Preface

GOALS OF THIS BOOK

*Harnessing the Power of Social Media and Web Analytics* is intended to serve both academic and industry audiences. In the academic context, the book can be utilized either as a primary or supplementary reference on the theoretical perspectives, techniques, models of social media analytics. The book can also serve as an up-to-date reference for practitioners on the current and potential future applications and practices of social media and web analytics.

In recent years, online social media have gained tremendous popularity among Internet users. Millions of consumers share personal information as well as their knowledge with others, many of whom are strangers, using online communities such as blogs, social network sites, and online bulletin boards. These online communities cover a wide variety of topics and interest groups (see, for example, Byrne (2008) on black social networks such as BlackPlanet.com; Barnett and Hwang (2003) on online forums for breast cancer patients, Schroeder, et al (2010) on using social software in higher education, and Wasko, et al (2009) on communications within an online legal professional association network). Information shared by social media users are captured and archived in online repositories that offer a wealth of valuable insights about consumers. These online communities have opened a new marketing channel for marketers to attract new customers and improve their business outreach. Compared with the slow growth of traditional marketing channels, social media continues to grow at a rapid rate. Businesses are increasingly recognizing that greater visibility on the Internet and social media captures customers’ interest in their businesses and their product or service offerings. Social media analytics empowers businesses to derive intelligence from popular social media sites by analyzing conversation data among consumers. It provides the foundation to a social CRM strategy by allowing businesses to quantify, understand, and respond to customers’ conversations about their corporate reputation and brands within online communities. It involves sentiment and behavioral analysis, and monitoring customer interactions within online communities.

From research perspectives, scholars in the fields of information systems and marketing are currently generating new ideas, modeling perspectives, and research directions. Past studies on social networks in disciplines such as sociology and anthropology provide essential foundations for research efforts in online social media. However, previous research tends to focus primarily on small social groups with face-to-face interactions. The advent of online social networks has brought about the need to revisit both the theoretical frameworks and applications of the existing body of research. Online technologies allow individuals from far distances to communicate and build relationships in a virtual community. Communication activities on these social networks can be easily captured, archived, and studied. Scholars
and practitioners are irresistibly drawn to the rich pool of valuable information available on these social
networks. In recent years, researchers from various disciplines have compiled an impressive corpus of
scholarly work studying this online phenomenon. Documenting and synthesizing these research outputs
and making them available to practitioners and future researchers will be extremely valuable. Therefore,
the overall mission of this book is to contribute towards this goal by documenting high quality research
outputs, industry practices, and future research directions on social media and web analytics.

OVERVIEW

This book is organized into three sections.

Section 1: Harnessing the Power of Social Media Marketing and Web Analytics
Section 2: Getting Inside the Consumers’ Mind with Social Media Data
Section 3: Enhancing the Power of Social Media Analytics

Section 1: Harnessing the Power of Social Media Marketing and Web Analytics describes the differ-
etent analytical applications available to social media marketers. The four chapters included in this section
present a comprehensive overview of social media marketing research. With topics ranging from theoreti-
cal frameworks for modeling consumers’ participation in social media to best practices in current social
media marketing, this section can serve as a valuable resource for those seeking to obtain an up-to-date
introduction to this stream of research. In chapter 1, Marketing Meets Social Media: Classification and
Evolution of Internet Marketing, Anteneh Ayanso, Kevin Lertwachara, and Brian Mokoya provide an
overview of different online marketing strategies, all of which can be enhanced by online social media
and Web analytics. The current practice shows that there is a significant overlap of technologies as well
as activities in most of the online marketing and advertising outlets. This first chapter attempts to provide
a classification of the major forms of internet marketing (or online advertising) available, and discuss
the key technological trends, practices, and academic research in each area. In particular, they highlight
the changing trends in internet marketing due to recent developments in Web 2.0 and social media
technologies. Sheila Sasser, Mark Kilgour, and Linda Hollebeek further discuss the emerging trends,
opportunities, and challenges involving online social media in chapter 2, Marketing in an Interactive
World: The Evolving Nature of Communication Processes Using Social Media. This chapter addresses
emerging trends, opportunities, and challenges that business managers face in an interactive social
media environment. The authors provide a review of the current social media literature as well as pres-
ent two research studies with insights into the nature of the communications process in social media.
Their work offers valuable insights into the challenging nature of the communication process in social
media, which has critical implications for social media marketers. In chapter 3, Effects of Consumers’
Social Media Participation on Consumer Behavior: A Marketing Perspective, Ashish Kumar and Ram
Bezawada address two important aspects of consumer behaviors in an online digital social media en-
vIRONMENT. First they propose a conceptual framework to help marketers understand consumers’ social
media participation. They further examine the key factors in social media that can influence consumers’
purchase behavior. Finally they present econometric analysis associated with modeling consumers’ social
media participation and quantifying its impact on their behaviors. In chapter 4, Social Media Marketing
in Emerging Economies: Case Study of Three Indian Firms, Madhupa Bakshi and Prashant Mishra take
a closer look at how three different corporations explore and implement their social media marketing strategies. They examine the unique situation in India in context of the growth of social media usage and try to find theoretical models as to how companies are coping with this new phenomenon. Their results indicate that the companies are eager to interact with their target consumers in social media, but few have been able to take full advantage of the online technologies. Furthermore they discuss various aspects of social media marketing, ranging from financial investments, corporate strategies, marketing impacts as well as moderation and digital curation of social media contents.

