

Issues and Challenges in Using Social Media

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Abstract - Social network sites (SNSs) are increasingly attracting the attention of academic and industry researchers intrigued by their affordances and reach. This section brings together scholarship on these emergent phenomena. In this introductory article, we describe the issues and challenges in using them. More than three-fourths of IT organizations have put a plan to maintain or increase their investments in technology trends that encourage user collaboration, such as peer-to-peer networking, social networking and web services. Our paper provides an overview of common knowledge sharing tools available in the internet and corporate world to illustrate the guidelines and their effectiveness. We then present few perspectives on the history of such sites, discussing key problems along with their effective guidelines. We suggested multiple sets of guidelines surrounding the quality policies, code of conduct & objectives of knowledge sharing. These suggestions will further help to improve the effectiveness of the knowledge sharing community. After briefly summarizing existing scholarship concerning SNSs, we discuss the articles in this special section and conclude with considerations.

I. INTRODUCTION

The term social media (sometimes also referred to as Web 2.0) is an umbrella term used to describe a suite of tools. Most of these tools are typically free, simple to use and also support global collaboration.

Social media tools are becoming very important because of the following reasons:

- To allow to seek input from customers on product, service
- To allow to get technology developments /updates
- To help to interact and develop new relationships with the customers, partners and suppliers
- To improve customer experience
- To accelerate problem solving
- To facilitate innovation through collaboration with third parties and industry experts
- To manage the brand and reputation
- Interact in new ways with their employees.

Today, social-networking platforms like Face book, Twitter, LinkedIn, Blogs etc. need no introduction to employees in their day-to-day work. Social media tools are becoming very important because they help the IT organization and its workers to seek inputs, to interact, to develop new relationships, to improve experience, to accelerate problem solving, and innovations through collaboration.

It is also important to note that the social media tools and the user community should be managed and regulated by the

user community itself and not the provider of the tool or third party institution.

Wiki's

Wiki's such as Wikipedia are systems for collaborative publishing. They allow many authors to contribute to an online document or discussion.

Web Services

Web Services are software systems that make it easier for different systems, to communicate with another system in an automatic way to pass information or perform transactions.

Social Networking

Refer to system, which allow members of a specific site to learn about skills, talents, knowledge or preferences. Some of the popular ones are FACEBOOK, LINKEDIN and MySpace. This can be helpful to companies to identify experts.

Really Simple Syndication(RSS)

This allows people to subscribe to online distributions of news, blogs, podcasts or other information.

Peer-to-peer Networking

Technique for efficiently sharing files (music, videos or text) either over the internet or intranet within a closed set of users. P2P distributes files across many Machines or retrieve files by gathering and assembling pieces of them from many machines.

Mash-ups

These are aggregations of content from different online sources to create a new service. An example would be a program that pulls apartment listings from one site and displays them on a Google map to show where the apartments are located.

Collective Intelligence

Collaborative publishing and common database for sharing Knowledge is common ways to achieve this. The decisions, can be made through collective information prior to making any critical decision on the subject area.

Blogs

Web Logs are in short forms are referred as Blogs and those provide Online Journals or Diaries hosted on a Web Site and often distributed to other sites or readers using RSS (Really Simply Syndication) through subscription.

Podcasts

Podcasts are audio or video recordings – a multimedia form of a blog or other sharable contents. They are often distributed through an aggregator such as iTunes.

Message boards

An Internet forum, or message board, is an online discussion site where people can hold conversations in the form of posted messages

II. ISSUES WITH POPULAR SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS

A. Blogs

The following are some of the issues by each blogger in usage of Blogs.

- Blogger don't have a distinct voice/personality
- Bloggers are not conversational.
- Blogger does not take time to provide right response to comments
- Blogger is not brave enough to articulate/share his/her views
- Blogger is not up-to-date
- Blogger does not know about best practices such as blogging ethics
- Blogger does not know how to maintain a good relationship through online
- Blogger keeps irrelevant topics
- Blogger publishes commercial or sales messages
- Blogger posts unreadable content
- Blogger is not being neutral, honest but positive and put neutral posting/comments

B. Facebook

Listed below are some of the issues users experience using

Facebook

- Difficult to Monetize
- As Marketers Move In, Users Move Out
- Untrustworthy Member Data
- Lack of Metrics
- Stalkers and Other Unwanted Activity Ruins Lives
- Privacy Concerns Mount as Developers Move In
- Loss in workplace productivity

C. Wiki

Listed below are some of the issues user's experiences while using Wiki

- Non motivating/Rewarding & Recognition
- Non availability of content or document management system
- Non availability fileservers/file shares
- Non availability of Intranet or project portals
- Non selection of proper content areas
- Non proper considerations for distribution of contents/wiki for other teams
- Improper Search Features
- Misleading Links Features
- Non Authoring
- Improper Tags Categorization
- Worst Wiki Engine and/or Search Engine Interface

III. GUIDELINES

A. GUIDELINES FOR BLOGGERS

The following are some of the guidelines can be followed by each blogger to make an effective use of Blogs.

