



## No way back: From naive social media practices to committed approaches

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Since the emergence of the first social media site in 1997 (Greenhow et al., 2020), social media services have grown in popularity in everyday life context, and education is no exception. With increasing interest over the years, educational researchers have studied the use of social media platforms, such as Facebook or Twitter, for teaching and learning purposes (Barrot, 2021). Researchers have found multiple benefits of this use, for example: increased participation, resource discovery and curation, facilitation of information access, networking and communication, among others (Anderson, 2019; Greenhow & Askari, 2017; Malik et al., 2019; Otchie & Pedaste, 2020; Zachos et al., 2018). Furthermore, some authors argue that social media use in education has potential to improve or change traditional practices by merging formal and informal educational practices and blurring boundaries between those learning contexts (Manca & Ranieri, 2016). There is also a prominent research line on professional development through social media for educators and pre-service teachers (Carpenter, 2015; Greenhow et al., 2020). The challenges of social media in education have been traditionally less explored, beyond the possibility of being a distractor (Lin et al., 2013).

One of the main challenges in social media concerns data privacy and control. Some authors have pointed out issues related to the commercial interests of the social media business and the control it can have over users' data (Anderson, 2019; Kühn Hildebrandt, 2019; Pérez et al., 2019). These issues have been more visible with the Covid-19 pandemic, and the worldwide uptake of opaque social media services and the large-scale student data collection, which is known as datafication (Williamson et al., 2020). Datafication of education involves collecting data on all levels of educational systems, which can be monitored, measured, and analysed (Jarke & Breiter, 2019). Although data privacy was not at the core of the pedagogical design of social media practices in education so far, nowadays the current concerns about privacy and control may lead to some changes. For example, that pedagogical design may consider different social media forms and practices in education that incorporate a balance of personal and institutional data control, use and sharing (e.g., decentralised, institutionally-owned, etc.) (Anderson, 2019; Ivanova et al., 2019; Marín et al., 2021, 2022). However, this is still an under-researched topic and requires further exploration.

Thus, in this Special Issue: “[No way back: from naive social media practices to committed approaches](#)”, we aimed at extending knowledge from critical approaches to social media practices, beyond “naïve practices”, but also at providing practice examples of educational practices where privacy and caring were core elements of committed virtual learning environments with social media use, in any educational level and in formal/non-formal education. Submissions were open to a range of topics that could address these critical approaches, such as theoretical frameworks which develop these approaches, studies on the implications of privacy issues related to social media at institutional level, case studies based on educational practices with ethical and

transparent social media use, among others. The Call for Papers drew 13 articles, out of them five papers were accepted after peer review and recently published in this Special Issue (Castañeda & Villar-Onrubia, 2023; Montiel-Ruiz et al., 2023; Stewart, 2023; Torres-Hernández & Gallego-Arrufat, 2023; Tran et al., 2023). These five papers consist of two empirical studies and three case studies as practical experiences that connect to the proposed topic.

The two empirical studies of this Special Issue (Torres-Hernández & Gallego-Arrufat, 2023; Tran et al., 2023) are about very different themes and contexts which help address the implications of overcoming naive practices in social media.

In their article “Pre-service teachers’ perceptions of data protection in primary education”, Torres-Hernández and Gallego-Arrufat present a study carried out with pre-service teachers in Spain about their awareness of risks and knowledge about data protection and privacy issues in Primary Education. Their research is built upon the practice recommendations that can be derived from the current national and international legal frameworks, such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (European Union, 2016) and the Organic Law for Protection of Data and Guarantee of Digital Rights in Spain (2018). It is also linked to the digital competence framework for educators, DigCompEdu (European Commission. Joint Research Centre, 2017), and in particular in its specific area related to protecting personal data and privacy. In the study, 384 pre-service teachers studying educational technology subjects participated in a questionnaire, built ad hoc with high indicators of its reliability and validity. Findings show that participants display quite a good awareness about risky social media activity in terms of data privacy. However, they exhibit a rather basic level of knowledge about how to actively carry out committed and ethical practices in Primary Education. Based on that, the authors claim the need to include data-related contents and a greater critical approach by promoting a *data culture* in Teacher Education programs, which they consider involving reflection “on how we value our data” (p. 9).

Another empirical study is the one by Tran et al. entitled “Influences of subjective norms on teachers’ intention to use social media in working”, and explores the uptake of a messaging app with massive uptake in Vietnam (Zalo) by 1,105 teachers, with a particular focus on students’ anxiety. The study is based on a survey built upon an extended version of the TAM model (Technology Acceptance Model), which adds two further elements based on the Social Influence Theory (social influence and emotional influence, which includes anxiety). The authors formulate 21 hypotheses of which all except but four of them are accepted. Findings show that colleagues and parents do not affect teachers’ level of anxiety whereas managers do, which is an interesting nuance that links to the current focus on surveillance. Other findings evidence that, the greater the teachers use the app, the less anxiety the students feel, and that the more anxiety teachers feel, the lower the indicators of technology acceptance in terms of perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use are. The authors finally recommend reducing teachers’ stress to increase the app uptake, which is connected to students and teachers’ well-being. This study needs to be understood in the context of the cultural background of Vietnam as a collectivist society, where what the community thinks can be influential in terms of technology acceptance. However, conclusions contribute to the field beyond the concrete cultural characteristics, especially due to the slight variation of the TAM built and to the attempt to describe an example of how and why social influence and emotions might be involved in social media apps, going further aseptic social media use in education.

