

Introduction to social media

01

What is social media?

One of the difficult things about defining social media is that it means different things to different people. Social media is also a relatively new concept and one that is constantly changing, with new platforms and features appearing all the time. The term social media is much broader than many think. Many believe that social media only refers to the social networks, such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest and Reddit, to name just a few. In fact, the term social media can be used to describe any digital systems where people connect with each other. The word 'social' in this context describes the way users on a digital platform share and interact with online content. The content they share could be anything from short status updates to long-form blog posts. It could also include rich media such as images, videos or music. While a simple online radio channel wouldn't be described as a social platform on its own, it would become one if users were able to create profiles, build playlists and share them with others, due to these 'social' interactions.

Many retailers allow the products they sell to be reviewed and rated by customers. By doing this, it turns a simple online shopping site into a site driven by social interactions, where products can trend in popularity. These online retail sites allow users to share their experiences, and even their own photographs of the products, through the online shopping platform. Most people now look at travel review websites such as Tripadvisor before booking a holiday, which is another example of social media. These review sites allow users to create profiles, connect with other holidaymakers and share their experiences, photographs and feedback as well as rate the overall holiday or hotel.

Some push the definition of 'social media' even further and include messaging apps like Whatsapp, and even voice over IP (VOIP) services such

as Skype and Viber in the definition of social media. In many ways, these platforms do exhibit many of the qualities associated with social media. New social networks and digital platforms with social features are emerging all the time. The new platforms enter a highly competitive environment where the existing platforms are fighting to keep users away from their competitors. Because of this, some of the most successful new platforms focus either on a specific niche or a unique feature, such as higher levels of security or a promise to never sell user data to third party advertisers. Nowadays, because social media has become so popular all over the world, almost all new online platforms include some form of social features, such as a profile or the ability to rate or 'like' content or products and share them with a user's own network of friends.

Figure 1.1 illustrates that the term social media goes far beyond just the social networks we have grown used to.

FIGURE 1.1 What is social media?



The power of social media

Social media is a fast-paced, constantly changing landscape. There are hundreds of thousands of conversations taking place all over the world at any given moment and it's highly likely that social media users will be discussing your company, your people and your competitors. This is a valuable opportunity to listen to them and gain intelligence about the opinions of the people that matter most – your customers and your employees. There are a number of products on the market that allow you to listen to social media and analyse the resulting data. This data will allow you to see trends in your industry or in public opinion and can even be used to predict future trends when modelled effectively. But, you must be aware of the constraints that you face when it comes to storing or analysing social media data.

Social media has fundamentally changed the way that people communicate with companies and with each other. We're far more connected now than we ever were. Many people appear to be totally addicted to social media and spend hours on it every day – ignore it at your peril.

Businesses that harness the power of social media gain competitive advantage and stay ahead of change. In fact, there are a whole host of benefits to using social media effectively. Social media shouldn't be used as simply a channel to broadcast company marketing material. Instead, social media allows organizations to connect directly with their customers, their employees and other stakeholders in a deeper, more personal manner. Organizations that harness social media effectively can embed their vision and gain supporters and followers. They can receive real-time feedback faster and more effectively than ever before – if acted upon this can give the board insight into what people think about their company and can influence the future direction of the business.

Successful organizations are open and transparent. They build trust with their stakeholders. Social media can help you do this – it's a fast and extremely effective tool. When someone sends a message to a company on social media, it's there for the whole world to see, and the response will be judged by others. Companies that respond with automated messages or use overly 'corporate' tones face a high risk of receiving complaints en masse from social media users who feel the company isn't relating to them on a personal level. The result can be increased negative sentiment about your company, which could have a snowball effect. What starts as a small issue can be amplified greatly if picked up and shared by social media users.

Creativity and innovation can come from anywhere – it's no longer just the remit of research and development or specially created 'innovation

teams'. Social media allows companies to gather ideas from their customers and employees, which it can use to significantly strengthen its competitive advantage. Understanding how to capture these ideas and turn them into reality is important for all forward-thinking organizations.

I often hear 'this doesn't apply to us because we don't do social media...' At this point, I usually have my head in my hands. If any company thinks that social media doesn't apply to them they are seriously mistaken. We're in the digital revolution. Digital technology is fundamentally changing the way that we do business.

Organizations need to know how to respond to the so-called digital disruptors – social media, mobile, data analytics and cloud. You only need to look at examples of former household names such as Blockbuster Video and Kodak to see what happens to companies that fail to keep up with change. Change is inevitable – those companies who embrace it can turn challenges into opportunities and safeguard the future success of their businesses.

