Need of Today : Creating an Enterprise Wide Social Media Usage Policy

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Abstract

The use of social networking sites is on a high and is increasing with time. Organizations tend to use the platform of social media for various business processes and for a wide range of business activities. Increasingly, companies are ascertaining formulation of guidelines to shun chances of detrimental acts, which could potentially risk the organization due to unacceptable conduct of an employee over social media. This study probed the implementation of social media policies by organizations and the associated benefits which can be brought about by enforcing these policies. Since the popularity and continued growth of social media tools is enormous, their impact on organizational business activities is also large. Organizations should be proactive in creating social media usage policies, if not yet created, with the consent of employees and other involved stakeholders. Furthermore, if policies are in place, organizations should review the policies to incorporate changes occurring due to changes witnessed in the dynamic medium of the Internet and social media. Policy implementation will inform employees about acceptable and unacceptable conduct, and they will be aware of social media usage expectations of the organization. This will check social media usage by employees and will cut down the associated risks for employees and organizations.

Key words: social media, usage policy, SNS, cyber-bullying

JEL Classification: J53, J83, K42, L86, M12, M15, M51

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The usage of social networking, mobile information, and communications technologies (ICT) in organizations has been increasing since the inception of social network platforms. Social networking by broad means is taken as communication among individuals using a variety of web-based services. The phenomenon is growing as new people are constantly registering with these web-based services, but a formal acceded definition is hard to provide as there is no common international regulatory body. In fact, it is a form of real-time direct text-based communication between two or more people using personal computers or other devices (Boyd &Ellison, 2007).

In a broader perspective, social networking sites (SNSs) could be defined as web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile, enunciate a list of their connections, and engage with their connections over the same system. The management of these connections may vary among various SNSs, but the soul remains identical. These are the platforms which allow users to meet unknown people and develop a community. SNSs allow users to build connections and make them discernible to others. These connections are also users of systems and many a times, are common among various other users, thus these create a network. Communicating information of, through, and to connections, is a crucial factor of SNSs. The shared information too is versatile in form of text, images, sound, animation, and videos which are shared using instant messaging and blogging.

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Since the growth of social media on web-based services is enormous, more and more people are engaging in it and building their profiles. These people are also employed with industries and are using SNSs at their homes and organizations. The use of SNSs creates a challenge for an organization in managing risks to individuals and to an organization on the whole. The use of SNSs may affect performance at workplace as exchanging information about one's profession and organization might shape the behaviour of the workplace as well as of individuals. This is also not helped by organizations as they have no documented policies on usage of Internet and SNSs that give clarity on usage of both.
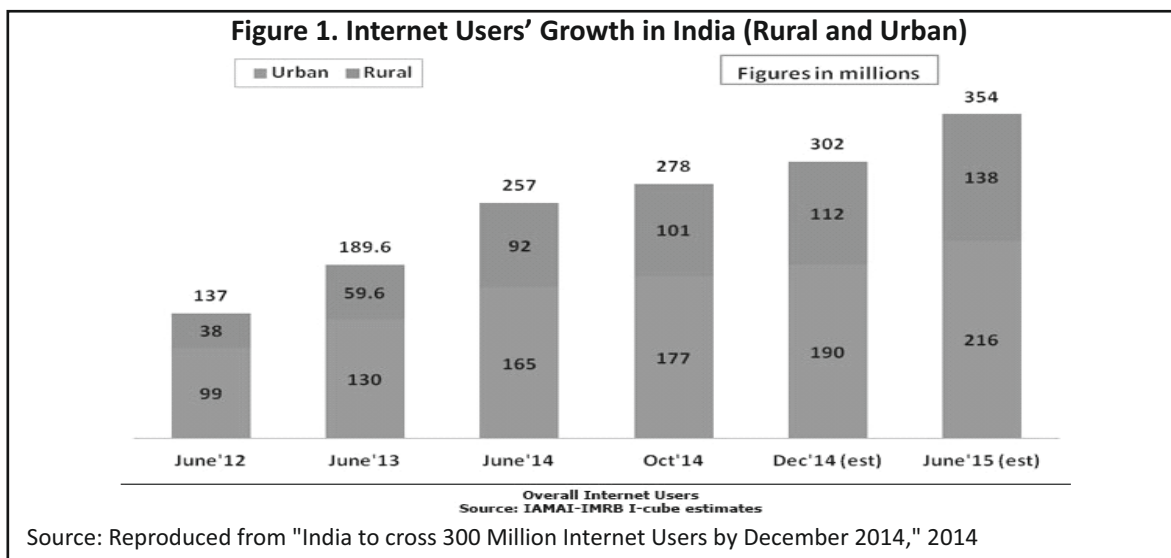
Objectives of the Study

