Learning Analytics in the Age of Social Media

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Abstract:
In just a short period of time, social media have altered many aspects of our daily lives, from how we form and maintain social relationships to how we discover, access and share information online. Now social media are also beginning to affect how we teach and learn in this increasingly interconnected and information-rich world. The use of social media has been growing in academic settings, with some surveys reporting adoption rates as high as 80% among university classrooms. However, the question remains, how do educators and learners know that their particular use of social media is beneficial to their teaching or learning? The objectives of this lecture is (1) to demonstrate the affordances and potential roles of social media in learning, as well as (2) to provide methods and measures that help researchers and educators evaluate the use of social media for teaching and learning based on automated analyses of social media texts and networks.

About the speaker:
Dr Anatoliy Gruzd is an Associate Professor in the School of Information Management at the Faculty of Management and the Faculty of Computer Science, Dalhousie University. He is also the Director of the Social Media Lab, a member of the Institute for Big Data Analytics at Dalhousie University and a co-editor of a new, multidisciplinary journal on Big Data and Society published by Sage. This year, Dr. Gruzd is co-organizing the 2014 Social Media & Society Conference and co-editing a special issue on Measuring Influence in Social Media for American Behavioral Scientist. The broad aim of Dr. Gruzd’s various research initiatives is to provide decision makers with additional knowledge and insights into the behaviours and relationships of online network members, and to understand how these interpersonal connections influence our personal choices and actions. His research and commentaries have been reported across Canada and internationally in various mass media outlets such as Foreign Affairs, Los Angeles Times, Nature.com, The Atlantic, The Globe and Mail, The National Post, and The Canadian Press.

*** The seminar is co-sponsored by the Centre for Information Technology in Education (CITE) and Faculty of Education, HKU ***