

The Value of Social Media

What Social Networking Sites Afford Organizations

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Abstract

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Social media are a phenomenon that has quickly become deeply rooted in the mechanics of our everyday lives, dramatically changing how we interact and collaborate with family, peers, and society. Meanwhile, organizations have increasingly been exposed to and affected by this societal use, and hence been nudged into also adopting social media platforms. Since few academic studies have examined what this change will mean to organizations, I aim to contribute a deeper qualitative understanding of the topic. The empirical foundation comprises six separate studies that together cast light the value of social media bring to today's organizations. The thesis contributes both empirically and theoretically to research into the organizational use of social media.

The constituent papers of this thesis can be seen as offering different perspectives on the potential value of social media, and what social networking sites (SNSs) afford organizations. Together, they contribute to an improved understanding of the roles and structure of social media, and of how SNSs create and share knowledge and thereby influence innovation. In the last decade, the rapid development of social media and their growing importance in both industry and society at large have spurred interest among both academics and practitioners, an interest that is likely to continue to grow. It is therefore important that the value of social media for organizational use, has not yet been fully explored, receives more attention, so organizational efforts and investments in social media often lack suitable guidance and strategies. This dissertation is designed to mitigate these challenges.