Preface

With the proliferation of smart devices, 4G, and other advancements in the information technology field, social media has become pervasive. Organisations, both in the public and private sector, see the impact of social technologies at the personal and professional levels. One of the greatest challenges of the moment is to create a balanced insight into the positive effects of social media as well as the negative implications created by this relatively new technology. This book attempts to present this view by balancing the vision of the effectiveness of social technologies with the adverse effects it may bring to its users. Being especially relevant in Higher Education settings, the dimensions of the social media adoption discussed in this book touch upon e-commerce, information security, business networks, libraries, the tourism sector, and raise issues linked to the psychological consequences and legal implications. The book is comprised of the following chapters:

Chapter 1, “Social Media in Higher Education: Examining Privacy Concerns among Faculty and Students,” reports the results of a trans-cultural study that involved three Spanish universities, a Colombian university, and an American university. This chapter analyses the privacy concerns of students and faculty resulting from the adoption of a range of social media as teaching resources in higher education. Video-sharing sites and blogs are the most used resources for academic purposes. However, privacy concerns can easily emerge among students and faculty. Using videoconferencing to discuss work with lecturers and the obligation of including pictures in the social network profiles are the activities with the highest risk of raising privacy concerns among students when social media is implemented for classroom purposes. Faculty may also experience privacy concerns when they are requested to send pictures for publication online. In addition, the work focuses attention on the privacy concerns that social media can create for faculty when they are used for social networking.

Chapter 2, “Social Media and Alcohol Use: Adverse Impact of Facebook and Twitter on College Students,” examines the negative impact of social networking use and how it may expose alcohol-related consumption and behaviour to young adults, college students in particular. The chapter uses the Theory of Differential Association to explain social networking as a pivot to increased alcohol use by adolescents and young adults. Alcohol marketing has expanded to various SNSs. This new environment allows for an additional source of exposure to alcohol and supports the hypothesis of increased likelihood of alcohol consumption and abuse amongst young adults, especially college students. The review of existing literature reveals that the depiction of alcohol use on social networking sites has a deleterious effect on alcohol use through the creation of positive social norms toward use and abuse. Similar to Facebook, Twitter, although showing benefits for improved academic outcomes for students, is also a platform that exposes students to alcoholic brands and behaviours.
Chapter 3, “Face to Face(book): Users’ Traits and Motivations and Effects of Facebook Use on Well-Being,” assesses how personality traits and motivations explain Facebook use, and the potential beneficial and detrimental effects of social network usage on social and psychological well-being. The positive effects of social technologies on social well-being are well known and include communication, feeling of connectedness, number of ties in personal networks, and others. The authors of the chapter explore the adverse effects amplified through SNS: negative personality traits, reduced self-esteem, feelings of loneliness, depression, etc. These effects may represent a real concern for many individuals who use SNSs and parents of teenagers, who wish to ensure their children’s well-being. Specifically, the chapter presents the results of analysis for users of Facebook and opens the discussion for ways to mitigate these negative effects.

Chapter 4, “Information Security and Privacy in Social Media: The Threat Landscape,” opens with an analysis of the foundations of the concept of information security and narrows down to information security and privacy on social networking sites. For instance, SNS services have found successful application in many areas in recent years as a powerful marketing and promotional tool, as well as a platform for international trade. However, the issues of information security and privacy are preventing businesses from gaining the full economic benefit of such applications. The lack of understanding of the complex nature of security and privacy issues are at the core of the problem. The chapter suggests some solutions and highlights the need for a common legal framework guiding the usage of personal information and ensuring information security on social media.

Chapter 5, “Abuse of the Social Media Brain: Implications for Media Producers and Educators,” highlights that social technology use has been increasingly encouraged and supported in schools and universities. Authors of the chapter argue that due to the proliferation of social media, information is no longer processed by users at a deeper level but absorbed superficially instead. Critics argue that using social and digital media in this way does not improve the development of cognitive skills, making it even more difficult for students to acquire new knowledge and retain it in the long term. The authors express concerns about the educators’ response to the challenges provided by social and digital media and urge them to provide clear guidelines on the use of social media in the classroom.

Chapter 6, “Social Networking: A Retrospective into the Trust Formation and Threats,” presents a five-year reflection on the development of mechanisms for trust formation on social networks. The chapter draws on a literature review of privacy protection techniques suggested in academic debate over the past five years and draws conclusions on the technology development patterns on personalisation and information protection mechanisms used on current SNS.

Chapter 7, “Reflections on the Impact of Social Technologies on Lecturers in a Pathway Institution,” was influenced in part by the recognition that although there are demonstrable benefits of integrating social tools in HE, there are some challenges that prevent their enthusiastic integration. For social technologies to expand and flourish in HE, it is necessary to gain insights into academics’ conceptions and obtain an in-depth understanding into why they may or may not incorporate social technologies into their courses. The chapter reports results of an autoethnographic study of HE lecturers and their perceptions of social media and challenges presented by the fast changing educational technology landscape.