This paper explores:

(1) Magnitude of social media usage at the workplace.

(2) Prospects and tasks of management while monitoring usage of social media.

(3) Framework of policies for effective management of social media usage at the workplace.

Internet Usage

New web based technologies are a never growing domain which has led to enormous growth of Internet usage. These technologies are also used by companies for work related activities. The line between usage of these technologies for professional activities and personal activities by employees is diminishing. The resources required for professional and personal activities are identical, and employees have started using these for their own benefit.

The number of users of Internet in India is increasing immensely. As per the *Internet in India 2014* report jointly published by the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) and IMRB International, the figure was expected to touch 354 million in June 2015. The report also said that 52 million new Internet users were expected to access the Internet in the first half of 2015. Towards the end of 2014, the total numbers of Internet users was 302 (IAMAI, 2014)(Figure 1).

With the growth of the Internet, the manner and the method of using the Internet is also changing. In recent

Figure 1. Internet Users' Growth in India (Rural and Urban)

Source: Reproduced from "India to cross 300 Million Internet Users by December 2014," 2014

times, the Internet is used more as an interactive and communication medium which is supported by the availability of Web 2.0 that enables the end user to blog, develop social network, comment, express his/her opinion, collaborate, and interact in varied ways.

The percentage of people who use social network sites went up from 17% to 49% in 2007 (Dutton, Helsper, & Gerber, 2009). Google leads the pack of most accessed sites, but Facebook is the most prominent social networking site with over 500 million users worldwide (Alexa.com, n.d.). YouTube follows Facebook in terms of traffic. Also, Twitter was at the 10th position in Alexa rankings. These figures tell about the significant growth of SNSs. During 2012, 58 million people in the United States logged in on some form of social media every day. This corresponded to an increase of over 12 million users in one year, and accounted for 22% of all Internet users (Qualman, 2012).

Facebook impacted the buying decisions of users. In 2012, 47% of Facebook users revealed that Facebook had the maximum impact on their buying decisions. This figure increased by 23% within the last one year - from 2011 to 2012. Also, Facebook users who checked notifications on Facebook more than five times in 24 hours accounted for 23%, out of which 8% logged into Facebook for over 11 times (Edison Research, 2012), and the overall usage of Facebook increased by 40% in a year (Kissmetrics, n.d.).

The user base of Twitter got increased by 53% in a year's time in 2012. In totality, 76% of their users were prominent regular users (Edison Research, 2012). On the social site YouTube, 50% of their registered users visited the site weekly (Kissmetrics, n.d.). LinkedIn and Pandora each had 175 million users, eBay had 100 million active users, and the list goes on (Smith, 2012).

Search, social networking, and e-mail are the top three key online categories which were popular with Indians as well as global online communities (Figure 2). Also, among employed Internet users, 61% made some use of the Internet at work, spending on an average seven hours a week online at work (Dutton, Helsper, & Gerber, 2009). Around 91% of businesses with 10 or more employees had Internet access (Office for National Statistics, 2010) - 13% employees had access to SNSs such as Facebook, and 13% could blog ; 46% users were highly qualified and were assigned important managerial assignments. The users mostly started using these technologies at home, which got extended to their work places later. The companies for which these people worked may have a view point of restricting the access of SNSs for employees, but they may well access these SNSs outside the workplace as Internet is a public medium and ubiquity is its premium feature ; 9% of employed users used internal instant messaging services more than 3 hours a day. In addition, 7% with access to professional networks along with 6% who had access to social networks spent more than 3 hours using them on an average working day (The Work Foundation, 2009).

