Social media and business intelligence: defining and understanding social media intelligence

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Social media is already very well known and widely used in the professional world. It is considered a strategic knowledge source for decision and performance for firms, knowledge from customers, products and market. Researchers and scientists are focusing more and more deeply in this area (Ros-Diego and Castelló-Martínez, 2012; Proulx et al., 2012). But there is still a great deal of misunderstanding as to how it can be used effectively. There are many claims that social media is essential to business, but understanding the hard science behind how this relatively new technology can create solid return on investment (ROI) or generate efficient Customer relationship management (CRM) can be confusing.

For many, social media and business intelligence are now inseparable (Nagle and Pope, 2013). Indeed, even the most basic user of any social network asks himself such questions as 'How many followers do I have?' or 'What's trending today?', and it is the job of business intelligence to tease out these answers in a comprehensive and scientific way so that the information can be organised and stored in a way that provides business value and improves decision-making (Foley and Guillemette, 2010; Power and Philips-Wren, 2011).

Combining social media and business intelligence allows companies to gain a competitive edge, cut costs and release products with a higher degree of success, becoming crucial for any company. Social media intelligence (the combination of social media and business intelligence (BI)) allows them to reach a greater audience, with more effective targeting and greater cost savings. At the same time, advertising and marketing can be created more efficiently, and changes within the organisation can be made (Divol et al., 2012).

This special issue aims to contribute to the growing body of literature examining social media, business intelligence and their impacts on organisation. It wishes to present and give first insights on 'social media intelligence' (SMI). More precisely, the five articles presented in this special issue contribute to (1) the understanding of SMI and its impacts on firms, and also (2) applying the concept in different situations to help managers develop successful SMI strategies.

Banz, Grosswiele, Huber and Probst highlight the impact of social media on interpersonal communication. They indeed became a significant factor for the marketing communication mix of firms. The more users on a platform, the more electronic-word-of-mouth is generated. Based on that idea, they focused on the ratio of fans to non-fans and its economic effects in customer portfolios, by drawing on a portfolio selection theory-based model and real-world data.

Del Guidice, Caputo and Evangelista develop the contribution of social media to the management of decisional liquefaction. For the authors, the liquidity of data, information and knowledge is influencing the relationships among social and economic actors through the definition of a new socio-technical configuration. Their study proposes a reading key for the ongoing evolution and also proposes some reflections useful for the emersion of a conceptual framework more fitting with the emerging scenario.

Dutot and Mosconi are interested in the understanding of the main factors that lead to disengagement of members in social media platforms or virtual communities. Recognising that social media acquisition and retention are crucial to the development and success of firms' online

strategies, the authors test how social influence, individual performance and individual valorisations can impact a virtual community's success or failure.

O'Riordan, Feller and Nagle advocate that social media is a broad term that encompasses a wide range of technologies with both distinct and shared capabilities. And, as there is no agreed-upon definition of these systems, a comprehensive list of features and their affordances does not exist. Their research seeks to create a feature-level categorisation framework for analysing the use of social network sites.

The fifth and final article, from Wu, Lien, Mohiuddin, Chien and Yang, deals with social media apps. Social media apps facilitate the study of business intelligence in order to develop business analytics, which is mandatory for developing an effective strategy for firms in the digital era. Despite the importance of social media apps, there is an insignificant study of how users decide to download apps and what the personality traits are that can explain the behaviour of downloading them. This research explores how positive emotion influences trust and downloads of free social media apps.

The guest editors would like to thank one more time the authors for their contributions to the special issue, as well as the board of the *Journal of Decision Systems* for their trust and support during the entire process. It has led to a unique special issue we are really proud of.

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