomla Learning Management System (LMS)

Photo sharing

Photo sharing sites allow you to literally "share photos" online with your friends, family, and colleagues. One of the most common online photo sharing sites is Flickr."QR"(or "quick response") codes store information in a two-dimensional square barcode. When scanned with a smartphone, QR codes direct users to mobile websites and other functions on their mobile phones. Podcasts (a blend of the terms "iPod" and "broadcast") are audio or video files that you can listen to or watch on your computer or on a variety of portable media devices (like an iPod, Zune, and certain cell phones). Social bookmarking is a way to store, organize, and search your favorite webpages on the Internet. In a social bookmarking site, you can save links to web pages that you want to remember and/or share. "RSS" stands for "Real Simple Syndication." RSS feeds are a way for websites to distribute their content to people automatically. You can think of Twitter as a "micro-blog." You use your computer or mobile phone to broadcast short messages, or "tweets," that are limited to 140 characters. People can sign up on Twitter to follow your tweets. Video and computer games are interactive games you play on game devices (such as Nintendo's Wii, XBox, and Playstation), and computers. A webcast is a way of broadcasting over the Internet. A webinar is a specific type of web conference. Visit this page to find more resources on webcasts and webinars. Video sharing sites allow you to

upload and share online videos similar to photo sharing sites. YouTube is the most well-known of these types of sites. The term “wiki” comes from the Hawaiian word for “fast.” Wiki technology creates a webpage that anyone with access to it can modify—quickly and easily, a webpage with an edit button. Widgets, Gadgets, call them what you’d like, but there is definitely a lot of buzz around these small applications that you can embed in a social network site, blog, or website. The term “wiki” comes from the Hawaiian word for “fast.” Wiki technology creates a webpage that anyone with access to it can modify—quickly and easily, a webpage with an edit button.

Skills and gadgets required to make your presence in social media

The following are the list of digital tools that are required to be on new media or social networking

1. Mobile phone with camera
2. Digital camera / camcorder
3. Personal computer with internet
4. Audio- video tapes, CDs, DVDs etc.,
5. Scanner
6. Any text material
7. Websites on any online materials

Advantages of using New media tools

· Easy to learn and do

· Students can easily create forums, and share

· Peer review possible

· Easy Storage and retrieval

· Reproducibility

· Audio visual learning

Students

· Generate, collate, Store and retrieve and discuss reading materials

· Document case studies in audio and video format

· Network with millions of likeminded colleagues

· Improves interaction

Teachers

· Easy to use and address the concerns of millions of students

· Teaching at own phase

· Effective communication through the use of audio- visual aids

· Improvisation over time

· Create learners interest

Researchers

· Open and real time research information made available

· Can reach and access information across the world

· Reduces plagiarism

· Improves the research quality

· Can organize or group, researchers of same interest across the world

Extension

· Up to date advisory for farmers, extension workers

· Facilitates easy understanding / diagnosis of problems and providing quality solution.

· Helps to create, store and retrieve local database of farmers, problems, solutions

Conclusion

· Proactive use of new media tools will bring a knowledge revolution in agriculture

· Extension scientists need to capitalize for the benefit of the farming community, research scholars and future generation.

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