The use of social networking sites is impacting workplace productivity ; 55% of working professionals admitted logging on SNSs while at work ; 16% professionals exhausted over 30 minutes, and 6% spent an hour or more per day. From a productivity perspective, 55% of employees were of the opinion that their productivity was not impacted by utilizing their office time on Internet and social media ; whereas, about 11% of the employees reported about reduction in productivity (My JobGroup, 2010).
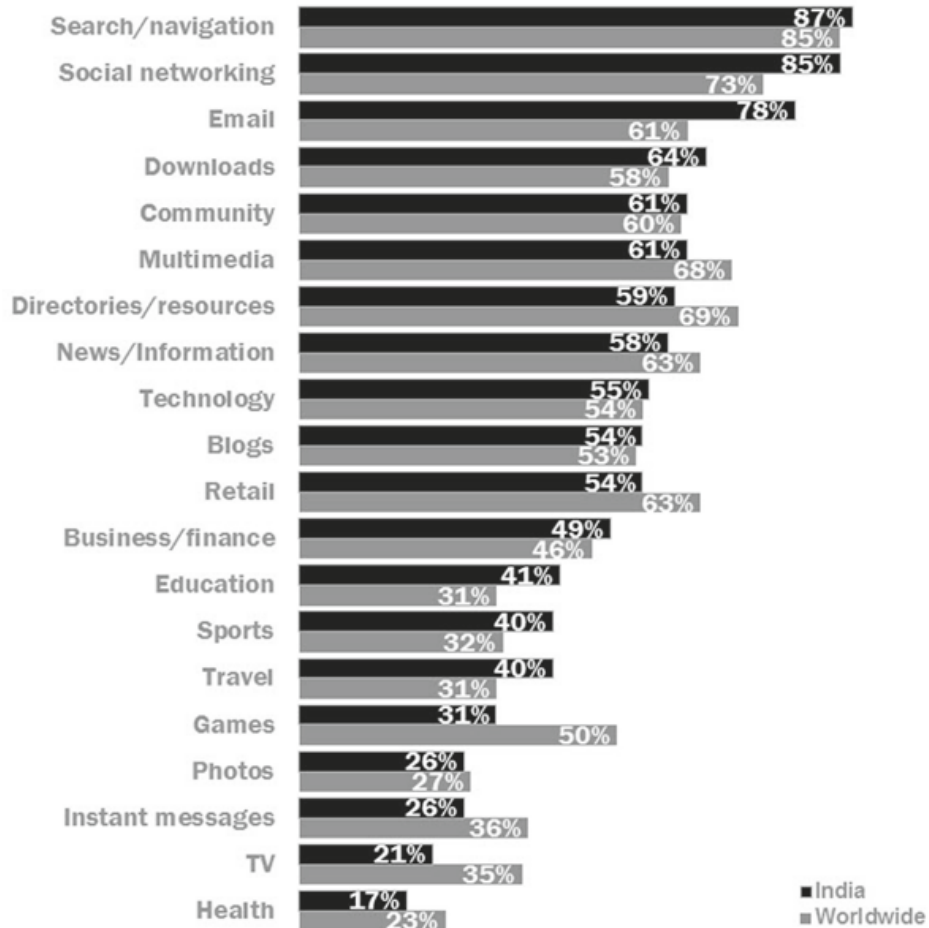
Social Media Usage and Discipline

There have been disputes between individuals and their employers, quite a few of them have been high profile cases. The cases got media publicity, which made employers cautious. There is a 'Work Blogger' fraternity which discusses professional intricacies, both negative and positive. Employers are now keen to know the social profiles and postings of their employees on SNSs. Currently, it is well accepted that usage of social media by employees is majorly non-work related and does not harm organizations, but their engagements on social media are always vulnerable to posting derogatory content about the organization, and in the past, there had been cases where organizations had taken disciplinary action. The usage mannerism of employees is of two types which could result in punitive action.

