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Social Media Marketing in East Asia - A comparison of marketing practices in the East Asian IT industry

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Introduction

Nowadays, social media is ubiquitous. Reading a friend's blog about his exchange year abroad, looking at photos of last nights' get-together on Facebook or just watching a video on YouTube – all these activities have become part of everyday life of many people. At the time of writing, Facebook had crossed the 700,000,000 user mark and the total time users worldwide spent on YouTube in just one month amounted to more than 326,000 years (Pingdom 2011). Moreover, the commercial use of social media is gaining in importance for several reasons. One reason is that social media enables companies to keep closer track of customer needs and to interact directly with target customers (Kotler and Armstrong 2008, 399). In addition, social media is becoming more and more mainstream, as surveys have shown that not only older generations are starting to use social media, but also that social media is more widely used as a communication tool than e-mails (Nelson 2009a, 3, 5). Other recent studies have shown the increasing importance of social media as an advertising channel while the advertising effects of classical media such as TV or radio are decreasing (see also Hettler 2010, 31; Kotler and Armstrong 2008, 400 or Nielsen 2009b, 2).

The author of this paper is an active user of social media, too, which has led him to observing and researching the commercial use of social media. In this context, the East Asian[1] region is of particular interest as it includes the countries with the highest average broadband connection speed (Korea[2]) as well as the country with the highest Internet population worldwide (China[3]) (Akami Technologies 2011; Internetworldstats 2011b). This provided the author with further impetus for research on what kinds of social media companies in this region can use and how they cope with this relatively new media within their marketing strategies. However, although a lot of current literature focuses on the social media environment of East Asia in general, and of China in particular, an analytical approach for a deeper understanding of social media marketing in this region is hard to find. It turned out that this lack is not a regional problem. Despite the fact that literature on social media marketing is as ubiquitous as the phenomenon of social media itself (see also Evans and McKee 2010; Mangold and

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[1] The author is aware that a clear definition of 'East Asia' does not exist, as it can be defined in geographical, cultural or economical terms. For this paper, East Asia refers to the definition of the United Nations of 'Eastern Asia', which includes China, Hong Kong, Macao, Japan, South Korea, North Korea and Mongolia (United Nations 2011).
[2] 'Korea' refers to the Republic of Korea.
[3] 'China' refers to the People's Republic of China.

Faulds 2009; Weinberg 2009 or Zarrella 2010), this field of research is generally lacking a widely accepted theoretical framework and is currently rather focusing on practical guidelines for commercial use. For these reasons, the author began researching in the underlying theories of social media and marketing separately. In this regard the concepts of Web 2.0 (see O'Reilly 2005) and marketing communications (see Kotler and Armstrong 2010; Dahlén and Smith 2009; Fill 2009 or Fill 2011) helped to understand this new phenomenon. Moreover, as these concepts are sufficiently researched, they will serve as theoretical foundation for this paper.

Social media marketing (SMM) is a very current and widespread topic. Yet, analytical approaches in the regional context of East Asia are missing. Furthermore, comparisons of not only the social media environment but also marketing activities of East Asian companies within this media require further investigation.

Against this backdrop, the key questions of this paper are:

- What are the similarities and differences of the SMM environments and activities of East Asian companies, and how can they be explained?
- Does a so-called 'East Asian way of SMM' exist?

In addition, the author is also interested in the economic aspects of SMM in East Asia and thus tries to answer the following sub-questions:

- How and to what extend do East Asian businesses conduct SMM?
- Are their SMM efforts likely to be successful from an economic point of view?

In order to answer these questions the author will refer to the following material. For the theoretical framework, selected primary and secondary literature from the Internet and the fields of marketing and communication studies will be referred to. Empirical data is collected through multiple case studies and almost entirely from the Internet, as social media itself and the latest relevant data regarding social media are only available over the World Wide Web[4].

In finding a method to answer the key questions, the author builds on the current theories and instruments of marketing communications and suggests a new possible

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[4] All references in languages other than English are translated by the author himself.

model of how to categorize and measure social media marketing activities. With the help of this analytical approach, the SMM environments can be systematically analyzed and characteristics and patterns of SMM activities of East Asian businesses can be identified. The model proposed here further enables the comparison of SMM activities of companies in general and can help in finding trends and similarities between industries, countries or regions. Therefore, the results of this paper will be of special interest for companies considering setting up marketing activities in social media in one or more of the analyzed countries. Moreover, the analytical model presented in this paper is going to be useful for any company interested in analyzing and comparing their current social media marketing activities with those of other companies. As this paper also focuses on the aspect of how to render SMM effective from an economic point of view, it can also help to improve already planned or implemented SMM strategies. Despite the focus on successful SMM, the measurement of the actual outcome and impact of the analyzed SMM activities on customers or other users of social media cannot be covered in the scope of this paper and is left out as suggestion for further research.

The paper will be structured as follows. In the first part of the first chapter, we will elaborate the theoretical framework necessary to provide an understanding of social media and the associated concept of Web 2.0. After that, specific social media channels are singled out to define the environment of SMM that will be subsequently analyzed. The second part of the first chapter deals with the theory of marketing in general. Later on, specific tools of marketing are presented before dealing with marketing communications in particular. The following section defines specific marketing instruments of social media marketing, which at the same time represent the analytical categories for the analysis of the empirical data. Thereafter, we will define the term 'social media marketing' for the purpose of this paper and explain the underlying importance of this new phenomenon from an economic point of view. The first chapter ends with an overview of the research design and the research method of the paper.

The second chapter deals with the empirical framework of the analyzed countries and of the case study companies. As several case studies are necessary to answer the key questions of this thesis, we will first look at basic data on the social media environment and on all platforms subject to the individual case studies within the specified social media channels. After this, we will present and analyze the collected data for each company according to the analytical categories established in the first

chapter. At the end of each country/company analysis, we will give a short summary of the results and in part give answers to the sub-questions presented above.

In the third and last chapter, the results obtained in the analyses of the case studies are compared to each other in order to answer the key questions of the paper. The chapter ends with a summary of the empirical findings and suggestions for further research.

1 Theoretical Framework

1.1 Social Media

1.1.1 Web 2.0 and Social Media

Introduction

Before analyzing how social media is used for marketing, the term 'social media' itself has to be defined. The first step, however, is to clarify the underlying concept, which is usually called 'Web 2.0'.

