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Article

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ORGANIZATIONS' RESPONSIBILITY IN MAINTAINING THE SECURITY OF PERSONAL DATA POSTED ONLINE BY ROMANIAN CONSUMERS: AN EXPLORATORY ANALYSIS OF FACEBOOK AND LINKEDIN

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Abstract:

Despite increased consumer concern about the privacy threat posed by new technologies and the Internet as a whole, there is relatively little evidence that people's privacy concerns actually translate into privacy-enhancing behaviors while online. One can say that it is not yet well understood how privacy concerns and trust influence social interactions between consumers within social networking sites. That is why, this article presents an exploratory study of perceptions of trust and privacy concern, along with willingness to share information and develop new relationships within two of the most popular social networking sites in Romania, Facebook and LinkedIn. The research shows that organizations must assume greater responsibility in ensuring consumers' safety who sometime neglect protecting their personal information, otherwise confidential. In this respect, the application of ISO 26000 standard recommendations by organizations would allow them to pass from just good intentions towards consumers to good actions, so that they are truly protected. The information was gathered with the help of an online questionnaire, administered to people over 18 years old. It is a very useful and needed tool for Romanian companies, as it presents the users' point of view, allowing them to find the best and most ethical way to do social data mining or use consumers' private information, disclosed on such sites. It is our strong belief that sometimes companies have to play an active part in helping users protect themselves from actually disclosing too much personal information on social networking sites. The paper begins with a summary of relevant research related to social networking sites. Then, the online survey methodology is described and the results presented, followed by limitations and conclusions.

Keywords: organizations' responsibility, consumers, privacy, protection of consumer security, social networking sites, Facebook, LinkedIn

JEL classification: M31

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Introduction

Social Media is an extensively studied topic by academia, research firms and companies engaged in such activities, this being clearly visible especially after 2009, but still there are issues like privacy, trust and self-disclosure within such sites that are only starting to raise the public's attention and interest, just starting to be tapped into.

Modern communication media and not only, are part of an "economy of attention"; each product which belongs to this category – book or e-book, website, television show, mobile games, etc.- all compete for the consumers' attention and try to gain financial benefits from this focus - through advertising, subscriptions, increased sales, cross sales or new memberships. Thus, users' attention has become a scarce and highly sought after commodity. As Bruce Sterling pointed out: "In the Information Economy everything is plentiful, except attention" (Peddie Research, 2009).

Social Media changes dramatically the balance of forces involved in this economy: who pays attention to what, who influences such decisions, how they are monitored and measured, response speed, and most importantly, how they are all monetized. Internet's social component is not just a momentary trend, it is a fundamental change in the way people communicate, collaborate, interact, inform, create, organize, prioritize, buy, sell or play. All the relational universe of an individual is actually involved: friends, family, clients, employers, employees, colleagues, stakeholders and ultimately even each individual.

Communication through Social Media differs from traditional communication by the fact that the results are not achieved and visible immediately. To lead a successful Social Media campaign, a company should allocate resources specifically to deal with these online environments and also strive continuously. Only after launching a company's presence via this online channel and entering into a social network, the challenging part starts, actually supporting interactivity and gaining consumers' trust, interest and engagement. In order to build a long-term, sustainable relationship with the consumer, based on credibility and trust, the company must prove continuous involvement and ethical behavior towards consumers' data privacy. Only this way it will be able to capitalize on the positive effects of using Social Media marketing.

Social Media has become an extensive market research system. It allows companies to search the market and find out what target consumers think, feel and want, but it is equally an essential link in establishing, developing and maintaining profitable long-term relationships with their customers. That is why the issue of data privacy and trust in the modern communication media, such as social networking sites, is of paramount importance for both parties involved in those relationships: users and companies. For people to keep using and sharing information through these sites, they have to trust them (the sites, companies and other people present) and feel their data is secure, while for companies to keep a healthy and long-term beneficial relationship, they must use the information they have on members correctly and ethically.