Figure 2. Reach of Key Online Categories. India Vs. Worldwide

Reach of key online categories: India vs Worldwide

Search, social networking and e-mail are the top three key online categories for online communities in India, with social networking and email being significantly more popular categories in India than the rest of the world.

Category	India	Worldwide
Search/navigation	87%	85%
Social networking	85%	73%
Email	78%	61%
Downloads	64%	58%
Community	61%	60%
Multimedia	61%	68%
Directories/resources	59%	69%
News/Information	58%	63%
Technology	55%	54%
Blogs	54%	53%
Retail	54%	63%
Business/finance	49%	46%
Education	41%	31%
Sports	40%	32%
Travel	40%	31%
Games	31%	50%
Photos	26%	27%
Instant messages	26%	36%
TV	21%	35%
Health	17%	23%

■ India
■ Worldwide

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Source: comScore Media Metrix, March 2011
Notes: Internet audience aged 15+ accessing the internet from home or work

Source: Reproduced from Digital Strategy Consulting.com. (2012)

(1) Where the issue centers less on use of social media : In these cases, employees post comments talking about ill practices, misbehaviours which are work related, where employees put up derogatory and obnoxious comments about their organization, defame the organization or management, or disseminate information that is crucial to the organization, which the employers do not wish to disclose.

(2) Where employees are utilizing IT resources of their organization for their personal benefit and access social media accounts using enterprise IT services. One of the reasons behind employee disseminating information over SNSs is that employees do not have confidence in the organizational system. An organization should have a

formal mechanism of reporting matters for employees without fear of reprisal. It was reported that employees had reported grudges against their bosses rather than against their organization, and 50% of them felt that they should not post negativity on SNSs about their organization (My JobGroup, 2010).

Organizations are implementing internal online forums where employees are encouraged to register their grievances, if any, and should also appreciate the good work and achievements of the peer group. Organizations are vigilant about threats and take action, if necessary. According to employees, there should not be any disciplinary action for criticizing the organization or the workplace ; 43% employees advocated no action compared to 12%, who supported punishment. Also, 70% employees were unclear about the existence of HR policy incorporating I.T. / I.S. usage and disciplinary clauses if there is a breach in usage of I.T. & I.S. including SNSs (My JobGroup, 2010).

(1) Legal Issues : In case the comments of an employee on SNSs are considered defamatory, employers can take action against the employee (Seaman & Cooke, 2010 ; Whincup, 2011). There are numerous cases where employees faced penalty for deprecating usage of SNS and were dismissed (Schoneboom, 2011). This may have happened due to non-clarity on what is acceptable and non-acceptable usage of SNSs. Employers should prepare a definite social media usage policy to define what is correct & acceptable and what is not. This will provide clarity to employees about their conduct on SNSs, and if objectionable comments are floated by an employee, it will be easier to initiate legal action against that employee (Brimelow, 2005).

Experts opine that many times, even having a social media usage policy does not help. Restrictions on discussing work related issues on social media may prevent users from raising legitimate grievances with employers. Also, employees as citizens have right to raise their voices against discrimination and ill practices of their employers. Certain comments may be categorized as 'protected disclosure' under whistle blowing, which protects employees (Brimelow, 2005;Whincup, 2011). Employees as citizens have constitutional right to raise their voice against alleged illegal or discriminatory practices by employers.

The employer and employees need to apply common sense while formulating policies for usage of Internet & SNSs. The regulations on usage of SNSs should also be examined and agreed to by an employment tribunal system such as ministry of Labour and Employment, Govt. of India. The tribunal may develop ideal regulations to be laid down uniformly by the organizations. What seems ideal is to have a policy that online conduct should not be different from offline conduct for protecting the integrity of an organization and its employees.

(2) Ethical issues : Ethics in the usage of social media is of prime importance as casual usage of SNSs may generate displeasure at the workplace. A user should be careful about two aspects:

(i) The subject that is posted on SNSs by a user as an employee, and,
(ii) The balance between rights and expected behaviour at work in accordance with the law.