CASE STUDY Risk in action: The power of social media campaigns

There have been many successful social media campaigns that have raised awareness about particular issues or which received a large amount of support from users all over the world. Most social media campaigns centre on the use of a hashtag. Three examples of successful campaigns are as follows:

- #BringBackOurGirls – started in April 2014 after the abduction of more than 200 schoolgirls in Nigeria. It was started by a group of campaigners who wanted to exert pressure on the Nigerian authorities to do more to find the girls and bring them back safely. The hashtag was used 3.3 million times. The most shared tweet was a photo of First Lady Michelle Obama holding a piece of paper with the hashtag written on it. The post was retweeted 57,000 times.
- Ice Bucket Challenge – a campaign to raise money and awareness for the Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) association. People all over the world made videos of themselves pouring a bucket of ice water over their head. The 2014 campaign saw people post their videos on social media and nominate their friends to do the same. The 2014 campaign received

\$98.2 million (£64 million), compared with \$2.7 million (£1.8 million) during the same period in the previous year.

- #WhyIStayed and #WhyILeft – a campaign that was started in August 2014 in response to a video of an NFL player assaulting his wife. Millions of men and women used the hashtag to organize a conversation about why they stayed with an abusive partner.

These examples illustrate how powerful social media can be when users unite in support of a campaign. But, companies should be very cautious if they want to take part in the conversations around the campaigns. At the time that #WhyIStayed was trending, DiGiorno Pizza tweeted '#WhyIStayed You had pizza'. Unsurprisingly, the company received an immediate backlash from social media users and *Time* published an article with the headline 'DiGiorno used a hashtag about domestic violence to sell pizza'. Companies must understand the context of a hashtag before using it. If a mistake like this happens, apologize profusely, as DiGiorno did.

SOURCES: www.bbc.co.uk/news/blogs-trending-27298696
www.buzzfeed.com/ryanhatesthis/digiorno-whyistayed-you-had-pizza
www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-29013707

Traditional social media vs enterprise social networks

It won't come as a shock that the most prominent traditional social media sites are those you're most likely already familiar with, such as Facebook, Twitter, Google+, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Wikipedia and so on. These are the sites millions of us use on a daily basis, often multiple times a day using our mobiles when we're out and about, sometimes even sending messages from unusual places. The first thing that some people do in the morning is open social media, before they've even got out of bed. The key thing to take from this is that 'traditional social media' means the public platforms that we've grown used to over the last 5–10 years and that allow us to interact virtually with our friends and family, or even those we don't even know in person but have a virtual connection with online.

The key characteristics of traditional social media are:

- a profile, usually with a photo, a short biography and some personal information;

- the ability to connect with others, by ‘friending’, ‘following’ or ‘connecting’;
- the ability to share information with a larger network, be that with your group of friends, or a post visible to the general public;
- the ability to comment on information posted to the network by yourself or others;
- tagging or mentioning people, places or businesses in posts or in photos.

There are many social media sites out there that offer other features, however, the points above are common across most social media platforms.

Enterprise social networks, on the other hand, are technology platforms deployed within an organization to allow employees to work collaboratively, taking advantage of features similar to those in traditional social media. It’s worth us touching on some of the high-level benefits of enterprise social networks so that we can understand why organizations are implementing them in the first place. There is a rapidly growing trend in industry for organizations, both small and large, to implement platforms that allow their employees to collaborate internally.

You may have already heard these platforms referred to as ‘Facebook for the enterprise’, or a company’s ‘internal Facebook’. While this does go a little way in explaining what it is, it falls far short of really defining the benefits of implementing such a system. I would avoid using such terms as it can cause confusion to the end users and give them a false impression of the platform before they’ve even experienced it.

An enterprise social network allows an organization’s employees to connect with each other and to discover other people within their organization across the globe.

Have you ever considered how difficult it can be to find specific people or experts within a large, multinational company? Imagine that you are based in the United Kingdom and you want to find a colleague with a specific skill. Perhaps you’re working on an international project involving the use of databases in a foreign country, let’s say Russia, and you’re stuck on a certain aspect. You want to find someone who understands databases that might be able to help, but they need to have Russian language skills too. My guess is that you would start by leveraging your own personal network, calling your connections and sending a few emails to colleagues. If you work for a large organization this could be like finding a needle in a hay stack...