Since their introduction, millions of people worldwide have joined social networking sites, creating profiles and accounts that reveal personal information about them. Moreover, with time, the reputation of most social networking sites has been diminished by a number of privacy related incidents largely publicized by the news media (Chiaramonte and Martinez,

2006, Hass, 2006, Read, 2006, Gilliom and Monahan, 2012, AdAge, 2013). Having this in mind, is it actually possible to join a network of millions of people and be able to trust all of them? This does not seem realistic. But since people are obviously continuing to join these types of networks and keep revealing information about themselves, what role does trust play in the use of social networking sites?

Very important at this moment is the involvement of organizations in protecting their own clients, the ones who actually consume their products. For this purpose, starting with November 1st, the moment when one of the most awaited ISO standards was actually launched, namely the ISO standard 26000, organizations are provided with a social responsibility guide, thus enabling them to pass from just good intentions towards consumers to good actions, so that they are truly protected (Dinu, 2011).

Privacy within social networking sites is often not expected or is undefined (Dwyer et. al., 2007). A very important thing to stress is that social networking sites do record all interactions and data, and retain them for potential use in social data mining. Offline, on the other hand, most social interactions leave behind no trace. This lack of a record is a passive enabler of social privacy (Lessig, 1998). Therefore these sites need explicit policies and data protection mechanisms in order to deliver the same level of social privacy as the one found offline (Dwyer et. al., 2007). Hence, since online social privacy is harder to guarantee, does a higher level of concern for data privacy from consumers, actually affect the use of social networking sites?

This paper describes a study of the impact of trust and data privacy concern on the use of social networking sites for social interaction, from the users' point of view. It is a very useful and needed tool for Romanian companies, as it investigates people's perceptions of the two most commonly used for Social Media purposes and popular social networking sites in Romania: Facebook and LinkedIn (Kane et. al, 2012). According to statistics on Facebrands.ro, at the end of November 2013, there were 6.6 million Facebook users in Romania, representing 68.45% of Internet users (Facebrands, 2013). Even at a global level, Facebook is one of the most popular and frequently used social networks, with 1.19 billion users worldwide in the third quarter of 2013 (Techcrunch, 2013). As for LinkedIn, in the third quarter of 2013 it had 259 million registered users worldwide and 57 million in Europe (LinkedIn, 2013). The total number of users in Romania in November 2013 amounted to nearly 1.2 million, 13.3% of the total Romanian Internet users (Socialbakers, 2013), being the second most popular social network among Romanian users after Facebook (Social media training, 2013). The article begins with a summary of relevant research related to social networking sites. Then, the online survey methodology is described and the results presented, followed by limitations and conclusions.

1. Literature review

Even if the term Social Media seems to be overused in recent years by all categories of audiences, from consumers to managers and academia, one can still find confusion regarding to what exactly should be included under this term, and how Social Media differ from the seemingly-interchangeable related concepts of Web 2.0 and User Generated Content. Thus, as a first step of the paper, it is only natural to provide insight regarding the roots of Social Media and what they include.

The Social Media era, as we understand it today, can be dated back some fifty years ago, to the "Open Diary" founded by Bruce and Susan Abelson", an early social networking site that brought together online diary writers into one community. The term "weblog" was first used around that same time, and truncated as "blog" a year later when one blogger jokingly transformed the noun "weblog" into the sentence "we blog" (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). This concept became more and more popular with the wider availability of high-speed Internet access, thus leading to the introduction social networking sites such as MySpace (in 2003) and Facebook (in 2004). Together with Twitter, these two sites are actually responsible for coining the term "Social Media" and the awareness it has today. The most recent additions to this group have been the so-called "virtual worlds": computer-based simulated environments inhabited by three dimensional avatars. Perhaps the best known virtual world is that of Linden Lab's Second Life (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2009).

Web 2.0 was officially used in 2004 and it represents the collaborative and interactive revolution of the traditional World Wide Web, symbolically named Web 1.0, promoted as such by Tim O'Reilly through the first O'Reilly Media Web 2.0 conference in late 2004. This way, "...the content and information is no longer exclusively offered by mass media, governments and companies to the visitors but also by other users interconnected through informal networks on the Internet, who actively participate in the creation, transmission and sharing of information all over the globe" (O'Reilly, 2005). Concrete examples of Web 2.0 usage are: Flickr, YouTube, File sharing sites, Social networking sites such as Facebook or Twitter, Recruiting sites like Ejobs.ro or BestJobs.ro, Blogs and Wikis. For the purpose of our article, we consider Web 2.0 as the platform for the evolution of Social Media.