The concept of Web 2.0 was mainly shaped and popularized by Tim O'Reilly (Walsh et al. 2011, 4), who originally came up with this term during a brainstorming session for organizing a conference about the web (Graham 2005). O'Reilly describes Web 2.0 as a concept without solid boundaries, "[…] but rather, a gravitational core" (O'Reilly 2005). He further describes Web 2.0 as a "set of principles, and practices that tie together a veritable solar system of sites that demonstrate some or all of those principles, at a varying distance from that core" (O'Reilly 2005). This gravitational core has following characteristics:

- ➔ The strategic positioning of the web as a platform
- ➔ Users controlling their own data on the web
- ➔ Service, not packaged software
- ➔ Architecture of participation
- ➔ Cost-effective scalability
- ➔ Remixable data-source and data transformation
- ➔ Software above the level of a single device
- ➔ Harnessing collective intelligence

(O'Reilly 2005)

Web 2.0 describes the transition from a rigid information source (Web 1.0) to an interactive medium of participation (Walsh et al. 2011, 4). Applications such as personal web pages, the Encyclopedia Britannica Online and the idea of content publishing which clearly belong to the concept of Web 1.0 are now increasingly being

replaced by Web 2.0 applications such as blogs, wikis and other collaborative projects. In other words, content and applications are no longer created and published by individuals but are instead continuously modified by all users in a participatory and collaborative fashion (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010, 61). However, Web 2.0 is not really a new technological innovation, but rather a new behavioral pattern of contemporary Internet users. The traditional concept of one-way communication is making way for the direct dialog between users and their environment with independently generated content (Bender 2010, 145). Another term often used in the World Wide Web is 'Social Web'. Although authors like Ebersbach et al. consider Social Web only as a part of Web 2.0 with distinctive characteristics (2009, 29-32), others like Ruisinger and Pleil use this term as a synonym for Web 2.0 (Ruisinger 2011, 157; Pleil 2010, 12).

Social Media

Having described the concept of Web 2.0 we will now define the term social media. Let us first look at some suggestions for the definition of this term.

Table 1 Definitions of Social Media

David M. Scott	"Social media provides the way people share ideas, content, thoughts, and relationships online. Social media differ from so-called 'mainstream media' in that anyone can create, comment on, and add to social media content. Social media can take the form of text, audio, video, images and communities" (Scott 2010, 38).
Kaplan and Haenlein	"Social Media is a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content" (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010, 61).
Hettler	"[Social media can be defined as] personally generated content, which is aimed at interaction and appears in the form of text, pictures, videos or audios addressed at a certain group of recipients from a virtual community or the public, as well as the underlying services and tools of Web 2.0. […]Social media combines technological, contentual and creative aspects in order to realize communicative exchange-processes in virtual communities" (Hettler 2010, 14).
Bender	"Social media is the location of the 'new communication', which includes text- or videoblogs (vlogs), podcasts and communities, and has to be distinguished from one-dimensional online- and offline media" (Bender 2010, 146).
Safko	"Social Media is the media we use to be social" (Safko 2010, 3).

Source: Compiled by the author based on Scott 2010, 38; Kaplan and Haenlein 2010, 61; Hettler 2010, 14; Bender 2010, 146; Safko 2010, 3

The idea that the Internet is a social medium is not new but the aspect of a many-to-many communication channel makes it unique in its own way. Whereas the telephone only allows one-to-one and the broadcasting media only one-to-many communication, the Internet allows a unique many-to-many communication pattern and has "[…] always been all about the average Joe being able to communicate with the rest of the world" (Sterne 2010, xvi). Building on this many-to-many communication pattern of the Internet, social media functions as a catalyst and allows the convenient distribution of consumer-generated content through easy-to-access online tools (Sterne 2010, xvii).

Based on these definitions, we will consider Web 2.0 as the underlying platform for the emergence of social media, whereas social media is defined as Web-based applications or locations where user-generated content can easily be communicated within the user's online environment.

1.1.2 Channels of Social Media

<u>Overview</u>

Having defined social media we now have to explore which Web-based applications or channels are actually used to communicate user-generated content. Because of the vast amount and variety of these channels, listing all existing social media channels goes beyond the scope of this paper. In this chapter we will thus discuss some suggestions for a categorization of social media as well as for a prioritization out of economic considerations.

Businesses can use social media either for internal or external communication. For the scope of this paper, only the use of social media for external communication, i.e. between companies and their consumers is of relevance[5]. Here we will refer to Zarella's categorization of social media as a starting point (see Zarrella 2010). Zarrella prioritizes social media channels from an economic point of view, as his book contains guidelines on the successful economic utilization of social media. However, it is important to bear in mind that this is just one example of how to categorize social media channels. Sterne, for example, defines six different broad categories of social media (Sterne 2010, xvii-xix), while there are many other examples (see also Mangold 2009, 358; Scott 2010, 37 or Hettler 2010, 41-60). As this paper will focus on the commercial use of social media, we will concentrate on the eight channels proposed by Zarella. These channels are, in order of priority, blogs, microblogs, social networks, media-sharing sites, social bookmarking and voting sites, review sites, forums and virtual worlds (Zarrella 2010, 3). For the sake of feasibility and significance, we will focus on the first four and most important channels, as they also represent the focus in many other surveys and research papers. In the Social Media Marketing Industry Report, a survey conducted at the beginning of 2011 with 3,342 marketers from more than 10 countries, the four channels microblogs, social networks, video marketing and weblogs were those channels used most by marketers (Stelzner 2011, 21). In another report conducted one year earlier, 1,955 professionals from the public relations field across more than 46 countries were asked about the importance of different social media channels in their daily working life. Social networks, online videos, weblogs and Twitter were considered as most important,

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[5] For further reading on the internal use of social media see Edosomwam et al. 2011.

with Twitter having the strongest growth rate (Zerfass 2010, 77-78). The four channels also constitute the focal points of studies by Burson-Marsteller, a communications and PR firm conducting research on social media in the Asia-Pacific region (Burson-Marsteller 2010, 6).

For these reasons, the above-mentioned four most important and most widely used channels will also constitute the research environment for the empirical data of this paper, namely weblogs, microblogs, social network services (SNS) and media sharing platforms (with a focus on video sharing platforms). Detailed explanations are provided in the following sections.

Weblogs

The term 'blog' is derived from 'web log', which is simply another word for an online journal (Safko 2010, 139). John Barger first coined the term 'weblog' in 1997 and from that time on "[…] blogs have come to dominate the net" (Wortham 2007; Safko 2010, 139). In the following years, Peter Merholz and Evan William greatly influenced the development of the blogging culture, bringing us to the current usage of the term (Baker 2008; Safko 2010, 140).

The Merriam Webster Dictionary defines a blog as "[…] a Web site that contains an online personal journal with reflections, comments, and often hyperlinks provided by the writer" (Merriam Webster Dictionary 2011). Blogs can also be described as publicly written diaries in the form of or as a part of a website (Ebersbach et al. 2009, 56).

