World's Largest Social Networking Experiment Is a Success

January 13, 2011

Cambridge, MA (RPRN) 01/13/11 — It turns out that all that time people spend texting, tweeting, Facebooking, and messaging is NOT a colossal waste.

At least it doesn't have to be. Because according to just-released preliminary results of an ongoing experiment by the World Mind Network, when the capabilities of these popular technologies are pushed to their limits, and efficiently used in combination with each other, social movements, online research programs, cultural preservation projects, and global discussion groups can be created and popularized in a few hours.

The Wiki Geeks project involves turbo-charging the abilities of social networking, blogging, Smart Phone apps, Google, Skype, and other popular technologies to address social, scientific, educational, cultural, and environmental problems. This week the program completed its first phase, which was a resounding success. For one thing, it raised $3.2 million for development work in India, Rwanda, and Bolivia, in less than 35 minutes. But more importantly, it showcased the immense power of Net and cell phone programs to pool expert guidance, raise community awareness, generate new Cloud-sourced ideas, and to instantly and effectively direct innovative thinking from where it is generated to where it is needed.

Student participants came from Harvard, Rutgers, the University of Witwatersrand, Caltech, Oxford, Union College, Harvey Mudd College, and the University of Parana, among others.

Researchers concluded that though the potential of the New Web for solving problems is vast, most people are not ready to grasp this. For most, it just doesn't seem logical that theories can be refined at the speed of light, experiments can be mounted instantly and inexpensively on a worldwide basis, social movements can be initiated, and questions of global import can be discussed by scholars and investigators spread over vast distances. And all at minimal cost compared to traditional methods.

An example of a Wiki Geeks discovery is this formula:

1s = 140fb, 80tw, 30on, & 10,000 = 850nw, 75vi, 55ft, 40sp, 30$, 3vol.

This means that the average student between 16 and 24 has 140 Facebook friends, 80 Twitter contacts, and 30 acquaintances from other online and offline networks. For every 10,000 people reached via social networking about a sustainability or environmental issue in Africa, Asia, the Middle East or Latin America, 850 will pass on the information to others via their own networks, 75 will contribute valuable ideas for improving the project, 55 will purchase Fair Trade goods, 40 will be inspired to start a similar program of their own, 30 will donate funds, and 3 will actually want to volunteer to help in person. Refining this general formula for every country and situation is one of the goals of this program.

And the lessons learned are applicable to business, government, education, and research of all kinds.

Further suggestions from the public are welcome.

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Filed Under: BREAKING NEWS, PRESS RELEASE, World News

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