Introduction to HICCS-47 Minitrack on Social Media and Workplace:
Job and Work Design Issues in a Social Enterprise

Xuefei (Nancy) Deng
University of Hawaii at Manoa
xuefei@hawaii.edu

K. D. Joshi
Washington State University
joshi@wsu.edu

Yibai Li
University of Scranton
yibai.li@scranton.edu

Abstract

This short paper serves to introduce the minitrack on social media and workplace and to summarize its constituent proceedings articles.

1. Introduction

The social media is transforming the workplace. Increasingly companies are launching social media behind their firewalls to encourage employees to share information, locate expertise, and engage in collaborations. Companies such as Best Buy, Deloitte, Microsoft, and IBM have hosted their internal social networking sites to enhance their communication and collaboration within and across organizational boundaries. The proliferations of social media in organizations have opened up new opportunities, but at the same time it has also raised new work and workplace related concerns and challenges, such as increased job stress, lack of clear personal and professional boundaries, role conflict, and information misuse. These challenges associated with the new ways of work, if unresolved, could adversely affect the organizations. In order for an organization to amplify the returns/benefits and to mitigate the drawbacks of using enterprise social media within its work environment, it is imperative for both researchers and practitioners to focus on the work/job level issues and challenges arising from the use of social media in enterprises.

This minitrack examines the nature and roles of social media in relation to work-related issues, including work/job design, workplace productivity, and workforce relationship. This research lies at the intersectionality of multitude of disciplines, namely Information Systems, Industrial Engineering, Science & Technology, Organization Science, and Behavioral Science. The Call for Papers welcomed theoretical and empirical studies addressing organizational, managerial, technical, and behavioral perspectives on social media in enterprises.

2. Summary of Articles

Three papers are presented as a part of this minitrack. We introduce them briefly below.

Minna Rollins, Jack Wei, and David Nickell show us how and why sales people can learn by reading and writing blogs. Drawing on social learning theory and using the netnography method, they analyze 200 salespeople’s blogs and conclude that blogging (writing and reading blogs) can be a helpful learning tool for many salespeople, highlighting the potential value of blogging for sales training in organizations. Focusing on the microblogging platform Twitter at the firm level, Tom Mattson and Salvatore Aurigemma conclude that re-tweeting activity (reposting what others have posted) is consistent with the theory of middle-status conformity, and demonstrate empirically the importance of status to the technology, organization and environment (TOE) framework. From a behavior perspective, Christopher Sibona examines the unfriending behaviors on social network sites (SNS) such as Facebook and the role of context collapse on SNS. This research work not only identifies four friendship types that account for the majority of unfriending decisions but also reveals the underlying causes associated with those unfriending decisions, providing important implications for practice.