Introduction to Social Media and Social Networking Minitrack

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Social networks, which have almost become part of our daily lives, have established new communication structures and behaviors in society. While citizens and businesses have already extensively used social networks for years, governments continuously increase their interest in the new communication technologies. Sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn provide a mechanism for individuals to come together based on a variety of factors such as existing friendships, common interests, or work. People have discovered how the use of social networks can facilitate communication and the exchange/sharing of thoughts and ideas. Governments have also discovered the potential for these sites to aid in government information sharing and outreach. At the same time, there are various issues surrounding such networks, including privacy, information leakage, blurred boundaries, and online addiction that must be addressed when discussing social networks. The Social Media and Social Networking Minitrack tackles social media and networks as it relates to e-government which may include the use of social media and networks by any level of government, the implementation challenges, trust and privacy issues, different patterns and trends of social networks, information sharing, information overload, and mobile social networking.

The Social Media and Social Networking Minitrack highlights the increasing importance of social media and networks in society. It is expected to provide an invaluable opportunity for researchers to share their findings in this new area.

The Minitrack includes two sessions with four and three papers in each. The papers show the latest findings on the use of social networking in the context of government.

In our first session, one paper provides professionals in citizen- and consumer-centered domains with more concise near real-time intelligence on online opinions. Another paper attempts to explore how local governments utilize online social networks as a means for external communication. Two papers tackle the role of social media in disaster hazards. In a case study, the authors use empirical data to explore how government used Twitter to inform the public about disasters. In the other paper, authors examine information sharing behavior in social media when one was taking the perspective of self versus other.

In our second session, authors in one paper synthesize emerging literature on social commerce, social media, and the diffusion of innovation to identify the role that organizational, managerial and environmental characteristics of SMEs play in the adoption of Twitter. In another paper, authors examine community capacity building over ten-years via an online e-government sponsored forum, using social network analytics. In the final paper, authors present a study that was conducted to understand how social media and traditional news about political candidates might interact to influence potential voters' views.

We thank the authors for submitting their work to make this Minitrack engaging. We hope you enjoy the papers and their presentation at the conference.