Terminating an employee may be justifiable if the employee's posts harm the integrity of an organization. 'Moral Intensity' of comments is judged, and in case the consequences of derogatory comments are severe, it justifies termination of an employee. Bloggers say that their blogs are not meant to attack employers and organizations but to vent out their frustration as blogs are a free space for expressing their views (Richards, 2008). It is a low moral intensity activity compared to high moral intensity activity when a blogger is trying to defame the employer deliberately.

Castigatory actions taken against low moral intensity cases may be considered as disproportionate responses. These cases may lead to negative publicity following penalization of an employee. Also, as these cases involve usage of a preeminent medium of the Internet and social network which is growing rapidly, the cases get publicised and spread far more widely (Schoneboom, 2011). The macro social norms and micro social norms are

seen contradicting each other in the form of 'Right to Speech' and 'Appropriate Behaviour at Workplace,' respectively in case of blogging (Valentine, Fleischmann, Sprague & Godkin, 2010). Work-related postings on SNSs are considered as freedom of speech by bloggers (Schoneboom, 2008) ; whereas, potential nuisance by employees on SNSs is considered as a breach of the responsibility of employees towards their employers (Whincup, 2011).

Ethical and unethical are relative terms and may vary from person to person. Thus, organizations certainly should have social media policies to have clarity on the usage of SNSs by employees. If what signifies as unacceptable use of social media is not made clear by an organization to its employees, then it is unfair on the part of the organization to take punitive action against employees in the context of the employment relationship (TUC, 2007). Dismissing an employee who writes a derogatory blog about the organization could be seen as ethical if there are prescribed guidelines specifying dos and don'ts, and if the organization has strong and clear ethical values and regulations (Valentine et al., 2010). The formulation of guidelines on social media usage by employers will clearly demarcate what is correct and what is not.

However, merely formulating policies on social media usage will not address the ethical issue. The policies should be regarded as ethical by the employees, and they should work according to the policy guidelines. The formation of effective social media policy is possible only with the consent of an employer and its employees after negotiating what is beneficial and acceptable to both. Employers need to work in partnership with their staff to develop workable conduct policies, and ensure that these are well communicated to everyone working for them. Actively engaging with an issue that is not going to go away is the best way to ensure that there are no unpleasant surprises for both employers and employees (TUC, 2007).

Policy Articulation

The social media landscape is in overdrive, but social media policies had been an afterthought, or were shelved for more important or timely considerations. With recent observations, cases, and rifts between organizations and employees over usage of social media by employees at the workplace, organizations are serious about formulating Internet and social media usage policies. The Internet is one of the prominent mediums of communication and is here to stay. Employees need to be responsible for their posts. *When in doubt*, '*do not post'* is a useful idiom (Biz 3.0, 2001). A good social media policy can encourage employees in promoting their brand online and may safeguard against tarnishing the organization's repute or making proprietary assets public (Markowitz, 2011). Organisations are dealing seriously with the issue of employee use of social networking sites. Various companies are adopting different approaches as per the nature of their business. There are certain practices that companies should indulge in while formulating social media usage guidelines.

(1) Developing an Acquiesce : Consulting the subject matter expert with all the associated stakeholders is always recommended. Consultation with trade union or other worker representatives if a union is not recognised in an organization, as well as management and contractor representatives, will help provide authority and legitimacy" (Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Services, 2006). Companies take it as a good practice to have the consent of all associated stakeholders prior to finalizing the guidelines; a draft is posted on the bulletin boards to record the comments of employees. Companies have standard practice of consulting its trade unions for any policy formulation, and should abide by the same in formulating the policy for its social media usage.

(2) Policy Intricacies : Policy details may vary from organization to organization based on the work environment and the business domain of organizations, but it should clearly define acceptable use of social media so that there is no disrepute caused to an organization. Social media usage policy should be the integral part of an organization's human resource policy, and should clearly define the conduct of employees. Many organizations

integrate social media usage policy with the organization's security policy since unauthorized dissemination of information, intentionally or unintentionally, may result in severe consequences. Employees must be counselled on privacy and confidentiality matters, and organizations must communicate to them that the information that may be considered as private may actually not be private.

