Foreword

Social media can be viewed as a multi-edged sword that works in unforeseeable ways and does not follow expected patterns. Although social media was intended as a technology to build and maintain connections (with friends, family, colleagues, etc.), it also contributes to social isolation and reduces face-to-face communication. On one hand, social media supports communal spirit and development of sound self-esteem; on the other hand, it can encourage addiction and foster narcissism. Social media presence is almost expected from any business; however, an organisation’s reputation online can be damaged either momentarily or in the long term. Facebook is said to strengthen friendships; nonetheless, it can harm relationships and destroy careers. The paradoxical nature of social media continuously presents challenges in personal and professional settings.

Not only members of the generations X and Y but also users of all ages are challenged regarding how to competently navigate the social media landscape. This remains an underexplored domain. Extant literature continually reveals results of new psychological effects that social networking has on people, their relationships, and egos. Organisations, including higher education institutions, tend to launch social media channels without a complete understanding of the risks and legal implications involved.

While extant literature reports accounts of exciting developments in learning and teaching supported by social media, the area of privacy and information protection in this context has been understated in Higher Education. In the same manner, the adverse psychological impacts of social media exposure are not considered fully. However, awareness of the “dark side” of social media is growing.

Academics argue that social media is inherently different than other types of media. Online social networks are self-developing, dynamic, interconnected, and interactive entities that span beyond the control of an organisation, with a specific set of management principles and analysis metrics. The distinct nature of social media presents a challenge in applying known theories and principles from the traditional online media. Consequently, a new set of insights is required to explain the behaviour of actors in social media settings.

Through an in-depth discussion of a range of issues surrounding the impact of social media and technologies on individuals, firms, and HE organisations, this book creates a rich account of the dual side of social networking applications. It opens a long-awaited debate on further exploration of the unchartered social media territory and instigates new ideas for illumination of this challenging topic.

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Ronald S. J. Tuninga is Pro Vice Chancellor and Dean of the Faculty of Business and Law at Kingston University and Dean at AVT Business School in Copenhagen, Denmark. AVT Business School cooperates for its Executive MBA is with faculty members from MIT, Harvard University, and the UC-Berkeley. He has been the Director of the PhD Program and Professor of International Management and Marketing at the Open University of The Netherlands, Visiting Professor at various international business schools such as Hult International Business School and King Abdul-Aziz University (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia), and is the former Director Dean and Professor of International Business and Marketing at the Maastricht School of Management. During his tenure at the Maastricht School of Management, he developed MBA programs in 24 countries across the world. He was the Associate Dean and Director MBA Programs and Professor of Marketing and International Business at Nyenrode Business University (The Netherlands). Professor Tuninga has lectured extensively both in North and South America, Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. His PhD is from Temple University (Philadelphia, USA). He completed his dissertation in Comparative Marketing in 1987. He also holds an MA in Economics, an MBA in International Business, and an MSc in Marketing. His research publications have appeared in such journals as the Journal of Macromarketing, Managerial and Decision Economics, The Irish Marketing Review, The Scandinavian International Business Review, The International Journal of Physical Distribution and Materials Management, Journal of Transnational Management, International Journal of Business and Globalization, South African Journal of Business and Management, Bedrijfskunde, and Proceedings of International Conferences. Prof. Tuninga has been involved in many international projects funded by the Dutch Government, World Bank, European Union, United Nations, and other international organizations. From 2007 until 2009, he was the President of the International Management Development Association. He was the Vice-Chair of the International Management Board (Board of Trustees) of the Association of MBAs (AMBA – UK) and currently is the Chair of the Faculty of Assessors of AMBA. He has been a member or chair of more than 40 assessment teams to business schools around the globe. He has been a consultant for companies such as for example Melitta North America and GE and a partner of the Holland Consulting Group.