- Blog regularly.
- Blogger should have a distinct voice/personality
- Blogger should be conversational.
- Blogger takes time to provide right response to comments
- Blogger should take time to pay attention to spelling and grammar rules.
- Blogger should be brave enough to articulate/share his/her views
- Blogger should keep him up-to-date
- Blogger should know about best practices such as blogging ethics
- Blogger should know how to maintain a good relationship through online
- Blogger should have a sense of humor!
- Blogger should consider client's reputation when dealing with external/collaborative environment
- Blogger should only keep relevant topics
- Blogger should not keep commercial or sales messages
- Blogger should be able to put readable content
- Blogger should be neutral, honest but positive and put neutral posting/comments
- Blogger should follow regulatory compliance requirements based on the environment being chosen

Though the above guidelines are being found and practiced in the common blogs, the key problem is the actual follow-up of these guidelines and conformance of the guidelines and moderation on those guidelines. This paper addresses some of the effectiveness of these guidelines, associated gaps and propose new ones which can help to improve the effectiveness in the knowledge sharing for a specific technical or functional topics commonly used in the software projects.

B. GUIDELINES FOR WIKI

The guidelines listed below are some of the commonly available guidelines users will follow for using Wiki

- Motivation/Rewarding & Recognition
- Availability of content or document management system
- Availability fileservers/file shares
- Availability of Intranet or project portals
- Strategies/ideas for splitting the content areas between intranet and wiki
- Selection of proper content areas
- Considerations for distribution of contents/wiki for other teams
- Search Features
- Links Features
- Authoring
- Tags Categorization
- Extension
- Signals
- Best Wiki Engine and/or Search Engine Interface
- Selection of Wiki Editors.

IV. TOP USABILITY GUIDELINES

User Satisfaction and usability of the web tools are very important. Surprisingly little research focuses on user satisfaction and usability of the social media tools. To create better tools that meet user requirements, the organization must identify characteristics that contribute to users' satisfaction and potentially to their ultimate adoption of the system and improvise it.

Media tools can best serve the organization and the user communities if it's designers first understand and satisfy user needs. The following has a list of top usability guidelines can be set and followed for each group within the organization

- Clean, Simple Design
- Linking
- Descriptive Titles
- Use readable text
- Make Content Clear to Users
- Post Finding & Navigation
- Frequent Usage
- Author Biography
- Clear Title & Purpose
- Clear RSS Feed

V. PROPOSED GUIDELINES

The following are the general best practices we have arrived based on our analysis on multiple knowledge sharing tools/communities in the internet and corporate sectors.

A. Establish Quality Policies

From our observation, it is very clear that there are no significant corporate wide policies and/or community wide policies defined in supporting social media tools and its effectiveness and hence we propose set of new guidelines towards quality policies.

B. Code Of Conduct and Ethics

From our observation, it is very clear that there is no significant code of conduct has been defined or used within the organizations.

- The objective and guidelines should be clearly articulated to avoid confusion and set the clear expectations and boundaries.
- The roles and responsibilities of the user's, and moderator should be clearly defined and published with the community.

- The quality of the social media tools should be audited and maintained regularly for completeness, quality and optimality by the assigned moderator/auditor.
- The moderators should be qualified enough to establish and enforce the quality and change the forum/contents if applicable.
- Web 2.0 tools should be customized for the knowledge sharing community to be flexible as well secured
- The author who publishes should make the users to share their knowledge by motivating them to the utmost extent.

VI. CONCLUSION

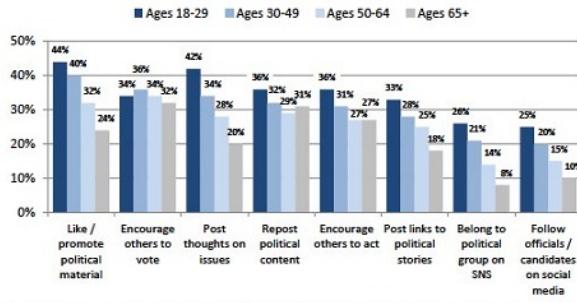
Undeniably, the tacit knowledge of the employees is an asset only if it is effectively utilized & shared. So, there are multiple research avenues to provide meaningful and measurable guidelines and compare and contrast. The effectiveness of those established procedures enforcement of the guidelines. We also found that we can utilize the heuristic evaluation techniques to evaluate the knowledge management tools/portals used by the community. Further research work and case studies will be conducted on each proposed guideline using the goal, question, metric (GQM) method and or other suitable method to evaluate the pros and cons of each proposed guideline to prove them to be effective and reliable.

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Younger social media users are more likely to use the tools for civic activities

% of users of social networking sites or Twitter who use social media these ways



Source: Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project Civic Engagement Survey, conducted July 16-August 7, 2012 on landline and cell phones and in English and Spanish. N for social media users ages 18-29=323. N for social media users ages 30-49=388. N for social media users ages 50-64=323. N for social media users ages 65+=167.

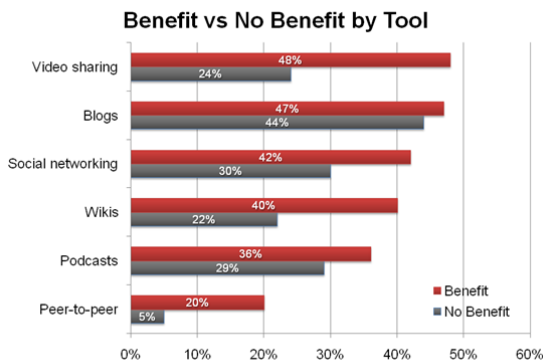


Figure 1 shows most common usage of social media tools by users.

Figure 2 shows benefits of various social media tools.