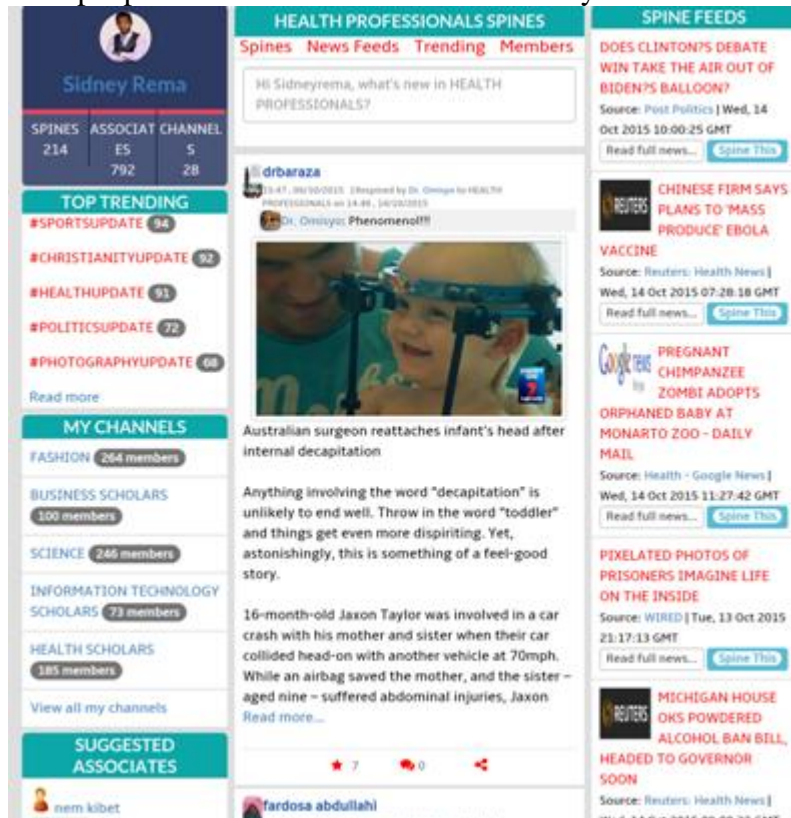**Two UoN students develop a networking site**

Sidney Rema, a 3rd year medical student and Phelix Juma, also a 3rd year Engineering student at the (University of Nairobi) UoN have developed a new platform dubbed VoSpine.

According to the two, more than 1,500 users across various professional, social and educational levels have already joined the platform barely a month after it was launched.

Users join particular channels where they are able to share their knowledge and experiences with other people across the world with whom they share common interests. VoSp

ine already has a team of 17 made up of Developers and Channel Managers who are all students at UoN.

The students aim is to ensure that users get information that is most relevant to them as opposed to other networking sites where users sometimes are exposed to content that they consider inappropriate to them.

This highlights VoSpine's mission to avail users a great environment to learn by engaging in productive interactions that can grow them in their various fields of experience.

"VoSpine is a networking site that is aimed at ensuring only relevant content reaches the relevant people. At times we, as users of other networking sites are irked by the posts we see from other users on social sites. For instance, a friend may post content on maybe fashion and if you have no particular interest in fashion, you'll find this inappropriate.

"This is because it has been directed to the wrong audience. However, if we create a community where you only associate with people with whom you share a common interest, then you can be sure that your posts are targeted to the right audience," says Rema, VoSpine's team leader.

VoSpine seeks to make the interaction of users on networking sites more productive.

"Prominent people have already joined the platform including Equity Bank CEO Dr. James Mwangi, and Pepe Minambo, a renowned international motivational speaker. We are targeting to connect more than 50,000 likeminded people across the world by the end of this year," says Danstan Wanyonyi, VoSpine's Brand & Marketing Director, also 3rd Yr Engineering student at UoN.

How VoSpine works.

On signing up on VoSpine, a user is required to join channels of his/her interest to start experiencing VoSpine. Be it an interest in business, fashion, health, technology or even religions, VoSpine has a home for everyone.

There are two main categories of channels namely: *General Channels* and *Scholar Channels*. **Scholar channels** mainly encompass students and other scholars in particular fields. Within these channels, the scholars have a good environment where they can share their experiences with fellow scholars across the world.

According to Juma, who is also a team leader at VoSpine, scholar channels have been created to group various scholars according to the courses they pursue. An example is engineering students' channel that brings together engineering scholars across the world into a common platform giving them a chance to learn from each other and share any other relevant information.

However, General Channels are open to everyone, irrespective of their professional or educational fields.

"It is important to note that all information sharing is done within channels and so without joining channels, there really won't be an interaction for any user," says Anaklet Koros, Product manager, 3rd year Actuarial student at UoN.

Information within channels is public and visible to all VoSpine users, however, non-members can only read while members can read as well as add posts and comments. It is also worth noting that since users can have many different interests, they are allowed to join as many channels as they like.

A part from just sharing information on the site, a user also has access to unlimited relevant content in form of news items, opportunities, and upcoming events i.e. summits and symposiums within the respective channels.

Association between users

VoSpine users relate as Associates if they are on same professional or education level and Mentors/Mentees if they are on different levels.

Unlike on other networking sites, where users are not grouped and can post anything anywhere, it is mandatory for VoSpine users to join channels that suite them best. This aims to ensure a user only accesses information that is relevant to them.

Besides sharing information only into the relevant channels, private information and discussions between users can be done in private chat rooms.

Accessing the platform

The VoSpine website is done and can be accessed through www.vospine.com on all browsers except opera mini which is almost done.

The team is also working on VoSpine's mobile app set to launched in a few days.

"As at now, our priority is getting more and more users onboard. We already have a few prominent people as mentors for some of the channels like business, health and fashion. However, we are obviously experiencing a few challenges in form of funding and as VoSpine grows, we need more expertise to handle the management and development of both the site and mobile" says Rema.