Whilst Web 2.0 represents the foundation, as we mentioned above, User Generated Content (UGC) can be viewed as the sum of all the ways in which people make use of Social Media. According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2007), UGC needs to fulfill three basic requirements in order to be considered as such: "...first, it needs to be published either on a publicly accessible website or on a social networking site accessible to a selected group of people; second, it needs to show a certain amount of creative effort; and finally, it needs to have been created outside of professional routines and practices."

Bearing in mind the concepts clarified above, one can give a more detailed definition of what Social Media means. Simply put, Social Media implies the use of web and mobile technologies to transform "conventional" communication into an interactive dialogue. Andreas Kaplan and Michael Haenlein (2010) define Social Media as "...a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content." In order to be better understood by their readers, the majority of articles and books written on this subject actually give concrete examples of the elements and groups which make up Social Media (Reuben, 2008; Mangold, Faulds, 2009; Zarella, 2010; Sterne, 2010): blogs, collaborative projects (e.g. Wikipedia), social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, MySpace), content communities (e.g. YouTube, Flickr), virtual social worlds (e.g. Second Life), virtual game worlds (e.g. World of Warcraft).

Since their introduction, social networking sites (SNSs) such as Facebook, LinkedIn, MySpace, Friendster, Cyworld or Bebo have attracted millions of users, many of whom have integrated these sites into their daily practices (Boyd and Ellison, 2007).

One of the simplest and most concise definitions of a social network is: “When a computer network connects people or organizations, it is a social network.” (Garton et al., 1999). Since then, social networking websites, also known as social network websites, have become a key aspect of Web 2.0 (the internet’s interactive phase). These websites have a simple mission – network through existing and compound relations (i.e. “friends of friends”). The growth of the most popular sites, Facebook and MySpace, demonstrates web users’ desire not only to map out their social networks meticulously, but also to publicly communicate with these “online friends” about the details and complexity of their daily lives (Murthy, 2008). The high transparency and detail of the information available on these sites is partially due to their initial popularity amongst undergraduate university students. Facebook, for example, initially called The Facebook, began as a social networking site which was exclusive to Harvard and after a while to American university students in general. Thus, the limited membership of the site made possible for a quite open “college-like” environment. In its early days, Facebook pages tracked everything from dull campus happenings to the so-popular and often corrupt American fraternities and sororities. Facebook spread easily to universities outside the US and in September 2006 opened its virtual doors to practically anyone and everyone. In the second quarter of 2013 it had over 1.15 billion members and was rated the top website for young people aged 18-24 (Smith, 2013).

Boyd and Ellison (2007) give a very interesting and comprehensive definition of social networking sites, portraying them as “web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. The nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site to site.”

Another important point which has to be tackled is the difference, if any, between the public use of the terms “social network site” and “social networking site”, usually interchangeably by users, experts or academia. On this topic, Haythornthwaite (2005) has a very interesting standpoint. He argues that what makes social network sites unique is not that they allow individuals to meet strangers, but rather that they enable users to articulate and make visible their social networks. This can result in connections between individuals that would not otherwise be made, but that is often not the goal, and these meetings are frequently between “latent ties” (Haythornthwaite, 2005) who share some offline connection. Therefore, on many SNSs, participants are not necessarily “networking” or looking to meet new people; instead, they are primarily communicating with people who are already a part of their extended social network. To emphasize this articulated social network as a critical organizing feature of these sites, many scholars label them “social network sites” instead of “social networking sites” (Boyd and Ellison, 2007). This emphasis on the perceived purpose of the social network sites by their users is also a key element in explaining their willingness to disclose a great deal of otherwise private information about themselves and the debate regarding companies using such information to try to alter consumer behaviour for their financial gain.

The social component of the Internet is not just a passing fad; it represents a fundamental change in the way people communicate, interact, collaborate, create, inform, prioritize, organize, buy, sell or play. The entire relationship universe of an individual is involved: clients, friends, family, employers, colleagues, shareholders and ultimately even each

individual (Peddie Research, 2009). Hence, companies and organizations nowadays have to pay special attention to these new instruments, understand them fully and also properly use them in order to reap the greatest possible benefits ethically.