**Section 2: Getting Inside the Consumers’ Mind with Social Media Data** focuses on how organizations can harness social media and Web analytics to improve customer satisfaction and long-term customer relationship. With a large volume of information about consumers and their preferences readily available online, companies seek to gain a better understanding about their customers. In chapter 5, *Integrating Social Media and Traditional CRM: Toward a Conceptual Framework for Social CRM Practices*, Kanghyun Yoon and Jeanetta Sims examine the current practices of social media customer relationship management (CRM) and propose guidelines for social CRM. These guidelines will help CRM practitioners and marketers develop, implement, and manage a more personalized social CRM strategy. Anteneh Ayanso and Derek Visser further discuss the limitations of traditional CRM strategies and describe various performance measurement frameworks and metrics that can be used in social CRM systems in chapter 6, *Analytics and Performance Measurement Frameworks for Social Customer Relationship Management*. First, their chapter provides an overview of the analytics and performance measurement frameworks for social customer relationship management (SCRM). Based on a review of academic research and industry practices, they then discuss the limitations of traditional CRM, and the technology and analytical capabilities that support SCRM. The chapter also provides a review of existing measurement frameworks for SCRM strategies and outlines the various metrics that have been proposed and/or are currently in use as part of SCRM systems. Furthermore, in view of the opportunities and challenges of big data and the social media environment, the chapter highlights current business practices as well technology and analytics trends that facilitate the implementation and maintenance of SCRM systems. Line Olsen and Tor Andreassen continue the examination of consumers and their behavior on social media sites in chapter 7, *Social Media Usage and Adoption: Are People Ready?*. Their research explores the consumers’ attitude toward and willingness to adopt social media and offers insightful results that can help managers and marketers customize their social media offerings to appropriate consumer segments. Specifically, the chapter includes findings from two different studies. In the first study, the authors investigate general technology readiness among different groups of users. This first study provides critical background information for the second study, in which consumers’ social media readiness, the construct and its drivers are examined. Their overall results indicate that customers are generally ready for social media, but their actual participation is partly determined by ease of use and usefulness of the social media sites. In chapter 8, *Insights into Social Media and Online Digital Music*, Yanbin Tu, Miao Zhao, and Cathleen Jones provide a timely and practical example of how social media and Web analytics can be integrated into marketing efforts of online contents such as digital music. In particular, they investigate social media along with traditional assessment channels and their roles in music evaluation. Their analysis reveals that social media marketing applications potentially can have a considerable impact on digital music evaluations and consumers’ willingness to pay. Their study presents valuable insights for the music and other industries where traditional and online marketing channels need to be more integrated.
Section 3: Enhancing the Power of Social Media Analytics explores innovative approaches to utilize social media data to enhance online user experience. The effectiveness of social media analytics hinges upon the predictive power of the analysis tools. However, social media data are considerably different from consumer information captured in traditional offline channels. In chapter 9, Exploring the Properties of Online Social Network (OSN) Data and their Implications for Consumer Social Data Analytics, Yamen Koubaa begins the section by discussing the unique properties of online social data. The examination of these properties is indispensable in order to enhance the accuracy of predictions and data analytics. Koubaa identifies and classifies these unique properties into seven categories: 1) the weights of the nodes, 2) the type and the length of the relationships, 3) the nodes classification, 4) the communities in social networks, 5) the contents, 6) the social influence in social networks, and 7) the evolution of the network structure. The chapter concludes by offering practical suggestions to help improve predictive and analytical power of social media analysis. Mario Cataldi, Luigi Di Caro, and Claudio Schifanella continue the exploration of social data utilization in chapter 10, Improving Search and Navigation User Experience by Making Use of Social Data. They present an innovative system that takes into account online user profiles to enhance the user’s online search results. Moreover, they outline a set of visualization tools that allows the user to be immersed in a user-dependent visual environment enhanced by a set information-rich text boxes that are semantically related to the user query. These boxes offer suggestions on possible refinement of the user search interest extracted from his or her social profile. This chapter also presents an evaluation aimed at testing the efficiency and the usability of the proposed system and provides real case scenarios and user studies that validate the proposed approach from the user point of view. In chapter 11, A Semantic Approach to LinkedIn Profiles: Critical Analysis and Insights, Ilias Kapareliotis and Patricia Crosbie conclude our book with their examination of the Linked-In social network where verbal and visual linguistic expressions can be employed to enhance online communications. They investigate a number of linguistic theories and their application on social media networks such as LinkedIn. Interestingly, LinkedIn and its use of social media data encapsulate many of the linguistic theories the chapter examined in the chapter. Using LinkedIn as an example, they discuss the linkage between the linguistic theories and the online social media environment. They conclude the chapter by providing discussions and practical recommendations for practitioners.

Social media has brought about a profound sea change to how organizations, communities, and individuals communicate and collaborate with each other. The popularity of social network sites such as LinkedIn and Facebook demonstrates the potential benefits that can be gained from these online technologies. In the business realm, companies try to infuse social media and data analytics into all aspects of their operations, from marketing, human resources, customer relationship management to finance and budget allocation. The nascent discipline of online social media analysis offers many opportunities that scholars and practitioners have yet to explore. Benefits that can be leveraged from social media may prove to be a proverbial ‘game changer’ in many business industries. Scholars are routinely challenged to discover new ideas to take full advantage of these online technologies. This book adds to our current knowledge of social media and Web analytics implementations. More importantly, it focuses on practical applications and ways to harness the power of these online applications. It can readily enhance advanced undergraduate courses that aim to cover a range of social media applications in Marketing and Information Systems as well as current practices in Web analytics. Introductory graduate courses in these disciplines can also benefit from the depth and rigor of scholarly work included in this book.
REFERENCES


