

Introduction to Knowledge Management in an Era of New Social Media: Risks and Opportunities Minitrack

Robert M. Mason
University of Washington
rmmason@uw.edu

Dianne P. Ford
Memorial University of Newfoundland
dpford@mun.ca

Social media—the set of Internet-based platforms such as blogs, Twitter, and Facebook—is becoming increasingly integrated not only in personal lives, but also in the way businesses operate, to the point that a new term, Enterprise 2.0 has been adopted to describe this new form of organization. This mini-track was designed to examine the interplay between knowledge management (one of the key managerial tools to leverage the key source for sustainable competitive advantage, knowledge) and social media. Papers oriented around social media are now permeating the conference, but our mini-track had a sharper focus.

In our call for papers, we requested submissions that would cover issues, challenges, ideas, and solutions for managing knowledge in an era of social media. Organizations, managers, and employees are faced with risks and opportunities for knowledge management because of social media (SM) and the inherent characteristics of these platforms.

The papers presented within this mini-track examine methods for using social media for knowledge management and the potential individual and organizational benefits that may be realized.

The first paper, “Just for the Fun of It? Towards a Model for Assessing the Individual Benefits of Employees’

Enterprise Social Software Usage,” by Maurice Kügler and Stefan Smolnik, examines the benefits that accrue to the employee who opts into using enterprise social software. This qualitative research study provides an interesting insight as to the contextual factors (task interdependency, virtuality, and task equivocality) for a variety of impacts (e.g., individual performance, connectedness, decision making performance, and innovative performance).

The second paper in the mini-track examines how the organization may benefit from the customers’ use of social media for the organization’s knowledge management. Ivy L.B. Liu, Christy M.K. Cheung and Matthew K.O. Lee present their paper, “Customer Knowledge Contribution Behavior in Social Shopping Communities.”

This study examines panel data of customers’ activities on a social shopping community. It offers interesting insights into customers’ motivations and the resulting benefits.

The third paper, “Ethnography of NASF (Navarre-San Francisco) Entrepreneurs in Twitter,” by Tania Arriaga and Dave Croasdell, explores the use of social media by an alliance of Basque business men and Women (NASF) as this alliance strives for regional change through increased emphasis on entrepreneurship activity.