All organizations have HR policies in place. The need is to integrate social media policies with the prevalent HR policies and discourage employees from associating their organization privately with the social media. The rest is essentially conduct, communication, and security policy. The conduct of employees should be the same whether they are offline or online. 'Don't do anything online that you wouldn't do off-line.' Social media usage policy doesn't restrict employees from working on the Internet, but educates employees about grey areas that could lead to conflicts between an organization and its employees (Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Services, 2006).

(3) Information Availability : In the modern times of knowledge economy, the Internet has brought about a revolution in spreading awareness and in helping people build knowledge. The enormous information available on the Internet is a great help to employees, but it may also pose challenges to organizations. If an employee is dissatisfied with an organization's policies, he/she may refer to the information on the Internet in the context of an event and even post his/her case. References are mostly made if organizations do not have published guidelines. Employees tend to do their own research about employment clauses and interpret these accordingly. They can also misunderstand information gleaned out of context on the Internet. This may complicate the interaction between employees and their organizations.

Organizations should lay down regulations officially documented for reference, in case there is a requirement. Organizations should have published handbooks publicizing information on employment rights, which may incorporate social media usage regulations. Organizations have to publish such information over their portals and micro-sites meant for employees in the format employees could easily understand (TUC, 2007). Web-based information systems are used to disseminate information about employment law and rights to employees. Organizations are using Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube for putting up such information (Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Services, 2006) and are also using podcasts and videos. Interactive platforms are developed where employees can get the clarification they need on a policy matter.

(4) Accessing Employee's Information and Monitoring by an Enterprise : Social media is a public medium where people can post information about their workplace, which may be accessed by a person for whom it is not intended. Public posting may aid organizations to record behaviour of an employee outside the workplace and lead to developing a notion due to which the employee may face discrimination.

Employees have a right to a personal life, and provided they do not breach reasonable conduct guidelines, employers should respect this. An organization wouldn't follow an employee down the pub to check on what they said to their friends about their day at work. Just because they can do something like this online, doesn't mean they should (TUC, 2007). The employer should not at all be concerned about the private moments of an employee. The biggest question here is whether organizations monitor their employees' SNS activities as they monitor them in office through tracking technologies such as RFIDs? In current times, technology offers greater possibilities to organizations to monitor employees with the convenience of public network and SNS, and this has raised questions about infringement of employee rights and concerns over privacy. On the other side, organizations too are concerned about security and integrity and validate employee monitoring (Chang, Liu, & Lin, 2015). Organizations must try to formulate a standard policy that must abide by and accomplish fundamental principles of data protection given below:

(i) Principle of Finality : The purpose of monitoring must be clearly defined.

(ii) Principle of Proportionality : The bad and good must be in equal proportion. The extent of monitoring must be proportionate to the potential harm of the activity it is intended to prevent.

(iii) Principle of Transparency : The process of monitoring, how and what the organization monitors must be clearly told to employees.

Monitoring policies should incorporate fundamental principles of data protection from the perspective of both the organization as well as of employees and should be formed only after developing consent between both the parties and trade unions, if required, for the policies accepted rather than the enforced policies.

(5) Cyber-Bullying : Cyber-bullying is on the rise with the bloom of the Internet, and users are finding it very difficult to manage its menace. Cyber bullying is use of ICT in an unreceptive and premeditated way to harm, to distress, or to humiliate someone (Llewellyn, n.d.).

Actions that may be classified as cyber-bullying necessarily include offensive or harassing e-mails sent to a colleague, email threats, posting blogs, and leaving comments on social networking sites with offensive messages, promulgate slanderous hearsay about employees, and sharing somebody's private data online. Cyber-bullying is not different from bullying and policies for handling both are similar. The only difference is of the medium. Strong anti-bullying policies need to be penned, which should be updated from time to time with the introduction of new technologies. Dealing with cyber-bullying is a bit difficult for employers as it may happen outside the workplace, over the Internet, and beyond the jurisdiction of an organization (Llewellyn, n.d.), and therefore, organizations have less control over it. If an organization's electronic medium is used for cyber-bullying, then it has better control over perpetrators in addressing the matter. The ICT usage policies of an organization must incorporate clauses addressing cyber-bullying happening inside and outside an organization with a clear distinction of actions that could be termed as cyber-bullying. Cyber-bullying policies could also be integrated with an organization's workplace bullying policies both within and beyond working hours.

