Preface

In order to survive and sustain, organisations need to find ways of managing both tacit and explicit knowledge. The emergence of social media has made it possible to better manage knowledge in organisations (Pawlowski & Pirkkalainen, 2012). Social media enables organisations to connect both internally and externally, and its widespread popularity provides many opportunities for managing knowledge. Hence, harnessing social media as a knowledge management tool has become vital. As we witness a global surge in the usage of social media (Chugh, 2012), it is important that organisations tap into this resource and leverage it for managing knowledge and not solely as a means of day-to-day communication with customers. Social media can potentially make the management of knowledge a less cumbersome facet (Razmerita, Kirchner & Nabeth, 2014) of routine operations. As social media continues to evolve, it brings new opportunities for knowledge management and it is important to tap into this resource.

Knowledge management is a discipline focused on management of information and intellectual capital that is considered to be a valuable resource by all organizations, irrespective of size and type, because of the reliance of their organizational processes on sound information. Organizations have always taken a keen interest in retaining and (re)using knowledge as it is a critical asset for them. There is an emerging consensus that managing knowledge effectively provides a source of competitive advantage. Hence, the importance of knowledge management in improving business processes and creating sustainable competitive advantage cannot be underemphasized. However, the tools and strategies for the creation, collection, storage and dissemination of knowledge have changed significantly over the last decade with the emergence of social media.

Social media is the use of collaborative online applications and technologies for the creation, sharing and application of information by facilitating a social environment amongst users. Social media encompasses a variety of tools such as blogs, discussion forums, chat rooms, social networking websites, video sharing websites, photo sharing websites, wikis/collaborative websites, social bookmarking websites and virtual worlds to list a few. These tools provide both interactivity and collaborative opportunities alongside various other functionality analogous to other knowledge management platforms. A study by Levy (2013) found that the higher the level of knowledge management, the higher the level of social media implementation for knowledge management requirements and importantly, social media implementation in organizations conforms to formal knowledge management activities. Social media can be used for collecting, storing and disseminating knowledge to the right people at the right time in the right place and in the right format and can be seen as an enabler of efficient knowledge management processes. As a result, social media has been embraced by individuals and organizations globally and its role in knowledge management is vital.
The emergence of social media has made it easy to connect with people (internally and externally) in organisations, provide speed, spontaneity and global reach (Asur & Huberman, 2010). Utilising social media for managing knowledge can essentially be seen as an innovative approach in various organisational processes. In fact, social media is a good fit for all knowledge management processes – it can be used to generate new ideas, collect and collate information, communicate and share (both top-down and bottom-up) knowledge, provide collaborative and socialisation opportunities locally and globally, build and store organisational memory, disseminate knowledge and convert tacit to explicit knowledge. Social media can also be seen as a facilitator of social networks, which are considered to be fundamental for the exchange of tacit knowledge. As a matter of fact, the various social media tools can be used to support the four knowledge conversion modes (Socialization, Externalization, Combination and Internalization) identified by Nonaka (1994).

It is evident that a number of challenges (technological, process and people) will confront organisations in the introduction and implementation of social media (Murphy & Salomone, 2013). In the twenty-first century, social media has pervaded almost everyone’s personal lives and organisations globally are no exception to it. Social media supports the personal and collective dimensions of knowledge, while integrating a social collaborative facet (Razmerita, Kirchner & Nabel, 2014). What beckons organisations is evaluating how to use social media to manage organisational knowledge. Nevertheless, the rapidly growing phenomena of social media can be used in a variety of organisational contexts to leverage and support knowledge management processes.

This book was motivated by the desire that people have to manage knowledge. The ubiquity of social media got me thinking about the role it can play in knowledge management at large and the various phases of the knowledge management cycle in specific. Social media appears to be the right fit for knowledge management cycle phases - knowledge acquisition, organisation, storage, retrieval and dissemination. There are innumerable tools currently available that either focus on one of these specific knowledge management phases or others that can largely serve multiple knowledge management phases. However, the adoption of social media for managing personal and organisational knowledge comes with its own challenges. These challenges stem from technology adoption avoidance, plain ignorance and/or a cultural dilemma. Nevertheless, these challenges are not insurmountable especially in today’s widely interconnected global environment. It was evident to me that a book that explores social media issues around knowledge management and outlines application of social media for managing knowledge was required. Hence, this all-inclusive book! This book presents theoretical and research-based practices related to the usage of social media for knowledge management.