The author of a blog usually writes about a topic of concern from a first-person point of view. The content is written subjectively, as commentary, and usually contains up-to-the-minute topics. In addition, it can contain multimedia elements such as videos, audio files or pictures, as well as links to other related blogs. The entries are sorted in reverse chronological order, which means that the newest post is on the first page of the blog (Ebersbach et al. 2009, 56). The main element of Blogs in the context of this paper is the interactive character, which is accomplished through the comment function. This function enables readers to express their opinions, start discussions, ask questions or just relate their praise or agree with the author on the topic (Ebersbach et al. 2009, 63; Sweeney 2011). Contrary to blog posts, these comments are normally shown in a chronological order with the oldest comment at the top (Hettler 2010, 45). It is possible

to sort blog posts into categories with the help of so-called 'tags'. These tags allow posts to be sorted after their content and enable people to find posts on certain topics. Moreover, as each blog has its own unique permalink, other authors who do not want to directly comment on a blog-post but want to refer or answer to it on their own blogs can use this permalink which automatically creates a reference in the comments-section of the original blog (Hettler 2010, 45). As of June 2011, the number of all blogs on the Internet was 163 million (BlogPulse 2011).

Blogs used by businesses are called 'corporate blogs' and can be used for internal and external communication (Ebersbach et al. 2009, 210-211). Seale defines corporate blogs as the Web equivalent to conversation and because a blog has a "clearly defined author, it helps humanize the business and put a face on it" (Seale 2007).

Microblogs

Microblogging is a form of blogging that limits the size of each post and can be used to announce offers or events, promote new blog posts, or keep the readers in the know with links to important news stories (Zarrella 2010, 31). Twitter is the most-used microblogging service with officially more than 200 million users at the beginning of 2011 (Twitter 2011) and estimations of up to 300 million users as of May 2011 (Bennett 2011).

Depending on the microblogging service, the characters of each post are limited, ranging from 140 to up to 200 characters. The microblogs are therefore equivalent to the length of a text message on a cell phone. Moreover, some of the microblogging services offer the option to compose microblog posts from the user's own cell phone using the short message service of the network provider. It is also possible to use the website of the microblogging service, widgets, web browser plug-ins or e-mails to post a microblog. The posts can be either public or private, and just as in weblogs they are sorted in a reverse chronological order (Hettler 2010, 45-46).

Social Network Services

The term 'social network' defines a structure, which consists of hubs connected through communication and interaction. These hubs usually consist of people or organizations.

The social network reveals how and to what extend these individual hubs are connected to each other (Hettler 2010, 54).

Social Networks in the context of Web 2.0 are called 'social network services' (SNS) (Ebersbach et al. 2009, 79). SNS can be defined as platforms and online presences that aim at building and maintaining relationships as well as facilitating the related exchange of information and communication with other participants over the Internet (Hettler 2010, 54). In an online social network, people usually connect with friends, both offline as well as online-only friends (Zarella 2010, 53). After registering with a social network site, users create profiles filling in personal details such as name, address, age, occupation, etc. Subsequently users can browse all the other user profiles for like-minded people and members with similar interests, living place, etc. (Hettler 2010, 56). Having found someone to connect with they can approach this person and request a formal relationship. In this fashion, users can gradually incorporate new persons in their personal network, but may also remove them if they wish to do so. Originally designed to connect natural persons, SNS today also allow companies and brands to establish a presence and to start relationships with other members (Hettler 2010, 56). Regarding the presence of companies and brands, SNS therefore "[…] present a number of opportunities for interacting with customers, including via plug-in applications, groups, and fan pages" (Zarrella 2010, 53). As of June 2011, Facebook is the world's biggest social networking site with more than 700 million users worldwide (Checkfacebook.com 2011).

Media Sharing Platforms

Media-sharing sites allow users to create and upload multimedia content, which is also called user-generated content. With the advent of easy-to-use digital cameras and camcorders as well as high-speed Internet connections, media-sharing sites have become extremely popular and sites such as Flickr or YouTube significantly simplify the process of sharing photos/videos and commenting on them (Zarrella 2010, 77; Scott 2010, 37). Media sharing services generally include two different kinds of platforms: video sharing platforms and photo sharing platforms (Hettler 2010, 62). However, for the reasons mentioned in the overview of this chapter, only video sharing platforms will be analyzed in this paper.

Video-sharing sites, such as YouTube, offer a way to publish self-made videos. They enable users to watch videos, embed them into websites or upload self-made videos. There are functions to comment on videos with text or again with a video, to rate videos or to mark them as personal favorites. In addition, videos can be forwarded to other social media channels such as Facebook or Twitter. Every user manages their own channel where they can upload video content. Other users can subscribe to these channels. Subscribers then will be notified every time new content is uploaded to the channel (Hettler 2010, 63). Moreover, some video-sharing platforms, e.g. YouTube, even provide various means of communication in the form of comments, video responses or personal messages (YouTube 2011a).

Video-sharing platforms can be used not only for advertising purposes but also for uploading videos that assist customers in dealing with well-known problems of a certain product or service (Miller 2009, 14-15). With YouTube, for example, companies can build (fan) communities not only spreading their videos to subscribers but also attaching additional information, e.g. hyperlinks. In addition, these official company channels, which are also called 'branded channels', can be designed individually to incorporate a specific corporate design or brand (Hettler 2010, 63-64).

1.2 Social Media Marketing

1.2.1 Marketing and the Marketing Mix

Marketing

Having discussed the concepts of Web 2.0 and social media and having determined the channels subject to the analysis in this paper we will now elaborate on the concept of marketing. Let us begin with a short introduction to the general notion of marketing before discussing the specific tools of marketing.

One widely accepted definition, which can be found in many marketing textbooks originates from the American Marketing Association, from 1985:

Marketing is the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion and distribution of ideas, goods and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational objectives (American Marketing Association 2008, 2).

The most recent definition from the American Marketing Association though reads as follows:

Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large (American Marketing Association 2011).

Drummond and Ensor further explain that marketing is a process, which looks to facilitate mutually beneficial exchanges. Economic prosperity depends on the generation of such exchanges. In addition, the generation of value is important as it drives the exchange process and constitutes the benefit each partner is seeking in the exchange (e.g. money, support, prestige). Moreover, to be successful, exchange relationships have to last over the long term. Short-term or one-off transactions should rather be defined as sales, whereas building a long-term ongoing exchange relationship is marketing (Drummond and Ensor 2005, 2).

The above-mentioned term 'value' can be described as the result of perceived benefits minus the perceived sacrifices of a product, whereas the term 'product' covers both, goods and services. Perceived benefits are further determined by the product, associated services (e.g. delivery, maintenance, etc.), and association/relationship with the provider. Perceived sacrifices, on the other hand, include factors such as cost, risk/uncertainty and time involved in purchase. Therefore, benefits can be seen as what the customer actually receives from the product and the product's provider (Drummond and Ensor 2005, 6-7).

After purchasing the product, satisfaction is determined by how well the product performs relative to expectations. Therefore, it is critical to be mindful of expectations, i.e. of how well the customer expects the product to perform. If expectations are higher than the resulting benefits the customer is likely to be dissatisfied. Conversely, the customer will be satisfied if the benefits of the product match or exceed the level of expectation. Hence, it is important to manage satisfaction. Yet, over time, high levels of satisfaction become the norm. As opposed to adding value, satisfaction factors become an expected part of the basic product offering (Drummond and Ensor 2005, 8).

