

topics:

- social media challenges

references:

- *Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of Social Media*, by Andreas M. Kaplan and Michael Haenlein, Business Horizons, volume 53, pp59-68, 2010.

grip of social media

- social media has massive use
- example statistics from January 2009:
 - Facebook: 175 million users
 - YouTube: 10 hours of content uploaded per minute
 - Flickr: 3 billion photos posted
- consequences:
 - companies do not have exclusive control of their (online) image any more
- quick history:
 - 1979: *Usenet* started by students at Duke; allowed internet users to post public messages
 - 1998: *Open Diary*; allowed users to post diaries online; one user coined the term *blog*, which was short for “web log”; also referred to as “we blog”
 - 2003: MySpace started
 - 2004: Facebook started

technologies and philosophies

- Web 2.0
 - refers to collaboratively created content
e.g., blogs, wikis
 - requires technologies including:
 - * Flash
 - * RSS (really simple syndication)
 - * AJAX (Asynchronous JavaScript and XML)
- User Generated Content (UGC)
 - requirements:
 - * must be published on a publicly accessible site or social media site by a select group of people
 - * must show some amount of creative effort
 - * must be created outside professional “routines and practices”

- excludes:
 - * email, instant messages (not publicly accessible)
 - * replication of existing content (no creative effort)
 - * commercial/marketing content (not outside professional practices)

• definition:

“Social Media is a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content.”

key elements of social media analysis

- media research
 - social presence
 - * media differ in the degree of communication between two people regarding acoustic, visual and/or physical content
 - * media differ in the amount of intimacy and immediacy facilitated
 - intimacy ⇒ mediated vs interpersonal (non-mediated)
 - immediacy ⇒ synchronous (turn-taking) vs asynchronous (no time/coordination constraints)
 - * together these influence social presence
 - * social presence is lower for mediated, asynchronous content; higher for interpersonal, synchronous content
 - * increased social presence ⇒ increased influence between people communicating using social media

- media richness
 - * amount of information transmitted over time
 - * not just bandwidth
 - * e.g., “a picture is worth a thousand words” — a picture file may be bigger than a text description and take longer to transmit, but the content/message may be richer
- **the purpose of communication is to resolve ambiguity and reduce uncertainty**
- social processes
 - self-presentation
 - * to control other people’s impressions of yourself
 - * to create an image (in cyberspace) that is consistent with one’s personal identity
 - self-disclosure
 - * means of self-presentation
 - * revelation (conscious or otherwise) of personal information (e.g., thoughts, feelings, preferences)

classification of social media

		social presence / media richness		
		low	medium	high
self- presentation / self- disclosure	high	blogs	social networking sites	virtual social worlds
	low	collaborative projects	content communities	virtual game worlds

collaborative projects

- examples:
 - Wikipedia: collaborative content
 - Yelp: social bookmarking of links and ratings
- most democratic instantiation of user generated content
- fuzzy definition of “truth”: what is *really* true versus what most people believe to be true...

blogs

- date-stamped entries
- usually displayed in reverse chronological order
- usually contain personal information (like a diary)
- usually managed by one person (the author)
- usually text-based, though other media support is growing
- risks for corporate users:
 - outsiders (customers): complain about company's products, services, etc.
 - insiders (employees): complain about company's policies, etc.
- benefits for corporate users:
 - companies can appear more *transparent*
 - especially if high-level employees blog

content communities

- example: YouTube
- sharing of media content (text, photos, videos, slides/powerpoint)
- risks for corporate users:
 - sharing of copyrighted material
- benefits for corporate users:
 - high-traffic
 - user generated, free advertising

social networking sites

- example: Facebook
- enable users to connect directly to share personal information (profile, email, photos, instant messages, etc.)
- most recent trends (as of 2010 when article was published):
 - “branding” by companies (e.g., having a corporate Facebook page)
 - games
 - virtual merchandising transitioning to real merchandise (e.g., florist's Facebook page allows sending of virtual flowers and sending of real flowers)

virtual worlds

- users inhabit (typically) 3-dimensional virtual world and interact with each other
- corporate involvement:
 - product placement inside virtual world
 - and the reverse: using the virtual world in a real-world ad
- two types:
 - virtual game world
 - * example: World of Warcraft
 - * MMORPG: massively multiplayer online role-playing game
 - * games have strict rules of behavior and pre-defined goals
 - * on web and on game consoles
 - virtual social world
 - * example: Second Life
 - * freer setting than games (no fixed rules of play)
 - * users create content
 - * can use virtual currency (so users can buy things...)

recommendations for companies using social media

- remember: it changes rapidly!
- choose carefully
 - choose which social media outlets to participate in based on target audience and where they “hang out” online
- pick the app or make your own
 - “make” or “buy” question
 - don’t reinvent the wheel—as long as the appropriate “wheel” exists
- ensure activity alignment
 - if using multiple media outlets/activities, make sure they align with each other
 - communication should resolve ambiguity and confusion, not create it—so be careful when communicating on multiple channels to be consistent
- media plan integration
 - as above, align not only content within social media, but also content between social media channels and traditional media channels (e.g., print ads)

- access for all
 - make sure target audience has access to the chosen media outlet(s)
 - e.g., some companies block some sites to keep employees focused on work
 - orchestrate access and roles of employees with respect to company’s social media presence
- five points about being social:
 - be active (up to date)
 - be interesting (not boring)
 - be humble (others spend more time on social media than you!)
 - be unprofessional (blend in with non-professionals)
 - be honest

the future of social media

- largely centered around mobile devices
- Mobile Web 2.0
- Twitter
- location-based applications