



Ethics in Information Technology

Chapter 9 Social Networking

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Learning Objectives

- What are social networks, how do people use them, and what are some of their practical business uses?
- What are some of the key ethical issues associated with the use of social networking Web sites?
- What is a virtual life community, and what are some of the ethical issues associated with such a community?

Social Networking Web Site

- Creates an online community of Internet users that eliminates barriers created by time, distance, and cultural differences
 - Allows people to interact with others online by sharing opinions, insights, information, interests, and experiences
 - Members may wish to develop new personal and professional relationships

Business Applications of Online Social Networking

- **Social network advertising:** Uses social networks to communicate and promote the benefits of products and services
 - Benefits
 - Advertisers can create an opportunity to generate a conversation with viewers of the ad
 - Ads can be targeted to reach people with the desired demographic characteristics

Social Network Advertising Strategies

- Direct advertising - Banner ads on social networking Web site
- Advertising using an individual's network of friends
 - People frequently make decisions based on input from their close group of friends
- Indirect advertising through groups
 - Interested users can join by becoming fans
 - Marketing tool for a company looking to market and promote new products, or increase brand awareness

Business Applications of Online Social Networking

- Company-owned social networking Web site
 - Users can talk about what new products, services, or improvements they would like to see
- **Viral marketing:** Users pass along marketing message to others, creating the potential for exponential growth

The Use of Social Networks in the Hiring Process

- Employers look at the social networking profiles of job candidates when hiring
- Companies may reject candidates who post:
 - Information about their drinking or drug use
 - Provocative or inappropriate photos
 - Discriminatory remarks relating to race, gender, or religion
 - Confidential information

Use of Social Media to Improve Customer Service

- Consumers use social networks to share their experiences, both good and bad, with others
- Seek help and advice on how to use products more effectively and how to deal with special situations
- Unless organizations monitor social networks, customers are left to resolve questions and issues on their own, risking loss of customers and future sales

Social Shopping Web Sites

- Combine two online activities
 - Shopping and social networking
- Shoppers and sellers share information and make recommendations while shopping online
- Revenue is generated through:
 - Retailer advertising
 - Sharing data about their members' likes and dislikes with retailers
- Retailers can design product improvements based on input and get ideas for new product lines

Table 9.3 - Sample of Social Shopping Web Sites

Web site	Description
Buzzillions	Product review Web site with over 17 million reviews across a wide range of products, with product rankings based on feedback from customers
Crowdstorm	Price comparison shopping resource that aggregates product information from various online buyers' guides, reviews, and blog postings
JustBoughtIT!	Facebook and Twitter app for capturing product recommendations from the online community; users can post a photo or screen shot online, share their purchases, and comment on what others are buying
Kaboodle	Social shopping site where members can discover, recommend, and share new products, provide advice, share feedback, get discounts, and locate bargains
MyDeco	Site with a focus on interior design and home decor; users can mock up virtual rooms using their favorite products
MyITThings	Both a fashion magazine and a shopping Web site that allows users to place products purchased in a virtual closet; users can store books, music, and other products
OSOYOU	UK-based social shopping site for women that aggregates products from 130 of the UK's top online stores selling fashion and beauty products
Zebo	A site that enables shoppers to chat, get tips, browse products, and conduct polls to get community input

Source Line: Course Technology/Cengage Learning.

Social Networking Ethical Issues

- **Cyberbullying:** Harassment, torment, humiliation, or threatening of one minor by another minor or group of minors via the Internet or cell phone
- **Cyberstalking:** Threatening behavior or unwanted advances directed at an adult using the Internet or other forms of online and electronic communications

Social Networking Ethical Issues

- Recommended actions
 - Send the stalker a written notice that their contact is unwanted
 - Evidence of all contacts should be saved
 - Victims of cyberstalking should inform their Internet service provider (ISP) as well as the stalker's ISP, if possible
 - Victims should consider speaking to law enforcement officers
 - Victims of cyberstalking should never agree to meet with the stalker

