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## Special Issue on Use and Impact of Social Networking: Guest Editors' Introduction

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### Guest Editors

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Social networking sites are already widely-spread and are here to stay. Nevertheless, it is still a rather young phenomenon and by far not at its end of development. On one hand, we have to deal with rather new communication and interaction patterns with which many users still have to get familiar with and to find its added value in the long term. On the other hand, the respective 'tools' and the technical platforms, are by far not really mature and stable yet. For example, Facebook and Twitter were only established in 2006, while MySpace has undergone dramatic changes during the last couple of years. In addition, the regular changes of the existing features, e.g. on Facebook, strategy modifications, e.g. at Twitter, as well as the emergence of new platforms may be interpreted as the platforms' search for their position and sustainable business model.

Conversion of connections from one social networking site to another is getting easier. There has been some integration between Web 2.0 tools. For example, Foursquare messages appear on Facebook or LinkedIn. However, there has also been some disintegration, such as Twitter messages taken off from LinkedIn.

As it is common with innovation, imitations often follow. For example, music was once mostly associated with MySpace, but now it is possible to listen to music on Facebook and other networking sites such as Spotify. On the other hand, some sites discontinued and outsourced some features. For example, Facebook discontinued its social coupon Deals, and Facebook's Marketplace is now owned by Oodle.

Social games are a fairly widespread phenomenon. Despite many (not only young) people have tried them out, only a small percentage keep playing them.

Furthermore, marketing communication is worth exploring in the context of social networking sites, for example how organizations and even individuals advertise on social networking sites including social games. However, social networking sites have also influenced communication between consumers. This may have a direct or indirect bearing on speed of product adoption. It is possible to argue that social networking sites made on-line shopping and of e-recruitment more socially acceptable.

With this editorial project, we aim to reflect on and discuss the use and impact of social networking as it appears today. A collection of high-quality articles which have undergone a rigorous double-blind review process is presented.

## Contributions to the Special Issue

In the first article, entitled *Social identity for teenagers: understanding behavioral intention to participate in virtual world environment*, Heikki Karjaluoto and Matti Leppäniemi investigate user intentions and behaviors within a virtual world environment using a framework consisting of a person's social identity, attitude toward using the service, subjective norms, attitude toward advertising on the service and enjoyment.

In the second article, entitled *Shopping and word-of-mouth intentions on social media*, Patrick Mikalef, Michail Giannakos and Adamantia Pateli investigate how specific aspects of social media websites foster user intention to browse products, and the effect that this has in shaping purchasing and information sharing intentions. In particular, utilitarian and hedonic motives are investigated.

In the third article, entitled *Social networks, interactivity and satisfaction: assessing socio-technical behavioral factors as an extension to technology acceptance*, Belinda Shipps and Brandis Phillips investigate interactivity and its role in user satisfaction with a social network site. Besides core technology acceptance model factors, they also consider marketing related factors and user satisfaction.

In the fourth article, entitled *What drives consumers to pass along marketer-generated eWOM in social network games? social and game factors in play*, Sara Steffes Hansen and Jin Kyun Lee investigate social factors and game factors with intrinsic and extrinsic benefits within extensions of the technology acceptance model that lead consumers to engage in marketer-generated electronic word of mouth behaviours.

In the fifth article, entitled *Electronic word of mouth and knowledge sharing on social network sites: a social capital perspective*, Jaehoon Choi and Judy Scott investigate the relationship among the use of social networking sites, users' social capital, knowledge sharing, and electronic word of mouth.