Chapter 8, “Facebook and Moodle as Classroom Extensions: Integrating Digital Technologies in the Curriculum,” explores the ways in which autonomy, collaboration, and cooperation are built into the curriculum of a teacher development class designed to use digital technologies. The chapter reports the results of an empirical-qualitative approach through active observation of the uses of Moodle e-portfolio and social sites including Facebook. The authors argue that it is possible to gain an understanding of the
autonomous and collaborative teaching and learning processes when online tools such as social networks are used. However, this requires that participants (including teachers) be prepared in terms of methodology and be accepting of new ways of teaching through the cooperation enabled by social networks and virtual learning environments.

Chapter 9, “Measuring the Social Impact: How Social Media Affects Higher Education Institutions,” opens the discussion around social media adoption in HE contexts. Uptake is arguably driven by the end users—students—being increasingly demanding in their expectations of technology support provided by universities. The chapter discusses a new set of challenges to HE institutions regarding how to adopt social media effectively in a range of modes provided to students, alumni, external stakeholders, etc. The authors aim to close the gap in the literature on social media applications in higher education and present the academic view on the benefits and challenges that surface during the technology adoption.

Chapter 10, “The Prevalence, Effects, and Reactions to the Use of Short Message Services in University Settings in South West Nigeria,” reports a study of messaging services and the implications of their use in the workplace. The study indicates that administrative staff at a Nigerian University is more likely to use messaging than academics. While the study acknowledges the positive role of messaging technology in professional settings, the authors report the negative effects including unsolicited messages, distraction, and inconvenience of messaging after work hours or in situations requiring undivided attention. The chapter draws attention to the fact that concern has been expressed on its effects in encouraging poor grammatical expressions and the possibility of distorting the message sent, especially when the abbreviations cannot be correctly decoded or interpreted by the recipient. They offer practical recommendations.

Chapter 11, “The Role of Social Media in Creating and Maintaining Social Networks Including its Impact on Enhancing Competitive Positioning within the Education Sector,” draws readers’ attention to the fact that social networks represent a disruptive medium that enhances the power of end customers and stakeholders to enter a dialogue regarding organisations and their offerings. The author argues that a different emergent strategy approach is required in planning social media strategies. The chapter utilises theoretical foundations from network theory and adopts the Service Dominant Logic to gain insights into the process of development and implementation of organisational social media strategies. It is recommended that managers in HE institutions think about how their organisation engages with and plans its future social media strategies as it can affect both social capital and competitive advantage.

Chapter 12, “The Impact of Social Media on Cultural Tourism,” explores the role of social media in the tourism sector. This chapter opens a discussion on the use of social media for reviews of cultural attractions, and their potential influence on the development of cultural tourism in Bahrain. The authors emphasise that as people use TripAdvisor to collect information about tourist destinations and share experiences with other community members, cultural tourism has a potential to grow in the region. This chapter recommends that social networks and TripAdvisor should be used by the local tourism authorities for the development and promotion of cultural tourism in Bahrain. The chapter concludes with a discussion on how social media could be used to communicate with visitors in Bahrain – advice which is transferable elsewhere.

Chapter 13, “Business Networks and Public Procurement in Turkey,” explores the role of network membership on the performance of firms in the public procurement market in Turkey. The authors use a unique public procurement data set of all high-value public procurement. The study considered professional Internet-based procurement-specific networks and business networks established through business associations. The authors conclude that despite the earlier blockade of Internet-based networks, such as
Twitter and Facebook, in Turkey, Internet-based procurement-specific business networks provide their members with a wide range of procurement-related services, access to critical resources, and timely information.

Chapter 14, “New Social Media Agendas for Teaching and Learning in Libraries,” looks at today’s students as creators of knowledge through social media that are profoundly changing the way they use and reuse knowledge. In supporting their learning at each higher level, librarians must stay well versed in new technologies and their applications in order to assist students in navigating a world full of content created by everyone and anyone. The authors emphasise that fundamental aspects of critical engagement, appreciation of the multiple “ways of knowing,” engaging the world ethically, and recognising diverse points of view are necessary for lifelong learning and for informed citizenship. The chapter outlines the unique roles of libraries in assisting users over time to develop these skills and deploy them strategically over the course of their degrees and careers.

Chapter 15, “Educational Edifices Need a Mobile Strategy to Fully Engage in Learning Activities,” provides an insight into the principles of developing a mobile learning strategy and policy for HE institutions. The authors explore the connections between social learning and mobile technology. The chapter offers strategic and pedagogical considerations to keep in mind when designing a mobile learning strategy in today’s socially networked world.

Vladlena Benson  
Kingston Business School, Kingston University, UK

Stephanie Morgan  
Kingston Business School, Kingston University, UK