Social Networking Ethical Issues

- Encounters with sexual predators
 - Some social networking Web sites are criticized for not protecting minors from sexual predators
 - Sex Offender Registration and Notification Provisions (SORNA) - Sets national standards for which sex offenders must register and what data must be captured
 - Adam Walsh Act - Defines three tiers of sex offenders, each with different length of registration times and verification frequencies

Table 9.5 - Sex Offender SORNA Data Requirements

Data provided by the sex offender	Data provided by jurisdiction in which the offender is registered
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Name• Social Security number• Residence address• Name and address of place of employment• Name and address of any school attending• License plate and description of any auto owned or operated by the offender	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Physical description of the sex offender• Text defining the sex crime for which the offender is registered• Criminal history of the offender, including the date of all arrests and convictions• A current photo of the offender• A copy of the driver's license or photo ID issued to the offender by the jurisdiction• A set of fingerprints and palm prints• A DNA sample

Source Line: Course Technology/Cengage Learning.

Table 9.6 - Registration Times and Verification Frequencies

Sex offender tier	Length of time sex offender must remain registered	In-person verification of sex offender data required
3	Lifetime	Every 3 months
2	25 years	Every 6 months
1	15 years	Each year

Source Line: Course Technology/Cengage Learning.

Social Networking Ethical Issues

- Uploading of inappropriate material
 - Social networking Web sites have policies against uploading videos depict violence or obscenity
 - Most social networking Web sites have terms of use agreements that give the sites the right to delete material and terminate users accounts that violate their policy
 - Most Web sites do not have sufficient resources to review all material posted

Online Virtual Worlds

- Shared multimedia, computer-generated environment in which users represented by avatars can act, communicate, create, retain ownership of what they create, and exchange assets with each other
 - **Avatar:** Character in the form of a human, animal, or mythical creature
 - **Massively multiplayer online game (MMOG):** Multiplayer video game capable of supporting many concurrent players
 - **Massively multiplayer online role playing game (MMORPG)**

Crime in Virtual Worlds

- Avatars trafficking in actual drugs or stolen credit cards
- Online muggings and sex crimes
- Consenting adults travel to private areas and engage in socially unacceptable behavior
- Some virtual world activities fall into a vast gray area
 - Gambling games within casinos are inspected and regulated by state gaming commissions

Educational and Business Uses of Virtual Worlds

- New Media Consortium (NMC)
 - International consortium of hundreds of organizations
 - Explores new media and technologies to improve teaching, learning, and creative expression
 - Builds custom virtual learning worlds, simulations, and learning games

Educational and Business Uses of Virtual Worlds

- Second Life Work Microsites
 - Enable businesses and government agencies to use Second Life for virtual meetings, events, training, and simulations
 - Stimulates engaged, collaborative learning to augment their traditional curriculum

Summary

- Social networking Web sites
 - Create an online community of Internet users
 - Break down barriers created by time, distance, and cultural differences
 - Allow people to interact with others online by sharing opinions, insights, information, interests, and experiences
- Social network advertising uses social networks to inform, promote, and communicate the benefits of products and services

Summary

- Social network advertising strategies
 - Direct advertising
 - Advertising using network of friends
 - Indirect advertising through groups
 - Advertising via company-owned Web sites
 - Viral marketing
- Employers look at the social network profiles of job candidates when hiring

Summary

- Consumers use social networks to share their experiences and seek help and advice
- Unless organizations monitor social networks, customers are left to resolve questions and issues on their own, risking loss of customers and future sales

Summary

- Ethical issues for social networking Web sites are:
 - Cyberbullying
 - Cyberstalking
 - Sexual predators
 - Uploading inappropriate material
- Online virtual world is a computer-simulated world
 - Visitor can move in three-dimensional space
 - Visitor can communicate and interact with other visitors
 - Visitor can manipulate elements of the simulated world