The three case studies of this Special Issue are of very different nature: two class projects (Castañeda & Villar-Onrubia, 2023; Montiel-Ruiz et al., 2023) and one longitudinal study of a self-explored professional development (Stewart, 2023).

Montiel-Ruiz et al. present the article “Social networks and gamification in physical education: A case study”, where they report in-service secondary education teachers’ perceptions after an educational intervention for communication and gamification based on the educational social networking site Edmodo in Spanish schools. The platform Edmodo was closed recently (22nd Sept. 2022), so the article needs to be considered beyond the tool, and the contribution to international research especially relates to the learning design and how privacy issues were considered. The authors point out that using social network sites in education requires observing legal and ethical aspects as well as risks, and they highlight the need that the teachers can preserve students’ privacy. In the educational intervention these aspects are considered by

balancing students' public and private activity in the digital platform. The study has a qualitative approach and data was collected through focus groups with 10 teachers and group interviews with 56 students. The results show that one of the main teachers' concerns is the teenagers' responsible use of mobile devices and social networks. The authors highlight the usefulness of wearables to track students' physical activity, although this may involve some degree of teachers' surveillance to track students' sport time, which would need a careful review to minimise higher risks regarding control in further iterations of the design. The authors also claim that the use of educational technology for physical education contributes to promoting the digital competence for well-being as it enhances sports in daily life and a healthy lifestyle, opposed to the idea that digital environments promote unhealthy and sedentary routines. The approach of this study case is an example that contributes to the generation of knowledge on learning designs committed to guaranteeing students' privacy in formal education.

The article by Castañeda and Villar-Onrubia, entitled "Beyond functionality: Building critical digital teaching competence among future primary education teachers", is a case study that particularly builds on a critical pre-service teachers' digital competence to use technology beyond the instrumental and naive approach, which pays attention to the teachers' ethical and social responsibilities in the current society. The "criticalness" accompanying digital literacy adds the focus on the user's commitment to observe "the social, political, and ethical implications" (p. 3) of technologies and involves deeply understanding the context where this digitalisation and datafication takes place. Therefore, the authors claim the particular role that teachers must play as social actors, by enacting their social commitment going beyond the technical skills. The three learning experiences presented in the article provide evidence of how to promote this critical digital literacy from early university courses in university courses in Spanish Teacher Education Programmes for Primary Education. The main element of those experiences are tasks aimed at "evaluating technologies for teaching" (p. 5), which involve discussing the diverse aspects to consider in order to evaluate the technologies as tools. Among those aspects, there are criteria concretely related to the topics of this Special Issue, such as "accessibility: standards, user-focused participation, required equipment, and cost of use", "privacy, data protection, and rights: sign-in/ sign-up, data privacy, and data ownership", and "archiving, saving, and exporting data" (p. 7). Students' e-portfolios reflect the evolution of their perceptions on the technologies as tools before the learning experience, and their progressive development of a critical digital literacy. The article is a contribution to the field since it gives an example that allows the operationalisation of how to introduce committed practices to principles related to the critical educational technology approach.

"The problem of the web: Can we prioritize both participatory practices and privacy?" is the article authored by Stewart, and includes a self-evaluation of the author's evolution from early participatory and open practices to current caring strategies connected to privacy issues. The narrative in the article is not about a single professional development but represents the evolution of the open practitioners who have embraced technology in early stages and the need to tackle the current datafied infrastructure with practices developed from critical perspectives. The author points out the dilemma faced by open practitioners when aiming at both equitable and participatory practices that consider trust and privacy issues, in particular since surveillance for behavioural data-extraction became more pervasive with the emergency remote teaching during the pandemic. The author relates her open practices to her own beginning as a blogger, promoting blogging among her students along with open licences, and later to the MOOC era, and specially to the Canadian cMOOCs' design. The networked community created around her cMOOC-like teaching model led her to social media, and Twitter. The main aim was to provide opportunities of active learning which would allow her students to make informed decisions about their future open practices. However, eventually Twitter evolved until "weaponization" (p. 6) and the early participatory web changed its nature into commercial platforms where users lose control, content is enclosed, access is limited, and users' data is tracked for profit purposes. Then, she started the Open Page project, where through multimedia artefacts students and collaborators evaluate digital platforms, including their data usage and privacy management. The narrative in the article makes us consider that the belief in open practices is still alive and networking is still possible while at least being cautious and preventing "the logics of data and enclosure" (p.10).

The collection of these five articles in the Special Issue "[No way back: from naive social media practices to committed approaches](#)", shows that there is agreement about the need of a critical approach to social media-based practices. Also, there is an overall acknowledgement on the current development of the Internet

infrastructure as a datafied web, where privacy issues need to be considered as a central part of any educational intervention that includes the use of technology. The legal framework seems to have played a relevant role in defining what students' data is and how it needs to be protected. Similarly, digital competence frameworks have been key in defining the skills to be developed by citizens and educators, including those for critical awareness and agency. However, against this backdrop, committed approaches embrace broader envisions of going beyond early naive social media-based practices and include not only data literacy skills but also, for example, a healthy lifestyle and psychological well-being.

The two empirical studies and the three case studies provide evidence of the wide variety of approaches and the focus on the person's agency for greater opportunities to choose along the balance of private and open networked activism while taking control of one's own data. Nevertheless, we still need to claim that further work is needed to explore how to design educational interventions with technology and social media beyond early naive practices. Therefore, we would like to encourage practitioners and researchers to pursue this line of work and further develop it. There is still much to be said, both from research and practice, and also to be theorised. We hope that the contributions are of interest to the readership of CEDTECH and that they serve as references for future work on this topic.

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