

Social networking sites can help prevent pandemics: experts

December 15 2010



A Malaysian girl logs in to her Twitter account in October 2010. Social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter greatly help in detecting and containing the spread of pandemics, experts at a global health conference said.

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The plethora of information on the Internet is almost a new stage in the detection and prevention of contagious diseases, they said at the gathering which ended Wednesday.

"[Social networking sites](#) such as [Twitter](#) or [Facebook](#), which are interactive and contributory, can help in the detection and prevention of pandemics," said Patty Kostkova, a researcher at London's City

University, speaking to AFP in translated remarks.

"These networks can also make interactions between doctors and patients more effective," she said.

Others said [tweets](#) and messages from worried local populations could also lead to the detection of emerging pandemics.

"Putting together the mass of information which circulates in and through social networking sites, adding them up and then officially recognising them as important," said Gayo Diallo, a university researcher in Bordeaux, France university.

"We can also use social networks through Smartphones to treat a patient at home instead of hospitalising them," he said.

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Citation: Social networking sites can help prevent pandemics: experts (2010, December 15) retrieved 6 May 2024 from

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