OBJECTIVE OF THE BOOK

A current holistic understanding of social media in knowledge management is needed by practitioners and researchers alike. This book aims to fill that gap and offers a variety of perspectives through useful and current information in this field. This book provides a concise and holistic understanding of the issues and challenges that can be encountered when exploiting social media for managing knowledge. Some chapters highlight the usage of social media for knowledge sharing and provide illustrations of its usage in various settings whilst others provide practical guidelines and frameworks that can be adopted to make implementation efforts of social media for successfully managing knowledge globally.
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I hope this book will be a very pragmatic resource for information system managers, business managers, administrators, academics, researchers and students who need to understand the multiple applications of social media in knowledge management from both a theoretical and practical perspective, in order to harness the true potential of this rapidly growing phenomenon i.e. social media.

ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

The book provides a holistic insight into multiple perspectives of the role of social media in knowledge management. It explores the usage of social media in knowledge management from an organizational and/or individualistic viewpoint, looking at the opportunities and challenges that are encountered in using and implementing social media. The book has chapters related to people, processes, practices, technology, and the environment, which enable the identification, creation, sharing, storage, application and (re)use of knowledge through the use of social media. The book will have both theoretical and practical implications for policy makers who wish to embed social media to help manage organizational knowledge. The book is organized into four sections containing fifteen chapters. Section one contains four chapters relating to usage of social media for knowledge sharing in different domains/settings. Section two comprises of five chapters that focus on the application of social media as an aid for knowledge management activities. Section three encompasses three chapters that outline frameworks relevant to knowledge management and social media. Finally, section four includes three chapters that concentrate on some challenges of social media for managing knowledge. A chapter-by-chapter brief description follows:

Chapter 1 reports the results of a Hungarian exploratory survey that explored the usage of social media technologies through an investigation of the willingness of employees to participate in knowledge sharing. It also explores whether there are generational differences relating to knowledge sharing behaviour. The results have shown that organizations prefer not to allow the usage of social media; but where the employees are supported to reach these tools, high proportion of them utilize these technologies.

Chapter 2 explores and discusses the role and use of social media applications for knowledge dissemination by hospitals and the medical tourists in the global business of medical tourism in India. The chapter outlines that social media tools, also called Word-of-Social-Media (WoSM), are increasingly being adopted and used by private super-speciality hospitals in the business of medical tourism in India to communicate and disseminate healthcare related information to its patients, medical professionals and other businesses connected with medical tourism. The chapter also calls out to the medical tourism industry to develop a Medical-Tourism Trip-Advisor (MTTA) platform to inform potential and current medical tourists regarding all aspects of medical travel from booking an airline ticket to the choice of destination, hospital, surgeon, accommodation, tourism and sightseeing to prepare them for their medical surgery and journey overseas.

Chapter 3 descriptively investigates the role of knowledge sharing in distinct environments through the use of social media. This chapter is predominantly centred on a review of the existing literature and could be seen as a very rudimentary outline highlighting the need of social media for knowledge sharing in libraries. It outlines the value of social media for educational designers and also provides simplistic guidelines for social media usage in libraries.

Chapter 4 examines ways of facilitating knowledge sharing for the benefit of students of international relations and conflict studies in Nigerian universities. This chapter argues that social media is designed
to facilitate interpersonal and intergroup relations. It presents an analysis to indicate that social media provides opportunities for learning experiences, with new information generated daily, knowledge sharing in an educational context would aid violence research, and also make teaching and learning easier.

Chapter 5 explores the use of crowd-sourcing as an effective tool for promoting universal primary education. It shows the ecosystem model needed to design a social knowledge management platform. The chapter then proposes a social knowledge management platform that captures and disseminates formal and non-formal knowledge and wisdom of the elderly to educate underprivileged youth online by mobilising a group of experienced senior citizens and quality teaching learning materials.

Chapter 6 provides a theoretical framework for profiling knowledge workers’ mainstream social media usage and investigating knowledge workers’ mainstream social media usage for personal knowledge management purposes. For this chapter, data has been collected from 325 knowledge workers in Turkey who work in various private sector organisations. The results indicate that knowledge workers mostly use social media for the purpose of identifying experts and least use these platforms for the purpose of participating in online discussions in order to create new knowledge.