2. Methodology

How does trust influence social interactions on sites that involve millions of people? This leads to the following research question:

RQ1: For members of social networking sites (Facebook and LinkedIn), how does trust in the site and its other members affect willingness to share information and develop new relationships?

A digital message can remain as part of a system for an undefined and undisclosed period of time. This makes the management of privacy, both for the individual and for organizations, extremely complex. Is a person's concern for the privacy of their social interaction record a factor in whether they use these sites? (Dwyer et. al., 2007). This leads to the second research question:

RQ2: For members of social networking sites (Facebook and LinkedIn), what is the relationship between internet privacy concern and their willingness to share information and develop new relationships?

Most of the prior academic studies (Joinson et. al, 2006, 2007, 2011) focus on the research and analysis of just one social networking site at a time or on a general analysis, whereas one major objective of this research is to compare data on two sites. This study looks for variances in respondents' behaviour while applying the same measures of concern for privacy and trust for the two different sites.

The two social networking sites, Facebook and LinkedIn, were selected because they have both similarities and differences. Both sites are very popular, not only worldwide, but among Romanian users as well, with millions of members. The Facebook (it's initial name) was first conceived and designed strictly for the use of college students, but LinkedIn is also very popular among students and young people, especially those looking for a job, or to widen their professional network. While these two sites attract from the same pool of primarily 18 to 30 year olds, they have very different styles. LinkedIn has been more focused on the professional part of users' life from the beginning, while Facebook, on the contrary, has put an emphasis on the social life and the connection with friends and other people in general. This is one of the main differences between the two networking sites, that also has a direct impact on how users perceive and trust them with sensitive information. Moreover, Facebook's IPO on May 2012 and a lot of rumours about the site's collaboration with FBI and giving private user information to aid investigations made Facebook users more and more concerned about privacy issues.

An online survey was designed, with details customized for Facebook and LinkedIn. The questions are the same for both social networking sites. A few adjustments were made to be consistent with the terminology associated with each site. For example, Facebook members can leave a public note for another member on a space on their profile called "The Wall." For LinkedIn, these are posted in the profile section labelled "Comments." The analysis

was made on a total of 108 valid questionnaires, gathered using the snowball sampling method. The authors posted invitations to participate in the survey on their Facebook and LinkedIn profiles, which were then shared by their connections.

Survey questions were created to capture perceptions of trust in online versus offline environments, internet privacy concerns, information sharing, general use and frequency of the sites, and the development of new relationships, online versus offline behaviour. These questions derive from a complex quantitative study conducted by Dwyer, Hiltz and Passerini (2007). The survey asked respondents to indicate what personal information they include in their public profile. Options included real name, photograph, hometown, e-mail address, cell phone number, relationship status (i.e. in a relationship or single), sexual orientation, political and religious orientation. One question was included to capture the main purpose for which subjects typically use the two social networking sites.

Users were also asked if they had initiated contact with a person they met on one of the two social networking sites using another communications method, such as face to face, e-mail, telephone, or instant messenger.

Of great interest to the researchers is the relationship between privacy concerns of the subjects and their actual online behaviour. Two questions address members' trust in the social networking site: "I trust that Facebook/LinkedIn will not use my personal information for any other purpose than those declared" and "I feel that the privacy of my personal information is protected by Facebook/LinkedIn." Two questions relate to trust in other members of the site: "I believe most of the profiles I view on Facebook/LinkedIn are exaggerated to make the person look more appealing" and "I worry that I will be embarrassed by wrong information others post about me on Facebook/LinkedIn." Each is a five point Likert scale, from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree".

3. Research results

The online questionnaire that was used for this research contains mostly closed questions, with fixed answers. It was used as a tool to measure the respondents' degree of online activity in general, and on Facebook and LinkedIn, in particular. Another very important point of the research was the users' behaviour in similar privacy invading situations, online versus offline. Last, but not least, the authors tested the respondents' willingness to start new relationships with people met exclusively through these social networking sites, and whether they were open to take those relationships offline too.