Managerial Implications

Many employment issues have been raised in the past time due to unmonitored use of social media at the workplace, and absence of social media usage regulation adds to the problem. These issues should be dealt with by referring to existing employment laws and data protection principles in various organizations. Employers must regulate the use and content of social media by employees by formulating effective social media usage policies, but employers may face serious difficulties in enforcing appropriate usage of SNSs by employees.

(1) Impact on Efficiency : Social media usage by employees at the workplace leads to excessive usage of IT resources of the organization that overburdens it and efficiency of the organization may go down. At the workplace, social media postings are made during normal working hours using the employer's IT infrastructure.

Blocking access to social media sites at work is the response of many organizations, though this may be unpopular and does not prevent employees from using social media on their personal gadgets like cell phones and tabs. Neither this can stop employees from accessing social media beyond working hours outside the organization. Alternatively, employers might want to monitor use of social media by their employees, but this needs to comply with prevalent data protection laws, and management should clearly guide employees about what constitutes excessive and inappropriate use.

(2) Reputation : Most issues have arisen where there has been damage to an organization's reputation. Disciplinary action against employees seems fine, but it must be in accordance with the established disciplinary

policies and procedures. The employer must act reasonably and in a fair manner, and response should be justified. One implication of this is that the actual impact must be considered by the employer rather than the assumed or feared impact.

(3) Privacy and Freedom of Expression : Social media usage policy may include particulars that may conflict with human rights laws, including right to privacy and right to freedom of speech. Even if it is otherwise, employees may claim that their social media postings are private and are beyond the employer's jurisdiction.

The employees might also argue that a restriction on their use of social media infringes their right to freedom of expression and speech. Their frank and lawful views expressed on social media may upset those of contrasting outlooks and action against them in such cases is unjustified. Enterprises should be very careful in formulating the policy and should respect the right to privacy and comply with data protection laws. Prior to monitoring employees, organizations should notify employees through an appropriate policy and should formulate a privacy impact assessment plan.

(4) Cyber Bullying : Social media is a strong, yet vulnerable platform that can be used for online bullying and harassment. Offensive photographs, derogatory comments posted to bully a target are common on the medium. Any action by an organization on an employee could be charged as discrimination against another employee. There could be claims for discrimination or unfair dismissal as employers are vicariously liable for the actions of employees towards each other in the course of their employment.

It is thus important for an organization to mandate bullying policies as an integral part of social media usage policy. Employees must be told about acceptable behaviour and policy scope to cover cyber-bullying outside the workplace. However, any ensuing suit against the employee must disclose to him the seriousness of his asserted conduct and the damage it has brought to the organization.

Conclusion

The use of SNSs by employees is increasing and will be growing exponentially in times to follow. Extensive usage by employees can have negative consequences on companies, since forbidden information could be intentionally or unintentionally posted by employees. The Internet is a versatile medium with ubiquity as its core feature. Organizations may apply a blanket ban on use of social media through their IT system internally, but employees could still use social media services from any location and hence, companies cannot afford to ignore the issue.

The general belief is that common sense should be used by employees and organizations in using social media and addressing matters related to social media usage, but a pragmatic approach is required to regulate the behaviour of employees. Organizations are now considering construction of norms defining social media fair usage policy for their employees that will furnish clarity on acceptable and unacceptable use of social media.

Consent has to be developed between organizations, their employees, and trade unions, if any, for developing guidelines, which will build a strong acceptability of the policy. Policies should be reviewed periodically as the world of Internet and social media is fast growing and changing dynamically. Education and training of employees on the matter may prove a key where employees may be updated with new version of the policy, if any amendments are made. They should be reminded of their limits and made aware about the difference in public and private life, and acceptable and unacceptable behaviour online. Organizations should clearly define information sharing and monitoring policies and apply specific checks on the inbound and outbound information which employees access that can be slanderous to the organization.