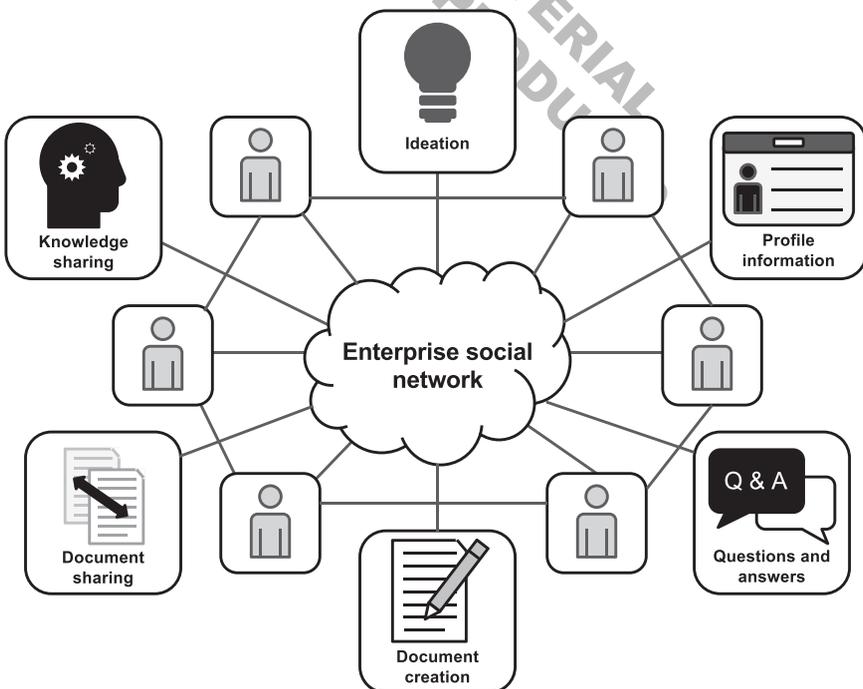
One of the key features of an enterprise social platform, similar to traditional social media, is a profile. Each user has a profile to which they add their skills, contact information, photos, interests and anything else relevant.

This makes it much easier to find people in your organization by using the in-built search functions. You may think that this sounds like LinkedIn or a glorified internal phone book, however it's far more than that. The internal profiles become much more powerful when you think about the other key feature of Enterprise Social: collaboration.

Enterprise social networks enable collaborative working across the globe. Most platforms allow you to create or join 'groups'. These groups are virtual areas that allow users to connect and post content of interest to members of the group, similar to LinkedIn. So, if you work as a communications professional at a multinational tyre manufacturer, you might want to join a group that focuses on writing, branding or communications. By doing this you'll be able to see other colleagues who also work in communications around the world. Because each user has a profile with details about themselves it's an easy way to find or meet colleagues virtually and build your network. The key features of an enterprise social network are illustrated in Figure 1.2.

Some of the real power of Enterprise Social can be seen in the discussions that are taking place in groups. Using our example from earlier of trying to

FIGURE 1.2 Enterprise social network



track down a Russian-speaking colleague with experience working with databases, we might enter a search on the platform. By searching, we might discover some groups devoted to discussing the very same issues we're trying to resolve. By reading through the comments and checking out the profiles of the people making the posts we might just find exactly the person we're looking for.

Many of the leading enterprise social networks also integrate into Microsoft Office. This allows two or more people to work on a document at the same time. The document is hosted 'in the cloud' (on the platform itself) and users publish their changes as they go. This reduces effort on versioning as there's no need to keep emailing the latest document around to your team – the latest version, plus all of the previous versions, are neatly organized and stored for reference. This may sound like familiar functionality to some other platforms, such as modern document repositories or file sharing tools, however what's different is the 'social' element that allows users to discover new documents and content.

Controlling the uncontrollable

Social media has grown quickly and organically. Controls weren't designed from the outset. Social media is naturally uncontrollable – people can, within reason, publish whatever they like. Because of this, organizations need to implement good governance to ensure that the risks of social media are managed without putting a stranglehold on it. If too much control is placed around social media, many of its benefits will be lost. This idea will be explored in more detail in the next chapter when we look at the social media risk continuum.

While social media was not created with control in mind, there are a number of things an organization can do to help manage risk. This book covers many of the approaches an organization can take, from designing effective policies, implementing operating procedures and monitoring for compliance. There are also a number of tools on the market that can help you manage traditional social media. We will look at some of these tools, often described as 'social risk and compliance tools', in Chapter 4, Data privacy and control.

Where traditional social media can be somewhat uncontrollable, meaning that you are reliant on the network itself to provide control features such as moderation and privacy settings, enterprise social networks are usually more configurable. As previously discussed, an enterprise social network is

an internal social collaboration platform an organization implements to allow its people to connect with each other and work together. Controls must be implemented in and around the enterprise social networks in order to protect the organization. This ranges from security controls to make sure the platform is unlikely to be hacked, to governance frameworks and policies to protect the users and the data within the network.

There are many vendors in the enterprise social network market, each with their own advantages, disadvantages and configuration options. It's important that you understand what controls you need to have in place before you choose a product. If you don't, you could end up paying a lot of money for a product, only to find that it doesn't meet your risk and governance requirements. It could be very costly to implement controls afterwards and, in some cases, the vendors may not offer the protection and control you need, meaning that you might need to consider starting again with another vendor. The key takeaway here is that before making any decisions or commitments, you should carefully plan what you want from your platform, how it will align to your business objectives, and how you will manage the risks. Only then should you think about the technology that will support your goals.

