Call for Papers: The Use and Impact of Social Networking

Special issue of the Journal of Theoretical and Applied Electronic Commerce Research

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The *Journal of Theoretical and Applied Electronic Commerce Research* is planning a special issue on the Use and Impact of Social Networking.

Social networking sites are already widely-spread and are here to stay. We experienced the rise of social networking sites and we learned that first-movers were not necessarily winners. We also saw Google+'s uptake that was faster than Facebook's, and we observed efforts to revive MySpace. Whereas Social Networking Sites probably have a certain life cycle, it can be assumed that underlying communication and interaction patterns are more universal. In addition, the development of social networking sites in China is worth mentioning. Facebook is blocked there, while Renren seems to be a very successful substitute.

We have seen some integration between Web 2.0 tools, such as Twitter and Foursquare messages appearing on Facebook or LinkedIn. Conversion of connections from one social networking site to another is getting easier. As it is common with innovation, imitations come along quickly. For example, music once was mostly associated with MySpace, but now we also listen to music on Facebook and networking sites such as Spotify. On the other hand, some sites discontinued and outsourced some features. For example, Facebook discontinued its social coupon Deals, while Facebook's Marketplace is owned by Oodle now.

A common feature of social games is that they involve virtual goods; these improve strength or the speed of levelling up. Virtually all social games allow to buy at least some virtual items, so players, who are willing to pay, are able to progress faster. This is also the reason why some people stopped playing social games. One may expect that as a response to that, there will be new social games developed, where the progress will not depend on money spent.

Another issue with virtual goods in social games is that the rules forbid players to trade with their virtual goods. But people sell and buy these goods anyway. In order to comply with the rules, the claim that it is not a sale but a contract for finding or achieving goals necessary for obtaining the virtual goods.

People tend to get bored with one game after some time. So, it is normal to expect players switching between games. There are various issues linked to the switching. It is also impossible to catch up with players, who started to play at the time the game was introduced. There is also no simple way to transfer the refund for virtual goods, which have not been used. This could be partially solved by Facebook Credits. Mandatory usage of Facebook Credits for all applications has a wide-reaching impact on the whole Facebook ecosystem.

Daily-deal/ social-coupon sites grew rapidly in the last few years. However, it is difficult and expensive to attract new subscribers. There is an increasing number of anecdotal reports which suggest that this type of marketing is not suitable for everybody. Not all business can sustain

such huge discounts. These deals also attract existing customers and potential customers, who already know about the company and who only want to take advantage of the lower price. So it is not so effective in attracting truly new customers. Even the conversion rate of one-time customers into regular customers is not so high. Not to mention that there is an increasing competition between big players (some of whom already backed down) and other local competitors.

Furthermore, marketing communication is worth exploring in the context of social networking sites, for example how organizations and even individuals advertise on social networking sites, including social games. A relatively recent phenomenon is related to promotion of organizations' and (or) their products' Facebook URLs in addition to (or instead of) regular organizations' web sites on marketing medium such as billboards. This raises interesting questions: How do organizations use social networking sites for marketing communication? Is it a one-way communication as it was the case with traditional media, or is it a truly two-way communication?

But social networking sites have also influenced communication between consumers. This may have a direct or indirect bearing on speed of product adoption. It is possible to argue that social networking sites made on-line shopping and of e-recruitment more socially acceptable. There are certainly other possible ways (other than those we are aware of) in which social networking sites adoption can influence business, although the extent of the impact varies from one country to another.

Subject Coverage

Particular topics to be addressed in this issue might include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Business models of
   - Social networking sites (of any type, i.e. LinkedIn/XING, Academia.edu/Researchgate.org, Facebook/Google+, ones with an unclear business model such as Twitter, even currently less used such as Fiendster/Myspace and controversial such as Netlog)
   - Games on Facebook and other social networking sites
   - Other sites residing above existing social networking sites, e.g. referral sites such as TopProspect and NotchUp
   - Daily-deal/social-coupon sites (business models and competition between Groupon, Living Social, Google Offers and alike, including discontinued ones such as Facebook Deals)
   - Mobile geolocation services (such as Foursqaure and Google Latitude)

2. Marketing and Social Networking Sites
   - Organizations advertising on any social networking site
   - People advertising on Facebook walls
   - Advertisement in games
   - Gamification of non-game applications (such as in the case of Foursquare)
   - Promotion of organizations' and/or products' Facebook URLs in addition to or instead of regular organizations' web sites even in old media
   - Usage of social networking sites for marketing communication

3. Societal impact of Social Networking Sites
   - Impact of social networking sites on social acceptability of shopping on-line
   - Impact of social networking sites on consumers' communication patterns
   - Impact of social networking sites on social acceptability of e-recruitment

- Impact of social networking sites on speed of product adoption
- Other business-related impact of social networking sites adoption on society

Notes for Intending Authors

We are seeking original manuscripts on the use and impact of social networking. Papers can focus on particular social networking sites or they can deal with more general communication and interaction patterns specific to a particular type or category of social networking sites. Empirical research papers are encouraged. Most of the journals and conferences focus on publishing papers, which report statistically significant results. However, contribution to the existing literature can occur also when no statistically significant impact is observed. One possibility is when the null hypothesis is interesting as such. Another possibility is when null impact is observed but previous research has indicated significant impact which suggests that the relationship of interest does not hold under certain conditions. Thus replications are acceptable as well.

Submitted papers should not have been previously published nor be currently under consideration for publication elsewhere.

Author guidelines can be found at http://www.jtaer.com/author_guidelines.doc. All submissions will be refereed by at least three reviewers. Submissions should be directed by email to fransu@asb.dk with copy to sherahk@unimelb.edu.au and hansdieter.zimmermann@fhsg.ch.

For more information, please visit the following web site: http://www.jtaer.com.

Important dates

– Full paper submission: 1 August 2012
– Notification of acceptance: 1 October 2012
– Revisions: 1 November 2012
– Final acceptance notification: 15 November 2012
– Camera ready version of paper: 15 December 2012
– Publication: April 2013

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