

Guest Editorial Preface

Special Issue on Social Media Networking for Customer Mapping and Reputation Management

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Social media is becoming all-inclusive and organizations cannot thrive without ensuring transparent and seamless flow of information, for which social media seems to be the best anecdote as of now. Its innovative uses for organizational functions and processes are leading organizations to identify newer ways by which they can meaningfully and profitably utilize social media platforms like microblogs, blogs, forums, business networks, enterprise social networks, photo sharing, social bookmarking, social gaming, video sharing, and virtual worlds. For informal information sharing, platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Wikipedia, LinkedIn, Reddit, Pinterest, Instagram, etc. have already created millions of users each and generate huge data which can be leveraged by organizations in meaningful ways.

Social media networking only these are changing the old methods of working but also offer a low-cost proposition for organizational communication, marketing and reputation management needs and in the long-run, can become a self-sustainable model in itself. Startups, Medium and Small Scale enterprises, established business houses and large MNCs alike, all need to engage the stakeholders using the digital technology. Social media has fuelled the startup revolution in past few years but it has also been witnessed, that how the failure to act swiftly and engage against a negative propaganda may lead to a backlash. So the social media is a double edged sword, as it allows organizations in creating real-time opportunities for satisfying, cross-selling, up-selling, growing relationships and fostering loyalty of their valued customers and at the same time any negative or adverse news can severely dent its image. The organizations, therefore, need to carefully plan and prepare a long-term strategy to leverage technology enabled advances and ingrain their use in its basic DNA.

In this Special Issue, we present original papers that tackle challenges or issues relating to using the social media and networks for customer profiling, reputation management and content management. Four papers have been selected for this Special

Issue and report the contemporary issues and challenges relating to application of Social media and networks for Organizations.

THE ARTICLES

The Call for Papers of the Special Issue received a strong response from authors and only 4 papers were accepted following a rigorous two-stage review process, coordinated by the guest editors. In the following, a short description of each paper is provided, summarizing the aims of each article and how the work described is related to the Special Issue topics.

The first paper of the Special Issue, entitled “*Customer Journey Maps for Demographic Online Customer Profiles*,” authored by *Deepa Ittimani Tholath and Fr. Casimirraj S.J.*, focuses on drawing up different personas of customers in the segmented sections using the demographics depicting the typical generation of consumers who engage in online purchasing methods. This study aims to provide a ready reckoner for marketers promoting online stores on how to communicate and interact with different types of customers so that they can intervene and ease pain points and enhance high involvement experiences and thereby ensure customer loyalty.

Ashish K Rathore, Nikhil Tuli and P. Vigneswara Ilavarasan, in their paper, “*Pro-Business or Common Citizen? An analysis of an Indian Woman CEO’s Tweets*” provides a content analysis of social media communication in the public space of a woman chief executive officer (CEO) in a developing country. The sample is based out of India which provides an exciting and dynamic setting with a mix of conservative and newly emerging breed of less conservative women. For this study, *Tweets* posted on Twitter, a micro-blogging social media platform, by an Indian woman CEO are used for analysis. Rstudio and Nvivo were used for tweets extraction and analysis. The findings show the various themes in CEO’s communication which are categorized in different sectors.

In “*Crisis Management and Image Restoration through Social Networking – Analysis of Maggi Crisis*” authored by *Debarati Bhattacharya*, the emphasis is on how social networking sites have become an important tool for Crisis Management and Image Restoration. The paper examines the theories on crisis and strategies of image restoration that have been employed by the Swiss multinational, Nestle when it faced adverse reactions for its popular Maggi brand in India. It has been found that the company took a lot of time in responding to the initial wave of negative comments on Social networking sites and its late engagement with consumers did it lot of damage. This paper further suggests which strategies could have been adopted by the company in such a situation.

Finally, Jitender Sharma, in the paper, “*Strategies to Overcome Dark Side of Social Media for Organizational Sustainability*” contemplates upon the disastrous and irreversible effects of any adverse publicity on social media. It discusses few cases where social media has caused damage of individuals and organizations. It analyses the reasons for negativity to spread on Social Media and presents the strategies that

can be employed for conquering the dark side of Social Media. The organizations need to designing proper and comprehensive social media usage policies at workplace and ensure the teams work pro-actively to engage with community at large.

As depicted by above contribution analysis, among the goals of this publication effort was to collect and publish contemporary and high quality research that addresses the dimensions of leveraging social media and networks customer mapping and reputation management. We believe that this Special Issue has managed to demonstrate the broad diversity of papers on the planned theme.

Finally, we would like to express our gratitude to the reviewers of this special issue for their valuable time: Dr Nimit Gupta, Dr Richa Misra, Dr Banashree Dey, Dr Nidhi Srivastava, Dr A K Jain, Dr Deepak Singh, Dr S. Minglani, Dr. T Hurley, Dr S Swami, Dr R Krishnan, Dr. M Venugopal and Dr R Parasar. Moreover, we would like to thank all authors who contributed their papers for consideration in the Special Issue. We are thankful to Dr. Subhasish Dasgupta the Editor-in-Chief of the International Journal of Virtual Communities and Social Networking for his valuable guidance.

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