A total number of 108 valid questionnaires were collected, out of which 60,38% were filled in by women. Moreover, almost 85% of the respondents are full time employees, while 98,11% have completed university studies or above (Masters or Ph.D.) (Table no 1).

The weekly average time spent online by respondents is about 4,5 hours with an average of just over 5 hours from Monday to Friday, and 4 hours on weekends. This can be explained by the fact that most respondents spend most time online during the week when they are at work or working from home, which means most of the day they are on the computer with direct Internet access. Moreover, 92.6% have an active Facebook account, while a lower percentage of respondents, 74% also have a LinkedIn account. This is in line with other current researches, according to which Facebook is preferred to LinkedIn by Romanian

users (IRES, 2011, facebrands.ro, 2013, socialbakers.com, 2013). Facebook is more popular and more frequently used than LinkedIn. This is also evident from the 4th question of the survey: "How often do you generally use the two networking sites?" Almost 41% of the respondents use Facebook very often, 37% use it often, while only 8% use it rarely or hardly ever. When it comes to LinkedIn, only 4% of the respondents actually use it very often, 17% however, use it often, 24% use it neither often, nor rarely, while 26% use it rarely. Thus, Facebook is regarded more as a daily social interaction enabler, while LinkedIn is used more for its professional appeal, when searching for a job or just wanting to stay on the job market, not so much for talking, or staying in contact daily with friends and acquaintances.

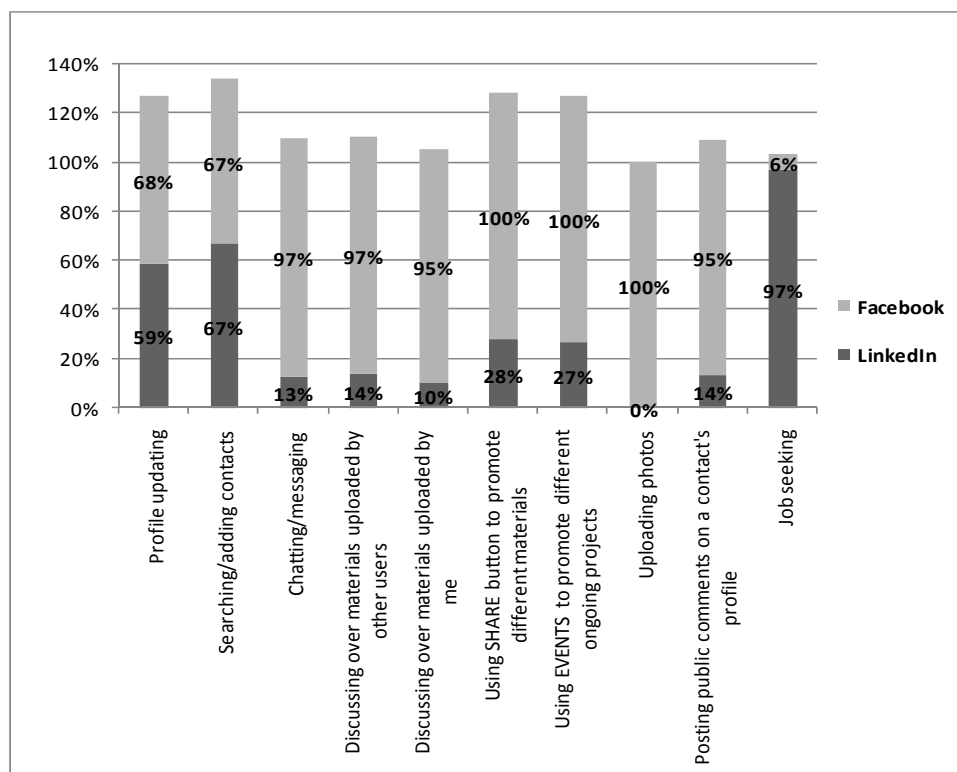
Table no. 1: Sample Structure

Sex	Percentage	Education	Percentage	Occupation	Percentage
Female	60.38%	Elementary Studies	0%	Full-time employee	84.9%
Male	39.62%	Secondary Studies	0%	Part/time employee	3.8%
		Professional Studies	0%	Associate (no fixed schedule)	3.8%
		High School Studies	1.9%	Unemployed	3.8%
		Undergraduate Studies	28.3%	Freelancer	1.9%
		Postgraduate Studies	60.4%	Homemaker	0.0%
		Doctoral Studies	9.4%	Student	1.9%
				Without occupation	0.0%

