

University of Southern Queensland



Understanding the impact of privacy concerns and trust on social networking sites: Analysing user intentions towards willingness to share digital identities

**A Dissertation submitted by
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For the award of
Master of Business Research**

2012

Certificate of Dissertation

I certify that the ideas, investigations, analysis, results, discussions, and conclusions reported in this dissertation are entirely my own work, except where otherwise acknowledged. I also certify that the work is original and has not been previously submitted for any other award, except where otherwise acknowledged.

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Abstract

Participation in social networking sites (SNS) has dramatically increased in recent years. SNS focus on building online communities of people who share interests and/or activities, or who are interested in exploring the interests and activities of others. This study examines the experiences of SNS users, and explores how the depth of their experience and knowledge of the Internet, trust and privacy concerns impact upon their individual willingness to share information about their own identity with other users on social networking websites. An acceptance model is proposed that incorporates cognitive, as well as affective, attitudes as primary influencing factors on user attitudes and behaviour which, in turn, are driven by underlying beliefs, perceived levels of privacy and trust, attitudinal experiences and knowledge, as well as a willingness to share.

The proposed conceptual model for this study is derived from the literature review and Theory of Planned Behaviour. This model explains how people experience different levels of motivation about sharing knowledge and seeking information from other members which, in turn, leads to a divergence in both intentions and behaviours within virtual communities. The model shows excellent measurement properties and establishes two distinct constructs—specifically, the need for perceived levels of privacy, and the need for established levels of trust within SNS.

This study is based on quantitative methodology and uses a structural equation model to test the construction of the model and its hypothesis. The data for this study were collected from a Facebook forum, with a sample size of 155 SNS users.

The main theoretical contribution of this study is to provide greater understanding and new insights into privacy concerns and trust, in so far as these factors impact upon SNS users' willingness to readily share information regarding their digital identities. Secondly, this study will enrich the existing literature regarding the inter-relationship between the extent of SNS users' length and depth of experience as Internet users, as this impact upon their willingness to share identity-based information.

List of publications during the MBSR study period

Tiwari, S, & Yong, J 2011, 'Understanding Impact of Privacy Concerns and Trust in Social Networking Sites', paper presented to 5th International Conference on ICT for Development and Education, Kathmandu, Nepal, November 16-17, 2011.

Yong, J, **Tiwari, S,** Xiaodi, H & Qun, J 2011, 'Constructing Robust Digital Identity Infrastructure For Future Networked Society', paper presented to 15th International Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work in Design (CSCWD), Lausanne, Switzerland, 8-10 June, 2011.

Acknowledgements

I sincerely wish to thank the following people for their encouragement and help in the researching and writing of this thesis.

I would especially wish to thank my supervisors Dr Jianming Yong for his patience, his professional advice and his faith in me to complete this thesis. Thanks also to my associate supervisor, Dr Michael Lane, for his suggestion to explore online social networking sites and his great enthusiasm for his support for this project.

I also thank my good friends Ramesh Tiwari, Arjun KC, Arjun Neupane and Rohini Prasad Devkota for their unwavering support and encouragement for this dissertation.

I remember all those who have contributed directly or indirectly to the successful completion of my study. In particular, special thanks go to all of the survey respondents for taking the time and effort to participate in the study.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge my family and my lovely and caring wife Sunita for their constant care, love and encouragement. I owe much to them for where I stand today.