Following this argument, the main goals of marketing are creating value, i.e. reasons for the customers to buy the offered products, and managing satisfaction.

Satisfaction, in turn, will only be experienced if the benefits of the product match or exceed the expectations of the customer. In addition, it is equally important to strive for long-term ongoing exchange relationships with customers rather than for short-term one-off transactions. One possible way to achieve these goals is the marketing mix.

Marketing Mix

The concept of the so-called marketing mix was introduced by McCarthy (see McCarthy 1968). It provides us with one possible tool to achieve the customer value and satisfaction mentioned above which, in turn, are very important for business success. The marketing mix, therefore, is also described as a means of translating marketing planning into practice (Bennett 1997, 151). The marketing mix consists of the four Ps, namely 'product', 'price', 'place' and 'promotion'. These are the key elements within the marketing function. The four Ps can be adapted in order to generate, and sustain, customer satisfaction. Each 'P' contains various factors that can be emphasized to meet customer needs. The four Ps are the vital decision areas for marketing managers, as they offer controllable variables which can be innovatively applied to specific markets. All elements of the mix are interrelated and the customers will view the marketing mix in its entirety, with all elements shaping perception. A high-quality product, for example, will require a premium price to reinforce its desired market position (Drummond and Ensor 2005, 8). The four Ps of the marketing mix with their respective functions are described as below:

Table 2 The four Ps of the Marketing Mix

Product	Products are solutions to customer needs. The provider needs to make various product decisions, including functionality, range offered, brand names, packaging, service and support. The product is normally the critical element in the mix, with all other decisions relating to this element.
Price	This element determines what a provider is paid. Various price setting models exist, with decisions relating to factors like market penetration, credit terms, discount policy and cost of provision.
Place	Place is perhaps more readily described as distribution. It is about making the product available. Some form of structured network is normally required – a distribution channel.
Promotion	The promotional element of the mix provides communication with the desired customer group. A range of mechanisms can be deployed for this purpose: advertising, public relations, direct mail, Internet marketing, selling and sales promotion. The blend of methods is often referred to as the communications mix. Generally, promotion aims to make a target market aware of a product offering, develop a long-term relationship with the customer and create and stimulate demand. The effect of promotional techniques can be difficult to evaluate and organizations need clear aims and goals to obtain maximum benefit from a promotional budget.

Source: Drummond and Ensor 2005, 9

Just as any other concept, McCarthy's marketing mix draws criticism generating alternative concepts on how to achieve the goals of marketing. Some concepts such as Kotler's (see Kotler 1984) are adding other factors to the four Ps. Other concepts, e.g. Benett's five Vs model (see Benett 1997) are an addition to the four Ps of Mc Carthy's model. Still other models, such as Ohmae's three Cs model (see Ohmae 1982) are complete alternatives to McCarthy's model. Nevertheless, Drummond and Ensor argue that criticism of the marketing mix is more likely due to poor application of the concept rather than any intrinsic flaw in the idea (Drummond and Ensor 2005, 11). For this reason and because of the common usage of McCarthy's concept in contemporary marketing literature we will also refer to this concept as the theoretical foundation of this paper.

As laid out in 1.1, social media is about communication, interaction and relationship building, which can all be found within the range of 'promotion' (see Table 2). In addition, Mangold and Faulds see SMM explicitly in the context of integrated marketing communications and the various elements of the above-mentioned communications mix (Mangold and Faulds 2009, 358). Let us, therefore, take a closer look at the most recent research on marketing communications before defining social media marketing and determining the analytical categories for this paper.

Marketing Communications

According to Dahlén et al., marketing communications has four main purposes:

- ➔ differentiate a brand against its competitors;
- ➔ provide information about product features or the brand's value proposition;
- ➔ reassure or remind consumers that the brand is still available, and will still do all the things that have previously been claimed; and
- ➔ persuade the target audience to change attitude, select product from possible choices and alternatives, and continue to stay loyal to the brand when future purchase decisions are made (Dahlén et al. 2010, 43-44)

Dahlén et al. argue that the driving force of marketing communications is branding[6], which applies to "[…] most organizations in almost all contexts" (Dahlén et al. 2010, 25). Marketing communications try to create a distinctive image for the brand in order to support the purchase decision and simplify choice (Dahlén et al. 2010, 26). The process from first receiving information about a product or a company up to the final purchase decision can be divided into three main categories: cognitive (awareness, knowledge, information gathering), affective (liking, preference, conviction) and conative (purchase, action) (Dahlén et al. 2010, 44). There are many different theoretical decision-making models describing this process (see Rogers 1962; Ehrenberg and Goodhardt 1979; Blythe 1997 or Blackewell et al. 2006). However, the most famous and most widely accepted model is Elmo Lewis' AIDA-model[7] (Dahlén et al. 2010, 85; Vakratsas and Ambler 1999, 26). Today, there are various views on whether marketing communications has a cause and impact on customers or not. One side argues that a direct link to action does exist, whereas the other side believes that marketing communications only supports decision making and does not induce it (Dahlén et al. 2010, 44).

In this paper, however, we focus less on the impact of marketing communications but rather on the media through which this communication is transmitted, particularly social media. For this purpose the concept of integrated marketing communications is very important. As consumers perceive marketing communications from a variety of media including televisions, radio, magazines, direct mail, the Internet and cell phones, "[…] a company needs to coordinate all these messages for maximum total impact" (Boone et al. 2009, 464). The goal of integrated marketing communications is to "[…]

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[6] The marketing practice of creating a name, symbol or design that identifies and differentiates a product from other products (Entrepreneur.com 2011a).
[7] AIDA stands for 'Attention Interest Desire Action', fur further reading see Strong 1925.

produce a unified, customer-focused promotional message" (Boone et al. 2009, 464). In the context of social media, Danes emphasizes that

> […] social media marketing is just one part of a marketing plan that attracts people to your products and services. It is useful and inexpensive, but you also need the credibility and marketing from other traditional publicity tools such as newspapers, mailers, radio or television commercials (Danes 2010, 6).

SMM is a very new phenomenon. Jones describes the impact of the emergence of social media in the field of marketing communications as "impressive" and further states that it "[…] undoubtedly calls for a redrawing of the rules" (Jones et al. 2009, 928). With the rise of interactive, user-generated social media, Dahlén et al. also see "[…] the emergence of a different marketing communications paradigm" (Dahlén et al. 2010, 444). What exactly is this new paradigm? Initially, the commercial use of social media was only seen as a cost-effective method to market products and services at minimal cost. With time though, "[…] lack of trust in businesses grew and this is where social media plays its other role" (Edosomwan et al. 2011, 87). Social media allows two-way communication between brands or companies and customers. It provides a space not only for marketing products and services of a company but also for interaction with the customers trying to solve their problems (Edosomwan et al. 2011, 87).