The vast majority of respondents consider they primarily use Facebook for: uploading photos, using events to promote different ongoing projects, using the Share button to promote different materials, chatting/messaging, discussing over materials posted by other or by them and posting public comments on contacts' profiles (96% to 100% of the respondents have checked all these options). 70% of respondents answered they usually use Facebook to search and add contacts, while only 6% agreed that they use it for job searching (Figure no. 1). From these responses it is clear that Facebook is used mainly as a bridge in communication, for personal rather than professional use, for staying in close contact with friends and people the users know from real life, but with whom they cannot interact physically that often as online. On the other hand, LinkedIn is used especially as an online resume, portraying the professional image of the users and helping them broaden their professional network of contacts with both persons and companies (97% of respondents use it for job seeking). Just like for Facebook, 65% of respondents use LinkedIn to search or add contacts, while none use it for uploading photos (Figure no. 1). Only 11% of respondents use LinkedIn for chatting/messaging, and 13% for discussing materials uploaded by other users. 23% use the Share button to promote different materials, and 22% actually use Events to promote different ongoing projects, which shows that this

kind of interactivity is not yet that popular on LinkedIn, and users keep to the basics when it comes to their overall activity on this social networking site.

Figure no. 1: The purpose for which respondents typically use the two social networking sites



The different perceptions and uses regarding Facebook and LinkedIn can also be clearly seen from the respondents' answers to the 6th and 7th questions: What type of information do you provide publicly on your Facebook/LinkedIn accounts? It seems that most people share their real name (89%), recent photo of themselves (75%), education level (76%), hometown (71%), workplace (68%) and relationship status (56%) on Facebook. They are least willing to share their religion (29%), phone number (15%), political (13%) and sexual (21%) orientations. When it comes to LinkedIn however, respondents show a lower trust in this social networking site and a higher percentage of respondents are actually more reluctant to provide personal data about themselves: real name (72%), education level (70%), workplace (67%), e-mail address (66%), recent photo (47%), hometown (48%), and relationship status (36%). Respondents are the least willing to share their religion (5%), political (3%) and sexual orientations (3%).

When asked whether they have ever contacted in real life a person they have met online, 57% of respondents said they haven't contacted anyone met through LinkedIn, while 40% have never contacted someone met through Facebook. It seems that contrary to theory and

general perceptions over LinkedIn and Facebook, Romanians trust and use Facebook a lot more than LinkedIn. 50% of respondents agreed they have contacted at least one person met on Facebook through instant messaging, 42% face-to-face, 27% on the phone and 25% by e-mail. For LinkedIn, 36% of respondents said they have contacted a person met there by e-mail, 24% face-to-face, 14% on the phone and 12% through instant messaging. Therefore, when it comes to Facebook, most people got in contact with new persons through instant messaging (more informal) or face-to-face, whereas on LinkedIn they communicated through e-mails or face-to-face (this is more specific to professional environments' communication, job-related topics).

The survey includes a set of claims to which the respondents have to argue for or against, thus revealing their perceptions on trust and privacy of Facebook and LinkedIn. 42% of the respondents (totally agree and agree) find it easier to send a message to a friend using Facebook rather than e-mail, while 31% are indifferent of the method used to send it (Table no. 2). This means that more than half of the respondents feel comfortable in having private conversations on Facebook, and trust the site enough to do that. Generally, respondents seem to find it easier to meet new people on Facebook than on LinkedIn (29% totally agree or agree, versus 21%). Even if respondents meet new people easier on Facebook than on LinkedIn, they don't trust that Facebook will not use their personal data for purposes other than those stated more than LinkedIn (Table no. 2). From this point of view, LinkedIn is perceived as being more trustworthy by the respondents. This opinion is also apparent from the next set of claims: „the confidentiality of my personal information is protected by Facebook/LinkedIn”. The respondents believe the confidentiality of their personal information is slightly more protected by LinkedIn than Facebook (Table no. 2).

