Social Media

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The use of various social media platforms is common in modern world. Many people use them for a great variety of purposes, often considering them something positive and useful. The use of social media for both personal and business purposes has already become widespread. Social networks bring various benefits such as ability to communicate with people from all over the world and acquire new knowledge. Businesses use social media to promote themselves and find customers. At the same time, one should remember about risks that are not known to many users, including information security and psychological issues. As a result, private users and businesses may face different problems, which means it is important to know about them and the ways of their elimination. Thus, one should describe common examples of issues related to social media use while also identifying possible strategies of dealing with them.

**Security Risks**

Over the last few years, using social media has become especially popular since they provide significant benefits to private users and businesses. Individuals can communicate with people regardless of their geographic location via social media, and this communication with as many people as possible is quick and free. Moreover, via social media, people can search for information of interest to them in specific communities, which makes the use of various social platforms quite common to them. Nevertheless, the personal use of social media may cause different issues, and they should be considered. For instance, private users may face cybercrime and problems with information security since their personal data can be stoles for various purposes when they use such platforms (Sulaiman & Naqshbandi, 2014). Further, stolen personal information might be obtained by those who are not supposed to have this information (Cross, 2013). In this case, private users of social media might experience serious problems, especially if their stolen information is private. Additionally, their information can be used illegally for such purposes as tracking someone or using their personal information for registration. Furthermore, if personal information becomes known to many people, this can damage one’s reputation, which leads to the problems in personal and professional lives of those who have suffered from such crimes (Gonzalez, 2014). Consequently, if security rules are not followed, social media platforms can bring significant risks to people, so everyone should know how to prevent them.

Once a person starts using social media, they should be informed on how to prevent common risks and issues. Moreover, it is recommended to conduct a personal assessment and find possible threats that come from social media use (Bahadur, Inasi, & de Carvalho, 2011). In order to prevent such risks and threats to personal information, users should know and follow simple but efficient rules. Their passwords should be safe and reliable. If possible, one should not log into their social media accounts from computers, tablets, phones, or other devices of strangers or people they cannot completely trust. Ideally, social media sites should be entered only via personal electronic devices. In exclusive cases, it is possible to use such websites from the devices of other people but only those who can be trusted. It is not recommended to log into social media platforms from devices that are easily accessed by others, including work computers or computers in internet cafes. At the same time, to avoid information security issues, users are recommended not to share personal information they do not want to spread via social media. Moreover, it is better not to share such information even with best friends or relatives.

**Mental Health Risks**

In addition to information security risks, social media platforms users can face other problems, including mental health issues. In particular, those who use social media regularly to read information related to news and communities often face stress. Stress is high since many users read plenty of information that can be both positive and negative. In 2015, the Pew Research Center focused on the study of stress caused to users by social media (Brown, 2018). It was discovered that most users had high level of stress if they read too much information published in social media, and women were more stressed as compared to men. This happened because users were too engrossed in the problems of others they had read about. High level of stress is especially typical for Twitter users who often share their negative emotions or situations. Moreover, the level of stress is likely to grow the more time is devoted to social media. In addition to this, regular users are likely to experience increased levels of anxiety, depression, and addiction. As a result, they have problems with sleep, personal lives, and work. They often have issues with communication with people in real life. In the end, such problems lead to difficulties with family and friends, misunderstanding of others, the feeling of anger and loneliness due to the inability to build real-life relationships (Brown, 2018). In fact, the intensive use of social media can be a sort of psychological addiction. Such users replace real communication with social media, and they suffer if they have to limit their use. Mental issues are triggered by comparing their personal lives with those of other people, which can lead to sadness and depression (Walton, 2017). Such problems should be identified and eliminated in a timely manner to avoid further and more serious ones.

Users should be able to control themselves and limit their use of social media if they see that they have any of the issues described above. It is always better to prevent problems than to eliminate them. If one discovers depression, anxiety, or difficulties with real communication caused by excessive social media usage, it is better to limit it, including cutting the consumption of information received from social media. One should preferably read only interesting and useful information. Moreover, users should avoid negative information, especially personal one, to avoid its influence on their personal feelings and well-being. With such strategies, they will be able to preserve their mental health and good relationships with others in real life.