However, a widely accepted theoretical framework or a standardized list of SMM instruments has not yet been established. Instead, this new paradigm has started a debate on how to successfully conduct SMM accompanied by a large body of literature essentially providing guidelines (see Arnone et al. 2009; Evans and McKee 2009; Zarrella 2010; Comm 2010; Valor 2009; Weber 2009; Weinberg 2009; Hettler 2010; Mangold and Faulds 2010; Pleil 2011; Danes 2010 or Ruisinger 2011). In this paper we will build on but also go beyond these debates by suggesting an analytical concept to measure and compare SMM conducted by businesses. This concept basically is an adaption of the communications mix, as part of McCarthy's marketing mix described above, complementing it by a few new elements derived from the guidelines mentioned before. The advantage of this model is that it combines both traditional marketing communications of products and services as well as new elements of marketing communications in social media.

1.2.2 Instruments of Social Media Marketing

Introduction

The specific instruments of social media marketing also represent the analytical categories for the analysis in this paper. SMM activities of different countries can only be analyzed and compared after clearly defining these instruments. First, we will discuss the communications mix, which is also called promotion mix[8], in general before taking a closer look at the SMM instruments. We will close the chapter with a summary of these instruments suggesting a definition for 'social media marketing'.

Promotion Mix

The promotional element of McCarthy's marketing mix provides us with the foundation for defining the instruments of SMM. Its goal is to establish communication with a company's customers. We can find several definitions for this kind of communication in the context of marketing. Wagner defines it as the "[…] transmission of information to influence opinions, attitude, expectations and behavior" (Wagner 2004, 2). Drummond and Ensor define promotion as "[…] any method, or combination of methods, used to communicate with a target audience. The aim is to get the right message to the right target group in a timely and cost-effective fashion" (Drummond and Ensor 2005, 147). Boone et al. see the function of promotion in "[…] informing, persuading, and influencing the consumer's purchase decision" (Boone et al. 2009, 464).

Communication is a multifaceted process and the overall image projected by a provider is crucial. The instruments and techniques used in the promotional element of the marketing mix represent the 'visible' element of marketing. In other words, promotion represents what the potential consumer is told about a product by a specific provider (Drummond and Ensor 2005, 148).

According to Kotler and Armstrong, there are five specific tools for conducting promotion. The combination of these tools is called the promotion mix or communications mix. Companies use this specific blend of tools, namely 'advertising',

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[8] In this paper, promotion mix and communications mix are used synonymously.

'sales promotion', 'public relations', 'personal selling' and 'direct marketing', to persuasively communicate customer value and build customer relationships (Kotler and Armstrong 2008, 398).

Table 3 Overview of the Five Promotions Tools

Advertising	Any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, or services by an identified sponsor.
Sales Promotion	Short-term incentives to encourage the purchase or sale of a product or service. Sales promotion includes discounts, coupons, displays, and demonstrations.
Public Relations (PR)	Building good relations with the company's various publics by obtaining favorable publicity, building up a good corporate image, and handling or heading off unfavorable rumors, stories and events. PR includes press releases, sponsorships, special events, and Web pages.
Personal Selling	Personal presentation by the firm's sales force for the purpose of making sales and building customer relationships. Personal selling includes sales presentations, trade shows, and incentive programs.
Direct Marketing	Direct connections with carefully targeted individual consumers to both obtain an immediate response and cultivate lasting customer relationships – the use of direct mail, the telephone, direct-response television, e-mail, the Internet, and other tools to communicate directly with specific customers. Direct marketing includes catalogs, telephone marketing kiosks, the Internet and more.

Source: Kotler and Armstrong 2008, 398-399

Of course, Kotler and Armstrong's definition is not the only way to describe the tools of promotion. Jobber, for example, defines six key elements of promotion with a slightly different focus (see Jobber 2004). Smith and Taylor even offer twelve different tools (see Smith and Taylor 2004). Others, e.g. Dahlén et al. (see Dahlén et al. 2009), work with the same definition of promotion tools as Kotler and Armstrong.

Before we continue analyzing the specific promotion tools, it needs to be clear that we can only consider the individual elements of the marketing mix in isolation with due care since "[…] marketing communication goes beyond these specific promotions tools. The product's design, its price, the shape and color of its package, and the stores that sell it – *all* communicate something to buyers" (Kotler and Armstrong 2007, 399). Still, Kotler and Armstrong hold on to the fact that "[…] the promotion mix is the company's primary communication activity" (Kotler and Armstrong 2007, 363). Now that we have a first idea of promotion tools, let us take a closer look at them and how they are used in the context of social media.

Advertising

In its most basic form, 'to advertise' means "to give notice, to inform, to notify or to make known" (Nicosia 1974 cited in Sheehan 2004, 2). Chambers's Twentieth Century Dictionary gives the following definition of 'advertising':

> to turn one's attention to, to inform, to give public information or announcement of (Davidson 1903, 18)

Armstrong argues that the single most important aspect of advertising is the purpose of increasing "[…] the number of sales of the advertised product by supporting an established, articulated marketing programme" (Armstrong 2001, 28). There is also a proper concept for advertising on the Internet called 'web advertising', which Janoschka describes as

> […] a paid or unpaid form of promotional communication through a medium, used in order to increase the number of sales of the advertised product and an awareness of the product (Janoschka 2004, 47)

In practice, companies conduct advertising by using media channels such as TV, print and cinema to convey a message, idea or product. It is a one-way and non-personal form of communication and generally aimed at mass markets and not the individual (Drummond and Ensor 2005, 148; Kotler and Armstrong 2008, 399). This means that this kind of communication has several advantages and disadvantages at the same time. It usually reaches a large mass of geographically dispersed buyers at a low cost per exposure, and it enables the seller to repeat a message many times. In addition to these favorable properties, consumers tend to view advertised products as more legitimate because of the public nature of advertising. Advertising is also very expressive, it can be used to build up a long-term image, and it can trigger quick sales. However, advertising is impersonal and can never be as direct and persuasive as company salespeople. In addition, because it characteristically is a form of one-way communication, the audience does not feel that it has to pay attention or respond. Another disadvantage of advertising is the costs, as some advertising forms such as TV advertising require large budgets (Kotler and Armstrong 2007, 368).