Organizations are now operating in a knowledge economy, and the Internet is the backbone of this economy. The medium along with social media can be advantageously used by an organization to create value through

digital engagements with customers. Employees can become the face of the organization through blogging and connecting with customers using social networks. Also, while dealing with employee blogging or posting unaccepted content, organizations should try to ensure that blogging is just to vent feelings, rather than to harm the organization. This kind of social media usage should be handled with maturity.

Employee behaviour can lead to cyber-bullying, which is growing with the increased use of social media. Anticipating the menace it can cause, employers should be prepared with anti-bullying policies, which include cyber-bullying as an integral part, but since the nature and medium of cyber-bullying is different - it may happen online and after working hours - new clauses to address cyber-bullying should be added to the anti-bullying policy of the organization. Social media usage policy may well incorporate cyber-bullying concerns with simple references to an organization's conventional bullying policy.

The practices discussed under Policy Articulation are of prime importance when organizations formulate social media usage policies. They should have a mandatory social media usage policy that gives clarity to employees about their conduct. Consent between an organization and its employees must be developed for formulating the policy, and it must be communicated to every employee. The online conduct of an employee should be considered no different from offline conduct if it intends to damage the organization, and the policy should unequivocally define acceptable and unacceptable behaviour of an employee with a clear mandate on disciplinary actions that an organization may practice in case of a default. A grievance registration process should be in place where employees can register their displeasure, if any. The policy should be reviewed, as technology keeps on changing with time and there is a need to address new trends in social media usage.

Limitations of the Study

The following part acknowledges the limitations of this study :

(1) The research is a qualitative research and the conclusions drawn are based on the views expressed by various authors whose work is referred to in this research. The relation between my views, that is, organizations need to have a mandatory social media usage policy" and actual operations in an organization is not tested, and no case study was referred to validate what has been expressed.

(2) Regarding literature research, the potential limitation is the scope of the review conducted. The databases that were investigated for relevant sources denied access to articles in numerous cases. Several articles were thus not retrievable due to monetary constraints or membership access regulations. Therefore, some potentially valuable findings regarding social media usage policies & strategies were not considered in this research.

(3) The research lacks a comparison between the practices of an organization having an effective social media usage policy with one without a policy. This may be helpful in knowing the effectiveness of social media usage policies, and the extent to which these policies have brought clarity on the blurred boundaries of personal and professional use of social media by employees.

(4) The study helps in forming a generalized opinion on having a social media usage policy for organizations, but the requirement of these policies and guidelines may not be similar in various industries, where nature of work is distinct and profile of employees vary. The research does not categorically specify a requirement of social media across industries.

The Way Forward

In order to validate the findings and gather more data about this research area, further research is recommended

that will add-on to the value and is essential for the stated aspects :

(1) A quantitative research may be conducted to validate the views expressed by various researches referred to in this research.

(2) It is advisable to investigate more cases for future research. In this way, research can prove how the elements of social media policy framework are applied in various companies and knowledge can be gained on the adoption and development processes in specific organizations in various industries. This may produce specific as well as generalized findings across industries.

(3) This research advocates having a social media usage policy in a company, but additional study could be performed on:

(i) Issues and difficulties in implementing the policy.

(ii) Is implementation of such a policy leading to invisible discrimination?

(iii) Social network policy implementation and impact on working culture, commitment, and behaviour of employees.

(iv) Is the social network policy clearing the blurred boundaries of personal and professional use of social media at the workplace and beyond?

(v) Social network usage intensity is associated with job performance and leads to organizational commitment. How does policy implementation impact the performance and commitment of employees?

(vi) Use of social network can offer various business advantages, and the benefits may be enormous, but can the reputational, legal, and operational risks be mitigated?

(vii) The requirement of social media policy across industries may not be similar. Could generalization be done across industries, companies, and locations?

A systematic research for exploring the above mentioned dimensions is certainly recommended.

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