Most respondents agree to the fact that most personal profiles on both Facebook and LinkedIn are exaggerated to make the person look more interesting (50% totally agree or agree about Facebook and 33% totally agree or agree about LinkedIn).

Surprisingly, respondents are not afraid that they will be embarrassed by false information that others post on Facebook or LinkedIn about them (Table no. 2). So, even if they disclose a large amount of personal data and they are concerned about privacy infringement issues from Facebook and LinkedIn, they are not at all worried about other users of the social networking sites and don't perceive them as a threat. On the other hand, they are very much afraid of identity theft on Facebook and LinkedIn, on people actually impersonating them online, stealing their personal data and possibly posting and commenting on their behalf.

About 35% of respondents say they have read the terms and conditions of Facebook's and LinkedIn's privacy policy before actually creating a profile, while 29% admit not reading them at all. This is a very important issue specific to most internet users nowadays: not reading the privacy policy of social networking sites and not only, not being aware of what happens to one's private data and not actually caring until a third party draws attention on the issue (Table no. 2).

As suspected, respondents are more reluctant to interact with company pages on Facebook than on LinkedIn (Table no. 2). This can be explained by the different type of usage of the two social networking sites. LinkedIn has a more professional image and is used to search for jobs or widen one's professional network, so it is only natural to interact more with

companies. On the other hand, Facebook is used primarily for informal social interaction with friends and acquaintances from the real world or for meeting new people, users being less open to interact with company pages.

Table no. 2: Trust and privacy perceptions on Facebook and LinkedIn

	Totally Agree	Agree	Indifferent	Disagree	Totally Disagree
I prefer to send a message to a friend using Facebook rather than e-mail	13%	29%	31%	15%	12%
I find it easy to meet new people using Facebook	17%	12%	25%	27%	19%
I find it easy to meet new people using LinkedIn	8%	13%	42%	21%	17%
I trust that Facebook will not use my personal data for purposes other than those stated	4%	21%	21%	23%	32%
I trust that LinkedIn will not use my personal data for purposes other than those stated	6%	20%	29%	20%	24%
The confidentiality of my personal information is protected by Facebook	6%	29%	17%	25%	23%
The confidentiality of my personal information is protected by LinkedIn	8%	29%	27%	23%	13%
I believe that most personal profiles on Facebook are exaggerated to make the person look more interesting	21%	29%	40%	10%	0%
I believe that most personal profiles on LinkedIn are exaggerated to make the person look more interesting	10%	23%	44%	23%	0%
I'm afraid that I will be embarrassed by false information that others post on Facebook about me	4%	10%	31%	43%	12%
I'm afraid that I will be embarrassed by false information that others post on LinkedIn about me	6%	4%	38%	38%	15%
I'm afraid of identity theft on Facebook	13%	26%	30%	25%	6%
I'm afraid of identity theft on LinkedIn	8%	21%	33%	33%	4%
I have read the terms and conditions of Facebook's privacy policy before I created my profile	2%	33%	8%	29%	27%
I have read the terms and conditions of LinkedIn's privacy policy before I created my profile	0%	35%	13%	29%	23%
I'm reluctant to interact with company pages on Facebook	8%	25%	28%	34%	6%
I'm reluctant to interact with company pages on LinkedIn	4%	9%	36%	45%	6%

A very important question of the survey is the 10th one, analysing the respondents' real life behaviour when it comes to disclosing personal information similar with that shared online. Most respondents are not willing to disclose things like: personal identification number (94%), daily schedule (85%), personal photos (93%), information on friends (63%), places where they like to spend their free time (57%) or personal telephone number (52%) (Table no. 3). Yet, almost all this information can be easily found out when accessing the personal Facebook or LinkedIn account of a person. Thus, it seems that respondents are still not fully aware of the impact and consequences of their online activity, at least not as much as their offline activity.