Before an advertising campaign is effected, so-called advertising objectives have to be set. An advertising objective is "[…] a specific communication *task* to be

accomplished with a specific *target* audience during a specific period of *time*" (Kotler and Armstrong 2007, 371). These objectives are classified by their primary purpose, namely 'inform', 'persuade', or 'remind'. Informative advertising is used when introducing new products, whereas persuasive advertising becomes more important as competition increases. Reminder advertising is important for mature products and keeps consumers thinking about the product (Kotler and Armstrong 2007, 371). Kotler and Armstrong offer the following list of advertising objectives:

Table 4 Advertising Objectives

Informative Advertising	Telling the market about a new product
	Describing available services
	Suggesting new uses for a product
	Correcting false impressions
	Informing the market of a price change
	Reducing consumer fears
	Explaining how the product works
	Building a company image
	Communicating customer value
Persuasive Advertising	Building brand preference (comparative advertising)
	Persuading customer to purchase now
	Encouraging switching to your brand
	Persuading customer to receive a sales call
	Changing customer perceptions of product attributes
	Convincing customers to tell others about the brand
Reminder Advertising	Building and maintaining customer relationship
	Reminding consumers where to buy the product
	Reminding consumers that the product may be needed in the near future
	Keeping it in the consumer's mind during off-seasons

Source: Kotler and Armstrong 2007, 371; Kotler and Armstrong 2010, 455

However, Kotler and Armstrong's advertising objectives are not the only way to categorize advertisements. Kroeber-Riel and Esch focus on the structure of advertisements and distinguish three kinds of advertising: informative[9], emotional and mixed advertising (Kroeber-Riel and Weinberg 2003, 616). Informative advertising provides information about the features of an offer, i.e. it emphasizes particular features and how they can satisfy the needs of the customer. The priority is on information and facts in order to convince a customer of a certain offer. Facts may include information on price, design, size of the company, terms of a bid, etc. (Kroeber-Riel and Esch 2011,

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[9] This should not be confused with Kotler and Armstrong's 'informative advertising objective', which aims to inform customers about a product. Kroeber-Riel and Weinberg's 'informative advertising' refers to the structure of an advertisement.

105; Kroeber-Riel and Weinberg 2003, 616-617). Thus, informative advertising can be described as product-oriented, factual and rational (Fill 2009, 515).

Emotional advertising is mainly used when customers are indifferent about a product and their attention needs to be attracted. This becomes particularly necessary if the markets are saturated and goods are similar in quality and exchangeable (Kroeber-Riel and Esch 2011, 110). Emotional advertising focuses on presenting emotional stimuli such as images of a dreamscape or political catchphrases. The emotional advertising message can refer to the advertised object itself or can just be displayed in any spatial or temporal context with the product (Kroeber-Riel and Weinberg 2003, 617-618). Hence, emotional advertising is based on feelings and emotions. It focuses on the images that are created within the mind of the message's recipient and the need for pleasure or enjoyment in consuming the message (Fill 2009, 515).

Mixed advertising combines these two elements. It contains informative aspects as well as emotional aspects and is the most commonly used kind of advertising today, as it combines the benefits of both elements to influence buyers in the process of making a purchasing decision (Kroeber-Riel and Weinberg 2003, 620; Fill 2009, 516)

Table 5 Types of Advertising

Informative	Rational elements such as: factual information about a product, features of a product, attributes of a product, design of a product, etc.
Emotional	Emotional elements such as: pictures, sound, catchphrases, dramatic scenes, stories and other non-rational methods to leave an impression or get the audience's attention
Mixed	Elements of both informative and emotional advertising

Source: compiled by the author based on Kroeber-Riel 2003; Kroeber-Riel and Weinberg 2003; Fill 2009

In order to categorize and analyze advertising related SMM activities, we will combine the objectives and types of advertising as laid out above using the following categorization matrix.

Table 6 Advertising Matrix

	Rational[10]	Emotional	Mixed
Informative			
Persuasive			
Reminder			

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[10] Due to the same terms being used in Kotler and Armstrong's 'informative advertising objective' and in Kroeber-Riel and Weinberg's 'informative type of advertising', we will use 'rational' instead of 'informative' in order to avoid any confusion or misunderstanding.

[22]

Sales Promotion

The instruments of sales promotion have different effects. They can attract consumer attention, offer strong incentives to purchase, dramatize product offers or boost sales. Sales promotion effects are often short-lived (Kotler and Armstrong 2008, 414-415). Whereas "[…] advertising says, 'Buy our product', sales promotions says, 'Buy it now'" (Kotler and Armstrong 2008, 415). Sales Promotion works closely with advertising and consists of short-term incentives to encourage purchase or sales of a product or service. Therefore, it is not only used to increase current sales of products, but it also helps differentiate the offer of a company from those of competitors because of declining advertising efficiency. However, sales promotion cannot be equated with short-term goals. "If properly designed, every sales promotion tool has the potential to build both short-term excitement and long-term consumer relationships" (Kotler and Armstrong 2007, 386). Specific examples include frequency marketing programs and loyalty clubs. Through these instruments, marketers are increasingly avoiding "quick-fix", price-only promotions in favor of promotions designed to build brand equity (Kotler and Armstrong 2007, 386).

   Kurtz also emphasizes that, today, the focus "[…] has shifted from short-term goals to long term objectives of building brand equity and maintaining continuing purchase", and that "[…] marketers recognize sales promotion as an integral part of the overall marketing plan" (Kurtz 2011, 588). Other authors, such as Altstiel and Grow, see sales promotion also as a way to retain customer loyalty, as "[sales] promotions provide a way to stay in touch with current customers and to give them incentives for continuing their relationship with a brand or a business" (Altstiel and Grow 2006, 324).

   Several instruments can be used to achieve sales promotion objectives. In the following table, Kotler and Armstrong offer nine different ways to conduct sales promotion. We will use them in this paper as the analytical categories for sales promotion activities.

Table 7 Instruments of Sales Promotion

Samples	Offer of a trial amount of a product. Some samples are free or are charged a small amount to offset its cost.
Coupons	Certificates that give buyers a saving when they purchase specified products. Some coupons are also offered on the Web or through online coupon services.
Cash Refunds (or Rebates)	Like coupons, except that the price reduction occurs after the purchase rather than at the retail outlet. The consumer sends a 'proof of purchase' to the manufacturer, who then refunds part of the purchase price.
Price Packs (Cents-off Deals)	Offer consumers savings off the regular price of a product. The reduced prices are marked by the producer directly on the label or package. Price packs can be single packages sold at a reduced price, or two related products banded together.
Premiums	Goods offered either free or at a low cost as an incentive to buy a product. A premium may come inside the package (in-pack), outside the package (on-pack), or through the mail.
Advertising Specialties (Promotional Products)	Useful articles imprinted with an advertiser's name, logo, or message that are given as gifts to consumers (T-shirts, pens, mouse pads, etc.).
Patronage Rewards	Cash or other awards offered for the regular use of a certain company's products or services (miles, points, frequent shopper cards, etc.).
Point-of-Purchase (POP) Promotions[11]	Include displays and demonstrations that take place at the point of purchase or sale.
Contests, Sweepstakes, and Games	Give consumers the chance to win something, such as cash, trips, or goods, by luck or through extra effort. A *contest* calls for consumers to submit an entry (jingle, guess, suggestion) to be judged by a panel that will select the best entries. A *sweepstake* calls for consumers to submit their names for a drawing. A *game* presents consumers with something (bingo numbers, missing letters) every time they buy, which may or may not help them win a prize.

