

Governing Energy

Sharing

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Almost all online communities have a focus on Sharing. Software, service and other providers seek to increase their visibility and ultimately generate more subscribers and revenue. Others see this as a marketing tool.

Network Economics can generate exponential growth rapidly.ⁱ Organizations recognize this and seek to capitalize on it to growth stakeholder value. Others may see this as another kind of opportunity.

In the Wild West of the Internet, ownership laws are routinely violated. Copyright materials are frequently copied, incorporated into blogs et al and not cited or acknowledged in any way. Plagiarism is rampant and unashamed.ⁱⁱ

Non-disclosure agreements, Insider trading regulations and other instruments designed to assure the confidentiality of organizational information and knowledge have proliferated in our Knowledge Economy. Perhaps unwittingly violating these agreements, individuals often do not think when Retweeting, Sharing, Liking or Favoring certain social content.

For example, responding to a Tweet, individuals with sensitive information may leak it in his or her response to an emotional statement by others. Human nature is such that we respond to threats, attacks or other statements to which we emotionally disagree.ⁱⁱⁱ This phenomenon is very visible in the current US Presidential election process.

In an era of Big Data, if X number of individuals from a specific organization respond to a Post regarding a merger or acquisition on a social media site such as LinkedIn, from Analytics one might infer a certain stance or position on the subject. Perhaps innocent, this inadvertent leak may impact on the equity markets.

If a social media based rumor turns out to be true (and there are often many rumors regarding impending actions) does the organization face any blowback or legal action? Perhaps not as there is usually a rumor mill about these types of issues.

However, in the Olden Days rumors were usually not in writing. When they were, the results can be disastrous. Leaking written documents such as the Pentagon Papers in 1971 contributed to the doomed Presidency of Richard Nixon.^{iv}

WikiLeaks, Edward Snowden et al are more modern examples of catastrophic organizational information leaks.^v Organizational damage can be huge, rapid and almost impossible to contain.

Inadvertent disclosures are not limited to Insiders. During the first Iraq war one reporter sketched a map in the sand of future military operations on global television.^{vi}

In this modern era, disclosure that violates SEC and other regulatory requirements is easy. Malicious, inadvertent, or even stupid comments online can have lasting effects.

Organizations may want to consider putting into place not just governance policies but technology enabled solutions that assure outgoing messages are not in violation of organizational policies. Precedent has been set as many organizations do not permit employees to visit certain websites from organizational networks, i.e., online shopping and so called adult entertainment.

What is your organization's Governance regarding Sharing in the Social Media?

About the Author

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End Notes

ⁱ Shemwell, Scott M. (2011). The Lesson of the Chessboard. [Essays on Business and Information II: Maximizing Business Performance](#). New York: Xlibris. p. 173.

ⁱⁱ <http://www.convinceandconvert.com/content-marketing/is-social-media-creating-a-plagiarism-problem-infographic/>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://psychology.about.com/od/findex/g/fight-or-flight-response.htm>

^{iv} <http://www.history.com/topics/vietnam-war/pentagon-papers>

^v <https://wikileaks.org/>

^{vi} <http://www.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/meast/03/31/sprj.irq.geraldo/>