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BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

Strand 1: ICT and Multi-Media in Physics Education
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University Physics Education using Facebook

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The European Space for Higher Education, pushed by the Bologna process, demands a change in the way the courses in the University are taught. This has resulted in an increased importance being placed on individual work that the students do, but it should be always supervised and directed by the teacher. The supervision is generally carried out through three main ways: attended sessions, work in groups and that done at home. To cover all these new issues and needs many universities are applying a tool for e-Learning called Campus Virtual which is based on Moodle. This tool of exchanging information allows the teacher to offer resources of the subject that they teach and works as a communication path using messages and forums, as well as receiving reports done by the students, group assignments, etc. Nevertheless this tool can be limited in terms of flexibility and accessibility as the tutoring, in cases where a lot of self-learning is needed, requires communications to be fast, flexible and easy. In this scenario the social networks offer new possibilities.
We analyse the activity and satisfaction of various teaching groups on Facebook in different courses of the following degrees in the UCLM: Computer Science Engineering and Medicine. The results obtained during the first semester show a high level of participation and frequent access, as well as, good general acceptance and use of the information provided by both students and teachers. Our intention is to promote and extend the use of these social networks to groups with which we collaborate both at the University of Alicante and at the Advanced Technology, National Polytechnic Institute of Mexico, to be able to compare the results of different populations of students.
The use of student groups on Facebook represents a new way for the direct and rapid transfer of information that has been accepted and evaluated differently. The students are quite receptive of its use, as it is much more user-friendly than Moodle, which from the beginning students perceive as exclusively academic, associated with work and evaluation, and so it results less attractive to many of them and therefore is harder for the students to be an active part of. In fact for the teacher it is very complicated to create an active communication forum in Moodle, while in the groups created on Facebook the participation rate is quite high. This is due to the students being familiarized with these social networks and also with the enthusiasm of the teacher and the content of the information exchanged. However the use of Facebook by the teachers is not as common as desired, maybe because it means a duplication of effort and resources (putting the same information in two different places), which require more time being invested on the subject, even though it provides improved communications with the students. It is also worth mentioning that it can be a place to meet and exchange opinions and comments between the students and the faculty, enriching their self-learning, critical thinking, relationships, etc.

Keywords: Social/Media Networks, Facebook, ICT, Physics Education, Learning Process, Active Learning, University Physics