For adults, social media risks are significant, but for children, they can be even more harmful since usually, they cannot control themselves properly yet. The problem of harm to mental health, caused by intensive social media use, is especially serious for children and teenagers who use social media for a long time without the appropriate control of adults. Many parents are too busy to track how many hours a day their children spend using social networks and what information they consume. This can lead to serious mental health issues in children. According to several studies, the increased usage of social media platforms by children and teenagers can lead to various mental health disorders, including sleep disorders, anxiety, and even depression. These issues are similar to those of adults; however, most children are not able to control their problems properly and provide an efficient self-management. As a result, they may have difficulties with communication, relationships, study, and even the weakened immune system, which leads to higher risks of catching cold, flu, and other diseases, if children are stressed by the intensive use of social media (Udorie, 2015). In such cases, adults should take care of their children since the latter cannot do it by themselves.

In order to prevent mental issues related to social media use, adults should control this usage by children, and if possible, eliminate or shorten it significantly. They should explain to teenagers the possible risks and issues and persuade them to limit their use of social media platforms. Everything should depend individually on each child, their age, the intensity of their social media use, and so on. Moreover, to replace social media with something positive, adults should stimulate children to be engaged in other activities, including communication with others in real life, sports, hobbies, and things that they find pleasant and useful.

**Risks for Organizations**

Companies that use social media platforms obtain such benefits as the ability to create an effective network for communication for company members as well as the ability to promote the company and its products quite cheaply. Moreover, via social media platforms, they can find new customers (Kumar, Varma, & Pabboju, 2013). However, not all managers know about potential problems that social media use can bring to their companies and organizations. As a result, they cannot prevent issues on time and it becomes hard to eliminate their consequences if problems escalate. For example, using social media platforms for business purposes can lead to cyber-attacks and other risks for the firm’s security. Cyber-attacks are rather dangerous for companies and their information systems since they can lead to the breach and loss of important information that should not be shared with people outside the organization. In addition, if social media networks in companies are not controlled properly, employees may use them without control with the aim of spreading private corporate information to those who are not allowed to know it. Breaking information confidentiality is a popular issue in modern companies. For example, hospitals and other medical organizations often suffer from the violations of patient confidentiality via social media. Moreover, they can use social networks within the organization too much, which is harmful to their work process (Kumar et al., 2013). For both issues, if they are not eliminated, consequences for companies may be negative and rather significant.

In organizations, managers should know how to prevent security and information privacy issues. In particular, they should establish appropriate security systems in their firms to prevent information leaks. In addition, they ought to control the use of social media by all employees, including pages they enter and links they follow. Privacy settings must be properly established and controlled. Managers should ensure that all computers in the organization that are connected to social media networks are properly secured. They should provide a proper training to all employees regarding social media and Internet safety. They should also make sure that employees use strong passwords and follow security recommendations when they use social media at work. Finally, they should periodically control social media usage by employees to prevent issues from occurring (Kumar et al., 2013). With such an approach, corporate users can avoid risks of using their social media platforms at work. In all cases, it is better to prevent security issues than to eliminate them after they have happened. Thus, companies should follow a specific assessment process, including the analysis of current social media strategies in the organization and potential threats; this process must also include defining strategies to prevent issues as well as monitoring and reporting the implementation of strategies of social media use (Bahadur et al., 2011). With such an assessment, it is easier for organizations to control their social media network, prevent issues, or eliminate them quickly if they occur.

**Counter Arguments**

As it is clear from above analysis, using social media contains many risks for both individuals and business users. At the same time, the benefits are rather significant, and they can outweigh possible issues and risks. Without social media, it would be much harder to communicate with people from different corners of the world as well as to obtain business benefits, including attracting new customers quickly and cheaply. Those arguments are true and relevant since social media platforms have many benefits as opposed to drawbacks. Thus, it is not wise to lose the former because of fear of potential risks. Moreover, anyone can use the benefits of social media, but their use should be careful and possible risks should be always kept in mind. With such a responsible use, one can have maximum benefits and minimum risks.

**Conclusion**

Therefore, the use of various social media platforms has become widespread in modern world, and it provides significant benefits to individuals and firms. However, while enjoying the positive sides of social media usage, users often ignore possible issues and risks, which may lead to serious negative consequences. For individuals, social media risks include threats to their information security as well as problems with mental health in the case of regular use of these media. For business users, information security issues are the most popular ones, if social media are employed for business purposes. In order to use social media with maximum benefits and minimum losses, users ought to remember about all most widespread risks in order to prevent or minimize them. For both firms and individuals, the main rule is to secure their private information and to use social media with particular limits. Only with such an approach, their use of social media will be beneficial and safe.

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