

The Wisdom of Social Media Innovation over the Needs of Online Network Citizens

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INTRODUCTION

The turn of the century significantly enhanced technological innovation. The collective innovation of social media provides online network citizens (ONCs) with a variety of communication tools, for instance, Facebook allows ONCs to broadcast messages to a large audience using status updates and wall posts, while also providing features, such as chat, for messages that the user wishes to keep private. While the diversity of social media collective features allows equally diverse forms of communication and immediate interaction, previous studies that address the propensity of the behavior of ONCs toward social media innovation are limited. The relationship between social media and user behavior has been empirically suggested by Lee & Cho (2011), Durukan et al. (2012), and Zolkepli and Kamarulzaman (2015). Previous research has shown that innovation has a positive impact on the behavior of the technology user as a whole. This reflects the tendency to learn, adopt and continuously use innovations within a specific domain of interest. In putting this into perspective, in this chapter, social media innovation is referred to as the combined competitive advantage and uniqueness that is found embedded within social media. This includes the synchronicity of all applications throughout social media, blogging and micro-blogging, tagging and geo-tagging, private and group chat rooms, message boards, podcasts, RSS, photo and video sharing, widgets, applications and bookmarking, which are deduced to drive the behavior of ONCs. This will be addressed by extending the prior work of the uses and gratifications theory by Katz, Haas and Gurevitch (1973) to explain the wisdom of social media innovation over the needs of ONCs that drive the usage.

THE WISDOM OF SOCIAL MEDIA INNOVATION

In view of the different ways in which innovation is acquired, Adams, Tranfield, and Denyer (2011) emphasize that the newness or innovativeness of technology is used in much of the research on innovation. The understanding of social media innovativeness helps to develop the dynamics of the innovation process, innovation performance and behavior toward innovation (Garcia & Calantone, 2002). In effect, McCarthy, Ridgway, Leseure, and Fieller (2000) suggest that the basis of innovation attributes relies on the innovation descriptive properties and qualities that innovation possesses. Innovation possesses attributes in accordance with what is assigned by individuals based on their perceptions (Dearing & Meyer, 1994).

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With this in mind, innovation is defined by Barnett (1953, p.7) as “any thought, behaviour or thing that is new because it is qualitatively different from existing forms”, or is “perceived as new” (Rogers, 2003). In addition, innovation is conceptualized as a new combination of means and ends (Rickards, 1985), and as the process leading from the invention to the commercial exploitation of a new idea, thus emphasizing that an application for the invention needs to be found (Roberts, 1987). It has also been classified according to its impact. Schumpeter (1934) distinguished between:

1. Incremental innovation promoting continuous change, and
2. Radical innovation leading to discontinuous, disruptive changes.

Rogers (2003), in the diffusion of innovation theory, posits that innovation is spread through society based on the S-curve graph, which explains that early adopters of the innovation select technology first, which is then followed by the majority of the public until the innovation is common to everyone. The S-curve is an innovation- and system-specific graph that is used to describe the diffusion of technology among the members of a specific system (i.e. ONCs). In essence, social media, which initially started as a medium of interaction that allowed Internet users to create, generate and exchange media content between users (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010), and initiate voluntary participation and communication (Zolkepli & Kamarulzaman, 2015), is now at the stage of maturity, which proves that its innovation has already become well-diffused and accepted.

Social media, on the other hand, is defined as a group of Internet-based applications that are built on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, which allow for the creation and generation of user-generated content (Zolkepli & Kamarulzaman, 2015). Social media has seven attributes according to Kietzmann, Kristopher, McCarthy, and Bruno (2011). These include:

1. Identity,
2. Conversation,
3. Sharing,
4. Presence,
5. Relationships,
6. Reputation, and
7. Groups in which each allow ONCs to reveal and examine a specific facet of the social media experience they encounter.

Irrespective of its attributes, social media was also developed from the exclusivity of user-generated content (UGC) features that were incorporated within its system. These collective features transform ONCs into content producers (Nov, Naaman, & Ye, 2010) who share opinions, insights and knowledge (Cho, Chen, & Chung, 2010); create and maintain relationships with other individuals with similar needs, interests or problems (Zolkepli & Kamarulzaman, 2015); and as a source of entertainment and self-expression (Kim, Jeong, & Lee, 2010). Social media innovation gives ONCs the feeling of ease of use and usefulness when using the medium (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). This notion of social media innovation provides a high level of online and offline integration that engages psychologically through ONCs. It reflects the idea that the greater the innovation, the more room there is to drive the needs of ONCs to use this medium.

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