Source: Kotler and Armstrong 2007, 387-388

Concerning the last instrument, 'contests, sweepstakes and games', an interesting trend on the World Wide Web has emerged. The Internet facilitates the use of this instrument at relative low cost, and it can provide data immediately. In addition and due to the interactive part of online sweepstakes, contests, and games, consumers become more engaged and start building a relationship with the company or its products (Kurtz 2011, 591). Hence, this instrument is particularly useful for effective long-term

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[11] As social media channels are not a point of purchase or sale, the above mentioned sales promotion tool 'POP promotions' will not be included in the analysis.

relationship building goals by providing a way to stay in touch with the company and by giving incentives to continue the relationship.

Public Relations (Traditional)

The term 'public relations' (PR) is defined by the Institute of Public Relations as "the deliberate, planned and sustained effort to establish mutual understanding between an organization and its publics" (cited in Drummond and Ensor 2005, 149).

'Publics' refers to all relevant reference groups of the organization[12], – internally as well as externally. It includes employees as well as customers, suppliers, retailers, media, investors, lawmakers and political interest groups. To all these reference groups, PR has to explain the performance and actions of its organization, convey its identity and build up trust (Ruisinger and Jorzik 2008, 7). Moreover, PR is long-term oriented and can also be referred to as the "management of communication" (Ruisinger and Jorzik 2008, 6). Holtz offers a very similar definition: "PR is, at its core, about coordinating an organization's relationships with those constituent publics whose permission to operate makes it possible for a company to do what it does. Good PR is all about relationships" (Holtz 2008).

Traditional PR may appear as news, features, or sponsorships. Still, the development of good media relationships stands at the center (Kotler and Armstrong 2008, 414-415). Originally, PR focused on press releases[13] targeted exclusively at reporters and editors. Maintaining good relationships with them was essential as the goal was to get published in one of the classical media channels, such as newspapers, magazines, or radio. PR professionals were rated according to whether or not they managed to get their press releases published. The customers, of course, only learned about the content of the press release if the media wrote a story about it (Scott 2010, 9-10; Jodeleit 2010, 2). Apart from the press release, there are also other traditional PR instruments for managing a company's relationships with its publics (see Table 8). These instruments have the shared goal to "[…] promote corporate or brand image; react to negative feedback from the marketplace or problems from the organization;

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[12] Reference groups overlap with stakeholder reference groups. The difference to stakeholders, who have a stake and are interested in the company, is that publics are not necessarily interested in or are even indifferent about the company (Sandman 2003).

[13] A public relations announcement issued to the news media and other targeted publications for the purpose of letting the public know of company developments (Entrepreneur.com 2011b).

introduce a new image, product, policy or anything which encourages and maintains positive company reputation" (Dahlén et al. 2009, 400). Dahlén et al. offer the following table describing traditional PR instruments.

Table 8 Traditional Instruments of PR

Advertising	Corporate image campaigns
Publications	Annual reports, brochures, articles, company newsletters, magazines, audio-visual materials, intranets, websites
Events	Social events, news conferences, seminars, outings, factory tours, trade shows, exhibits, contests, competitions, anniversaries, annual general meetings
Sponsorships	Linkages with sports, arts and causes to gain positive association for the organization or brand
News	Press releases and news conferences aimed at generating interest through the media or handling negative publicity
Speeches	Questions from the media, annual general meeting feedback or promotion of ideas or products at sales conferences can help build the company image
Public Service Activities	Cause-related marketing is an area where companies can build goodwill with a community or audience
Identity Media	Visual identity can be projected through logos, stationery, signage, literature, the physical evidence of buildings and interiors, uniforms and dress codes
Internal[14]	Company newsletters, staff briefings, training

Source: Dahlén et al. 2009, 400

Public Relations (New) and Successful SMM

Although traditional or mainstream media channels are, without doubt, still of relevance and critically important to organizations (Scott 2010, 10), PR in the era of Web 2.0 is experiencing a complete transformation. This transformation is the main point of discussion in many recent academic papers (see Pleil 2011; Ruisinger 2011; Hettler

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[14] As internal PR activities will most likely never be conducted in the publicly accessible environment of social media, this tool will not be included in the empirical framework of this paper.

2010 or Scott 2010), with PR professionals (see Holtz 2008; Wong 2009 or Jodeleit 2010) and in surveys (see Zerfass 2010). The transformation of PR can also be associated with the paradigm shift in marketing communication laid out in 1.2.1.

What implications does this new paradigm have for marketing communications and PR? One effect seems to be that businesses have fewer ways to influence and control the communication but rather have to adapt, be responsive and adhere to the new rules of social media communication in order to be recognized and heard (Ruisinger 2011, 162). However, many firms seem to fear the loss of control that comes along with new media usage behavior. They can no longer monitor which content is shared in which way and with whom. Neither can companies impede the spread of bad news or withdraw it from the flow of information (Ruisinger 2011, 164). Moreover, due to the simplified upload options for user-generated content to the Internet, the speed with which criticism and negative comments can spread has accelerated significantly since the emergence of Web 2.0. Criticism is published in the very instant a user decides to blog or post about it on a social network. From that moment on, this negatively associated post can also be found through search engines. Conversely, positive comments are accessible in the same way and spread equally fast, which strongly supports the goals of the organization (Pleil 2011, 243).

The new paradigm of marketing communications and the new environment of PR in the context of Web 2.0 require new instruments. Since the field of new PR has been established fairly recently, and since it has not been thoroughly explored yet, there is neither a widely accepted theoretical framework nor an exhaustive list of instruments comparable to what we know for traditional PR. A review of social media related literature and of guidelines from authors and professionals in the PR industry is required to identify new methods of PR and to elaborate practical instruments of new PR. These methods and instruments may then also be considered as the most successful way of conducting social media marketing from an economic point of view. Hence, elaborating them will help in answering one of the sub-questions of this paper, namely whether or not East Asian businesses are likely to be economically successful with their SMM efforts.

As mentioned in our discussion of the basics of traditional PR, the main goals for public relations are building long-term relationships with an organization's publics and maintaining a good reputation. These goals do not change in new PR. Alexandra Wheeler, Digital Director of the successful social media campaign of Starbucks,

emphasizes that new PR is „ […] about relationship, not marketing[15]" (cited in Wong 2009). Moreover, groups that are formed on the Internet, such as the virtual target audience, can only be reached through the Internet. New PR is crucial in contacting and building long-term relationships with these groups (Ruisinger 2011, 20). In social media, important factors for these new kinds of relationships are trust, transparency, personalization, individualization and speed of action. Personalization and individualization become particularly important as the information flow starts growing at increasing speed (Beisswenger 2010, 27; Ruisinger 2011, 165-167). These factors can also be described as the "currency for the development of relationships" (Pleil 2011, 248). Additionally, social media channels are very effective in communicating these factors and in helping to build long-term relationships. They do so in a unique fashion, for instance, by enabling organizations to reach their publics directly and obtaining their unfiltered expectations (Hettler 2010, 74; Pleil 2011, 248). Dahlén et al. emphasize the use of this direct interaction and see the two-way dialog as one of the foundation blocks of new PR:

> With the advent of the Internet and the new Web 2.0 generation, the 'information era' has completely transformed the PR landscape; […] PR is actually returning to its roots of two-way dialogs of connected communications rather than the broadcast monologues of company-transmitted communications (Dahlén et al. 2009, 401).