Sanjib Tiwari

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-------------|
| CERTIFICATE OF DISSERTATION | II |
| ABSTRACT | III |
| LIST OF PUBLICATIONS DURING THE MBSR STUDY PERIOD | IV |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS | V |
| TABLE OF CONTENTS | VI |
| LIST OF TABLES | VIII |
| LIST OF FIGURES | IX |
| LIST OF ACRONYMS | XI |
| CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| 1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY | 1 |
| 1.2 FOCUS AND MOTIVATION | 3 |
| 1.3 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM | 5 |
| 1.4 GOAL AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVES | 7 |
| 1.5 METHODOLOGY | 8 |
| 1.6 OUTLINE OF REPORT | 8 |
| 1.7 CONCLUSION | 10 |
| CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW | 11 |
| 2.1 INTRODUCTION | 11 |
| 2.2 SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES | 11 |
| 2.2.1 <i>Web 2.0 and Social Networking</i> | 11 |
| 2.2.2 <i>Background of Social Networking Sites</i> | 16 |
| 2.2.3 <i>Defining Social Networking Sites</i> | 21 |
| 2.2.4 <i>SNS Knowledge and Experience</i> | 22 |
| 2.3 INTERNET PRIVACY | 24 |
| 2.3.1 <i>Privacy Concerns</i> | 27 |
| 2.4 TRUST | 30 |
| 2.5 DIGITAL IDENTITIES | 33 |
| 2.5.1 <i>Willingness to Share Digital Identity</i> | 36 |
| 2.6 GAPS IN THE LITERATURE | 37 |
| 2.7 CONCLUSION | 38 |
| CHAPTER III: THEORETICAL SUPPORT AND CONCEPTUAL MODEL | 40 |
| 3.1 INTRODUCTION | 40 |
| 3.2 RELATED SOCIAL THEORIES | 40 |
| 3.2.1 <i>Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA)</i> | 42 |
| 3.2.2 <i>Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)</i> | 43 |
| 3.2.3 <i>Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)</i> | 43 |
| 3.3 RESEARCH QUESTION (RQ) | 45 |
| 3.4 CONCEPTUAL MODEL | 46 |
| 3.5 CONCLUSION | 50 |
| CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY | 52 |
| 4.1 INTRODUCTION | 52 |

| | |
|--|------------|
| 4.2 OBJECTIVE | 53 |
| 4.3 RESEARCH DESIGN | 53 |
| 4.4 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY AND PARADIGM..... | 55 |
| 4.5 RESEARCH APPROACH | 57 |
| 4.6 QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN | 59 |
| 4.7 DATA COLLECTION AND SAMPLE SIZE..... | 64 |
| 4.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS | 66 |
| 4.9 DATA ANALYSIS | 67 |
| 4.9.1 <i>Descriptive Statistics Analysis</i> | 67 |
| 4.9.2 <i>Reliability</i> | 67 |
| 4.9.3 <i>Validity</i> | 69 |
| 4.9.4 <i>Factor Analysis</i> | 71 |
| 4.9.5 <i>Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)</i> | 71 |
| 4.10 CONCLUSION..... | 73 |
| CHAPTER V: RESULTS AND ANALYSIS..... | 75 |
| 5.1 INTRODUCTION | 75 |
| 5.2 DATA QUALITY AND CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS | 75 |
| 5.3 CONFIRMATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS (CFA)..... | 86 |
| 5.4 DIMENSIONAL LEVEL ANALYSIS – THE MEASUREMENT MODEL | 92 |
| 5.5 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS AND CORRELATION FOR ALL VARIABLES | 95 |
| 5.6 STRUCTURE EQUATION MODELLING (SEM) | 96 |
| 5.6.1 <i>Overall Model Fit</i> | 100 |
| 5.6.2 <i>Path Results</i> | 101 |
| 5.7 CONCLUSION..... | 102 |
| CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSION | 105 |
| 6.1 INTRODUCTION | 105 |
| 6.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY | 106 |
| 6.2.1 <i>Research problem</i> | 106 |
| 6.2.2 <i>Research hypotheses</i> | 107 |
| 6.2.3 <i>Research Methodology</i> | 108 |
| 6.2.4 <i>Conclusions about descriptive demographic data</i> | 109 |
| 6.2.5 <i>Conclusions about SEM model fit</i> | 109 |
| 6.2.6 <i>Conclusions concerning Results of Research Hypotheses Tests</i> | 110 |
| 6.3 CONTRIBUTION OF STUDY | 113 |
| 6.3.1 <i>Contributions to the Literature</i> | 113 |
| 6.3.2 <i>Contributions for SNS Users</i> | 114 |
| 6.3.3 <i>Contribution to SNS Developers</i> | 114 |
| 6.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND FUTURE RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES | 115 |
| 6.5 SUMMARY | 117 |
| REFERENCES..... | 119 |

