

Chapter 3

The Ethics of Security of Personal Information upon Facebook

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ABSTRACT

Social networking systems are an ever evolving and developing means of social interaction which is not only being used to disseminate information to family, friends and colleagues, but as a way of meeting and interacting with “strangers” through the advent of a large number of social applications. Social networking systems, as well as being a way for those people who are isolated to interact with other people, can also have a huge social and personal impact on some users, for example, harassment via a social networking site resulting in suicide. This personal information (not just factual data), including the thoughts and feelings of individuals, can be used by others through social applications to cause emotional and psychological distress. The level of security for all this personal information on social networking systems such as Facebook will be examined in the chapter, as well as the possible threats and ethical issues that could impact users. This chapter will discuss a number of examples where personal information has been breached and will put forward a model that evaluates the security and risks and proposes a framework that relates to the use of information within Facebook.

INTRODUCTION

Information access, anytime, anywhere, any place is one of the features of the twenty first century. The widespread global adoption of Electronic

Business and faster Internet connections through broadband provides access to business and commerce from a networked desktop computer.

The initial focus of the Internet was the distribution of information in a static manner but over time, the Internet has developed into Web 2.0. The Web is no longer a collection of static

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Figure 1. The Difference between Web 1.0 and Web 2.0

Web 1.0	Web 2.0
DoubleClick	--> Google AdSense
Ofoto	--> Flickr
Akamai	--> BitTorrent
mp3.com	--> Napster
Britannica Online	--> Wikipedia
personal websites	--> blogging
	evite--> upcoming.org and EVDB
domain name speculation	--> search engine optimization
	page views--> cost per click
	screen scraping--> web services
	publishing--> participation
content management systems	--> wikis
directories (taxonomy)	--> tagging ("folksonomy")
	stickiness--> syndication

pages of HTML that describe something in the world. Increasingly, the Web is the world where everything and everyone in the world casts an “information shadow,” an aura of data which, when captured and processed intelligently, offers extraordinary opportunity and mind-bending implications (O’Reilly & Battelle, 2009).

The difference between Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 is shown in Figure 1. In essence, the difference in development and usage relates to the move from static information to dynamic information and this transformation is encapsulated as Web 2.0. A major issue for successful Web 2.0 applications is the involvement of users to add value (Serrano and Torres, 2010).

The emergence of Web 2.0 and related Internet sites such as Facebook has had a major impact upon the Internet in recent years. One of the interesting aspects of Facebook is the use of third party applications and the interactions that this allows. This means that individual Facebook pages now act as a web page, blog, instant messenger, email system and the use of third party applications allows for real time functionality (DiMicco & Millen, 2007; Shuen, 2008).

The rise in popularity of Facebook has meant issues surrounding its security and its ethical use have become more important and this chapter will explore many of these issues.

BACKGROUND: THE HISTORY OF SOCIAL NETWORKING

Social networking sites (SNSs) are virtual spaces where people congregate to discuss ideas, share information and communicate (Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008). SNSs have become increasingly popular and are being used on a daily basis by millions of users across the globe.

The first accepted SNS was SixDegrees.com which was launched in 1997 and allowed users to create a profile, list their friends and view their details. It closed as a business in 2000. This may be due to the limited functionality of the early sites or the fact that it was still early in the evolution of the Internet and many people may not have had a large number of friends who were also Internet users to connect with via a SNS. Cyworld was launched in 1999. This was a Korean virtual world

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