Why is governance and risk management so important?

Good governance is the foundation for success in social media. A good governance strategy will help you understand how you can harness the power of social media to meet your strategic goals. It will help you keep ahead of change and ensure that you can anticipate issues in advance and address them before they turn into a problem.

There are many stakeholders who have an interest in how social media is used in an organization. Typical stakeholders could be marketing, IT, HR, operations, security, sales, and so on. A good governance strategy will bring these different groups together and ensure that everyone is on the same page, working towards a common goal. It will help you understand where you are, where you're going and how you get there, while at the same time satisfying any specific requirements along the way and staying within any constraints to help your company succeed.

It's not unusual to see eyes glaze over when the subject of governance and risk management comes up. There's a perception that governance and risk is a dull, compliance-type topic that you visit only to tick some boxes. But in

fact, governance is all about the mechanics of how you operate and it's this that will make your project a success. Furthermore, if you think of all of the social media blunders that are reported in the press almost every day you can begin to understand the importance of good governance and risk management. Many of us, myself included, find some of the social media mistakes organizations make highly entertaining. And the way a company responds to an initial incident can be equally entertaining as they make a bad situation worse! Their mistakes should press home the need to ensure that you don't fall victim to the same thing yourself. This is where good governance and risk management come to the forefront.

All too often I see or hear about companies who have implemented a certain social media strategy only to have it rejected at a later stage by the dreaded risk and compliance department. The reason for this is often because the people running the project had failed to engage them and articulate how the strategy fits into the organization's risk strategy.

Chapter overview

Throughout this book I will introduce you to the key elements that make up good social media governance and risk management. The chapters are broken down into logical themes as follows:

- Chapter 2 covers the fundamentals of risk management, including risk strategy and appetite. We also look at the social media risk maturity model that is used as a way of assessing how mature your organization is in its governance and management of social media risk. Once the fundamentals have been covered, we will look at the five categories of social media risk.
- Chapter 3 is all about strategy. Strategy is an important part of governance because it sets out the direction of your social media programme and in turn dictates what governance you need to implement to support that strategy. In this chapter we will assess the key parts of a good social media strategy, such as the use of content, advocates, ideation and gamification. We will do this with a governance mindset, always thinking about the risks and considering what you need to implement to ensure you achieve your goals.
- Chapter 4 covers data privacy and control. In this chapter we will look at the key principles of data protection and assess how they relate to social media. We will also look at the management of social

media data, including storage, classification and archiving. We'll then cover how to practically implement controls to ensure that social media data is managed appropriately.

- Chapter 5 is a deep dive into governance. Governance is all about how to operate social systems at a practical level. We'll look at tactics to bring the key stakeholders in your organization together and how their roles and responsibilities fit into your social media programme. The topics we'll cover in this section include monitoring and moderation, data quality, metrics and operating procedures.
- Chapter 6 covers two important policies: the social media policy and the privacy policy. In this practical chapter we will look at best practice for writing effective policies. We'll also consider ways to ensure that your policies are easily accessible and engaging, and not considered boring compliance paperwork by your employees.
- Chapter 7 provides practical advice about crisis management. We'll look at the crisis lifecycle, and cover how to plan and prepare for crises, how to assess them, how to respond to them and what to do when the crisis has passed and the dust has settled.
- Chapter 8 looks at security in the context of social media and digital systems. In this chapter we look at cybercrime and assess ways that criminals try and hack into your computer systems. We'll cover best practice for account management and look at how phishing attacks can put your social channels at risk.
- Chapter 9 covers the social media regulatory mix. We'll look at the key themes that regulations around the world attempt to control. We'll also look at practical examples of regulatory compliance in social media.
- Chapter 10 looks to the future of social media and digital technologies. In this chapter we'll look at how social media analytics will evolve to a state where accurate predictions about future behaviours can be made based on a user's social media data. We'll also look at The Onion Router (TOR) and the dark web, cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin, biometric authentication such as retina and fingerprint scanning as well as biochip implants, cyber-bullying and the decline of email. Finally we'll consider our reliance on digital systems and look at how social media is helping safeguard freedom of speech, and how increased security and encryption will lead to a purer form of democracy.

Summary

In this chapter we introduced some of the key topics that we'll explore in depth in the rest of this book. The opportunities that social media offers to business is truly amazing, but it's vital that good governance brings the key stakeholders together and gets them working towards a common goal. An awareness of the risks of social media is vital, as without it, it won't be possible to implement the policies, procedures and controls necessary to manage those risks.

Earlier in the chapter we covered the important difference between traditional social media and enterprise social networks. Simply put, traditional social media refers to the public platforms that anyone can sign up to and use, whereas an enterprise social network is a platform a company operates to allow its employees to collaborate virtually. This understanding will be essential when considering the advice and practical steps in the rest of the book.

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