List of Tables

| | |
|--|-----|
| TABLE 4-1 QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS AND VARIABLE CODING | 62 |
| TABLE 5-1 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESPONDENTS | 86 |
| TABLE 5-2 RELIABILITY STATISTICS | 89 |
| TABLE 5-3 CONVERGENT VALIDITY OF THE MODEL VARIABLES | 91 |
| TABLE 5-4 GOODNESS OF FIT INDEXES OF THE MEASUREMENT MODEL | 94 |
| TABLE 5-5 DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS AND CORRELATION..... | 96 |
| TABLE 5-6 GOODNESS-OF-FIT INDICES OF STRUCTURAL MODEL | 100 |
| TABLE 5-7 PATH COEFFICIENTS FOR STRUCTURAL MODEL..... | 101 |
| TABLE 5-8 RESULTS OF HYPOTHESES TESTING | 102 |

List of Figures

| | |
|--|----|
| FIGURE 2.1 TIMELINE OF THE MANY MAJOR SNS | 20 |
| FIGURE 2.2 DIGITAL IDENTITY: GLOBAL SET OF ATTRIBUTES OF A USER | 33 |
| FIGURE 2.3 THREE TIERS OF DIGITAL IDENTITY | 35 |
| FIGURE 3.1 CONCEPTUAL MODEL - KEY FACTORS OF SNS THAT IMPACT ON WILLINGNESS TO SHARE DIGITAL IDENTITY | 46 |
| FIGURE 4.1 THE PROCESS OF QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH | 54 |
| FIGURE 4.2 THE FLOW CHART OF RESEARCH DESIGN | 55 |
| FIGURE 4.3 THE PURPOSE RESEARCH DESIGN | 55 |
| FIGURE 5.1 Respondent age groups percentiles | 77 |
| FIGURE 5.2 USES OF INTERNET | 78 |
| FIGURE 5.3 USES OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES | 79 |
| FIGURE 5.4 CURRENT NUMBER OF ACCOUNTS IN DIFFERENT SNS | 80 |
| FIGURE 5.5 NUMBER OF VISITS TO SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES | 81 |
| FIGURE 5.6 SOURCE OF ORIGINAL KNOWLEDGE ABOUT SNS | 82 |
| FIGURE 5.7 AVERAGE NUMBERS OF FRIENDS IN EACH SOCIAL NETWORKING ACCOUNT..... | 83 |
| FIGURE 5.8 PURPOSE FOR VISITING SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES | 84 |
| FIGURE 5.9 EDUCATION STATUS OF RESPONDENTS | 85 |
| FIGURE 5.10 MEASUREMENT FIT MODEL | 92 |
| FIGURE 5.11 STANDARDISED STRUCTURE EQUATION MODEL PATH DIAGRAM | 98 |
| FIGURE 5.12 FINAL STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODEL OF IMPACT OF PRIVACY CONCERNS AND TRUST IN SNS FOR WILLINGNESS TO SHARE DIGITAL IDENTITIES..... | 99 |

List of Appendices

| | |
|---|------------|
| APPENDIX A | 134 |
| PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET | 134 |
| APPENDIX B | 136 |
| ETHICS APPROVAL | 136 |
| APPENDIX C | 137 |
| INFORMATION AND INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT (ONLINE VERSION)..... | 137 |
| APPENDIX D | 138 |
| ONLINE SURVEY..... | 138 |
| APPENDIX E | 143 |
| STATISTICAL DATA ANALYSIS DETAILS..... | 143 |

List of Acronyms

| Acronyms | Description |
|-----------------|--|
| C.R. | Critical Ratio |
| CFA | Confirmatory Factor Analysis |
| CFI | Comparative Fit Index |
| CR | Construct Reliability |
| DI | Digital Identities |
| GFI | Goodness of Fit Index |
| IFI | Incremental Fit Index |
| IS | Information System |
| IT | Information Technology |
| IUIPC | Internet Users' Information Privacy Concerns |
| NFI | Normed Fit Index |
| PC | Privacy Concerns |
| RMSEA | Root Mean Square Error of Approximation |
| RSS | Rich Site Summary |
| SEM | Structural Equation Model |
| SNS | Social Networking Site |
| SPSS | Statistical Package for the Social Sciences |
| T | Trust |
| TAM | Technology Acceptance Model |
| TLI | Tucker-Lewis coefficient |
| TPB | Theory of Planned Behavior |
| TRA | Theory of Reasoned Action |
| VE | Variance Extracted |