Table no. 3: How people react in real life if a person they don't know very well asks for personal information

	I will share this information	I will not share this information	I don't know how I would react
Personal identification number	2%	94%	4%
Personal e-mail address	70%	25%	6%
Personal phone number	39%	52%	9%
Daily schedule	9%	85%	6%
Personal photos	4%	93%	4%
Work place	63%	26%	11%
Places where I like to spend my free time	35%	57%	7%
Information about friends	28%	63%	9%
Personal opinion on different events	72%	17%	11%
Brands of products I like to use	79%	15%	6%

When it comes to the correlation between respondents' online behaviour versus offline behaviour concerning the willingness to disclose private information, the results are very interesting and noteworthy. 55.6% of respondents who have publicly disclosed their email address on Facebook, would not tell it directly to a person if they were asked, while 69.7% of the people with a public email address on LinkedIn would do the same. Moreover, 50% of the people with a public telephone number on Facebook, and 45% of the people on LinkedIn, would not disclose this information if asked by someone they know for a short period of time. Photos of respondents seem to be perceived as less intrusive as only 5% of the respondents with public photos on Facebook and 4.2% of the respondents with public photos on LinkedIn would actually not share photos in a real life environment. The current work place seems to be the most sensitive topic for them, as 78% of the respondents who have disclosed this information on Facebook and 77% on LinkedIn would not do that if someone asked them face to face. It can be easily observed that overall, respondents seem to be more willing to disclose a large quantity of private information online, as it is easier to overlook all the privacy concerns when one is not directly asked for such details, whereas in a real life situation a person is actually reminded about these issues when asked directly to disclose otherwise private information and one's natural response is to protect from such intrusions and not willingly share it.

Conclusions

Never in the history of man has society shared so much personal data with so little concern for privacy. Social networking can threaten a company's security not just because of what its employees might choose to disclose, but because Social Media sites are prime targets for cyber criminals.

The basic premise of sharing information is nothing new. Consumers have long handed over personal data to companies for services. But now our personal information is freely available online and we are giving it to virtually anyone who asks. Sure, some of us might take precautions when it comes to limiting the information seen on our Facebook profiles, but even these Social Media users willingly share details in comment sections, review sites and forums. So, it is as much the companies' and the social networking sites' job to regulate this issue, as it is the users' to be fully informed and aware of what they post online or share with others.

Back when the internet burst into being, many were concerned at the thought of sharing personal information or companies collecting personal details without permission, but nowadays social media users would rather share their details for more choice, convenience and better deals. That is why, it must be a top priority for companies to protect the security of consumers and their personal data and design a working system that manages and protects this information.

This study is the first step into analysing this issue and trying to raise awareness on this matter, as it represents the next cornerstone of the online environment.

Another important finding of this research is that privacy and trust seem to operate in a symbiotic relationship, such that a lack of one is compensated for by a surfeit of the other. This insight has important implications for conceptualizing how organizations manage to balance online customer privacy requirements and trust, and illustrates the danger of neither protecting privacy nor engendering trust to online organizations.

Certainly, a strength of this article is that it has highlighted the complex and nuanced nature of the relationship between privacy, trust, and behaviour while suggesting numerous future research programs based on the interaction between people's interpretation of a situation and their general preferences.

The results of this research show once more how important the implementation of the recommendations of ISO standard 26000 is, by both public and private organizations, so that consumers can be protected, even from their own indiscretions.

Limitations and future research

Finally, the results of the present study should be understood in terms of the potential limitations of the methodology and sample. The small sample size has an impact on accurately measuring the effect and significance of correlations. Another limitation is that the survey is a self-report of behaviour. Additional validation of the information could have been performed by using software to download profiles and do a comparison of data collected automatically to reported results.

Preliminary measures of trust were tested in this survey, but additional validation of the constructs is necessary. The survey instrument did not include any questions with respect to the subject's motivation in using these sites. It is possible that members of Facebook use the site specifically to meet new people. A member's motivation for use could mediate the influence of trust and privacy concern.

Another limitation is that no effort was made to determine if the personal information revealed by users in social networking sites was accurate. It is possible that many users give false information (especially on Facebook), which is significantly different than revealing real information. Giving false information could be significantly related with trust and privacy concerns.

The hereinabove results show that the interaction of trust and privacy concern in social networking sites is not yet understood to a sufficient degree to allow accurate modelling of behaviour and activity. The results of the study encourage further research in the effort to understand the development of relationships in the online social environment and the reasons for differences in behaviour on different sites.

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