Chapter 7 illustrates the role of social media in managing and disseminating organizational knowledge via a case study of a local government’s response to a natural disaster. It offers a qualitative evaluation of real-time unfolding of discourse throughout a storm in the town of Grancesco (US), following a rhetorical approach to crisis communication that stresses message development and its presentation. The chapter recommends that building social media communication structures during non-crisis periods could provide a stronger knowledge communication infrastructure for crisis management.

Chapter 8 describes the principles of wiki-based organizational knowledge management solutions and provides detailed descriptions of successful implementations in four global organizations where each wiki serves a different knowledge management-related purpose. The chapter reviews methodological, technical, cultural and implementation aspects of these wikis. Good practices and key success factors for wiki adoption are discussed, which can help organizations to harness the power of a corporate wiki.

Chapter 9 scrutinises existing literature from the Journal of Political Marketing and performs a thematic content analyses of 320 articles to explore the impact of adaptation and use of social media by political actors and organizations on the knowledge production and generation of political marketing. It offers a conceptual context to understand modes of knowledge production and generation and its application in the field study of political marketing.

Chapter 10 presents an exploratory framework to analyze the implications of the use of various types of social media based knowledge management tools on the firm’s knowledge collection and sharing strategies. Through the use of intelligence gathered by case studies and expert interviews in India, this chapter illustrates how the usage of social media has enabled smaller firms to quickly build their knowledge bases and increase the pace of their growth. The chapter recommends that social media based knowledge management intervention has to match the firm’s requirement based on its knowledge management strategy.

Chapter 11 discusses the ‘SECI–SM Framework’, which has been proposed in an earlier work by the authors. The distinctive features of SECI-SM model is discussed in the light of previous researches. The framework offers an extended form of knowledge sharing activities highlighted through the renowned SECI model. The model does not undermine the importance of conventional knowledge management efforts rather adds a new dimension of social media to it.
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Chapter 12 explores the relationships between social media building blocks and knowledge transfer in the context of cybersecurity using technology threat avoidance theory. Based on the exploration a parsimonious model of social media properties, threat avoidance and knowledge transfer has been developed. The model integrates threat avoidance and knowledge theories to identify how cybersecurity knowledge transfer takes place over social media platforms.

Chapter 13 reviews research into how social graphs for an enterprise, team or other collaboration group interacts with the ways intranets have been used to display, collect, curate and disseminate information over the knowledge life cycle. The role of intranets in the knowledge management life cycle has been outlined. The roles that online social networks -aware intranets could play in emerging technologies are examined and pragmatic steps that can be taken for intranet success have been outlined in this chapter.

Chapter 14 raises three challenges of managing knowledge via social media. Firstly, it explores whether knowledge management practices have fully embraced social media. Secondly, it delves in to the issue of whether knowledge management strategy can cope with the rapid speed of social media adoption. Finally, it leads through a journey of social media adoption and usage for brand building, electronic commerce and briefly explores whether social media can provide a higher advantage to smaller and newer companies in comparison to older but larger organizations.

Chapter 15 provides an introduction and background to Big Data and the technologies used for Big Data solutions, so that data from social media can be harnessed. An overview of the analytical approaches used in Big Data is also outlined in this chapter. The impact that Big Data solutions have on the technology and data architectures are highlighted. A data management framework has been outlined that identifies many areas within an organization’s data and knowledge management capabilities that could be impacted by Big Data.

As this journey comes to an end, I hope the readers will find some value in the contributions made by the authors from ten countries representing a broad cross section of university researchers and industry practitioners as they provide a global perspective to this topic. In summary, the book will also open up further avenues and opportunities for future research into the area of social media in knowledge management in a diverse range of cross-disciplinary settings. What works in one setting may fail in another, hence the need for constant experimentation is urged. Moreover, technology in the form of social media itself may not be sufficient to facilitate all knowledge management efforts in organisations. A mixture of technology and other conventional knowledge management mechanisms should be considered. Overall, the book is designed to be a ‘one-stop shop’ for global information about harnessing social media for managing knowledge. Armed with specific usage practices, applications, frameworks and challenges, readers can make informed choices about the adoption of social media to manage knowledge.

To knowledge management via social media and beyond!

Ritesh Chugh
Central Queensland University, Australia

REFERENCES