Considering this new kind of two-way communication through social media, Dell's chief marketing officer, Mark Jarvis, also emphasizes that "[…] listening to our customers is actually the most perfect form of marketing you could have" (Jarvis 2007). The importance of two-way dialogs and of avoiding the use of social media as a mere broadcasting tool is emphasized by many other authors, PR professionals or organizations, such as Ruisinger (2011, 156, 165, 272-273), Pleil (2011, 243, 246), Hettler (2010, 38, 74, 150, 153), the SNCR (2008), Burston-Marsteller (2010, 35-37) or Bauman (cited in Swallow 2010).

Hence, from the point of view of new PR, companies should not primarily consider social media as an alternative way to promote products or events. It should rather be used as a new communication platform that allows two-way dialog as mentioned above that truly does justice to the importance of long-term relationships. Eventually, social media might be used not only for dialogs but also for market research, customer service, image promotion and opinion leadership. However, companies need to seize this

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[15] Marketing in sense of sales related promotion in the marketing mix, e.g. advertising or sales promotion.

opportunity and must avoid misusing social media as a mere sales channel (Ruisinger 2011, 165).

As mentioned before, maintaining a good reputation is another integral task of PR in any company. In the context of Web 2.0, this task remains valid. A good 'digital reputation'[16] has to be maintained (Pleil 2011, 246). It is essential for companies to be equally capable in dealing with positive as well as negative statements. Trying to enforce interests legally may induce a Streisand-effect[17], regardless of whether the attempt was justified or not. Once published on the Internet, information cannot be removed any more. The only solution for this problem is to deal with it in a professional manner (Pleil 2011, 243).

As we can see, new PR essentially focuses on the same goals as traditional PR but has to adapt to a completely new environment, namely Web 2.0. New PR is considered to be the biggest challenge and opportunity at once, as it contributes significantly to the overall success of SMM activities. In the next chapter, we will identify the specific instruments that allow companies to make the most of this opportunity, i.e. building strong long-term relationships and effectively maintaining a good reputation through social media.

Instruments of new PR

Important elements of new PR include topicality combined with attractive and useful content, opportunities of feedback, and dialog. Attractive and useful content can range from customized support via expert information to entertaining material. These elements are critical for digital relationship management and the accumulation of social capital, as well as for maintaining a good digital reputation (Pleil 2011, 246-247; Hettler 2010, 153).

One method for companies to support long-term relationship building is to integrate socially, or in other words, become a part of the social network community. Companies can try to build a community on their own, which today is much easier and far-reaching then before, or they can publish content. For stakeholders as well as organizations, it is economically and technically easier than ever to publish content by themselves (Pleil

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[16] The reputation acquired in the virtual world of the Internet (Pleil 2011, 246).
[17] Named after actress Barbra Streisand, describing the phenomenon that information on the Internet is likely to spread even faster the more someone tries to remove it.

2011, 243, 246, 248). Another option to integrate socially could be to just take part in discussions in the community or start new ones (Ruisinger 2011, 165).

Integrating customers into the innovation process is also an effective instrument to achieve the goal of long-term relationships. Due to the direct exchange with employees of a company, customers feel like insiders and believe that they know more than others. This results in a more intensive relationship with the company, which again leads to loyalty, recommendation, and word of mouth advertising[18] (Hettler 2010, 146-147).

In order to maintain a good reputation, businesses should respond to customer questions, criticism and wishes in a direct and unfiltered way. Moreover, they should promote interaction, face up to negative as well as positive comments, and give a human face to the company when interacting with their publics (Ruisinger 2011, 165). A good way to react to criticism can be to just comment on or weaken the negative statement in order to impede its further spread. In addition, speed of action and right timing are especially important when dealing with negative comments (Hettler 2010, 38; Ruisinger 2011, 167).

As the PR industry is in the middle of transformation, a list of specific new PR instruments in the context of Web 2.0 has not been compiled as of yet. From the above-mentioned instruments as well as from other options of online PR activities mentioned in secondary literature by Burston-Marsteller (2010), Hettler (2010), Mangold and Faulds (2010), Pleil (2011), and Ruisinger (2011), we suggest the following list of new PR instruments for the purpose of analyzing SMM activities of businesses.

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[18] 'Word of mouth advertising': an unpaid form of promotion in which satisfied customers tell other people how much they like a business, product or service (Entrepreneur.com 2011c).

Table 9 New Instruments of PR

Branch Specific Content (BSC)	Supply of branch specific content in form of articles, reports, news, stories, guidelines, problem solutions etc. on the company's branch or industry related matters and trends.
Non-Branch Specific Content (NBSC)	Supply of entertaining or informative content on topics that are completely unrelated to the company's branch or industry.
Support via Social Media (SSM)	Online support via publicly viewable social media channels. This support can be proactive or reactive and provide assistance regarding products, services, campaigns, events, or other activities of the company.
Social Online Integration (SOI)	Any kind of communication with the whole social network or online community as well as with individuals of these groups which is not directly related to any products or services of the company and entails no content as defined in BSC or NBSC.
Integration of Customers (IOC)	Asking customers to become part of the innovation process; integrating customers into the development process of new products.
Maintenance of Digital Reputation (MDR)	Comments or reactions to negative statements or open criticism of a company's products or services, or the company itself.
Active Word of Mouth (AWOM)	Active and deliberate forwarding of posts from satisfied customers telling other people how much they like a business, product, or service. This may be achieved e.g. by reposting other user's comments, posts, tweets, etc.

Source: compiled by the author[19] based on Burston-Marsteller (2010); Hettler (2010); Mangold and Faulds (2010); Pleil (2011) and Ruisinger (2011)

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[19] This table is neither complete nor the only way to categorize the tools of new PR in the context of social media. This categorization is a suggestion by the author as no widely accepted list of specific new PR tools has been compiled as of yet.

Personal Selling and Direct Marketing

The last two tools of the promotion mix have specific common characteristics and, therefore, are sometimes referred to as a subgroup in the five categories of the promotion mix (see Kotler et al. 2005 or Kotler and Armstrong 2007). Kotler et al. describes personal selling as "[…] the interpersonal arm of marketing communications in which the sales force interacts with customers and prospects to make sales and build relationships" (Kotler et al. 2005, 809). Personal selling is one of the oldest professions in the world, and people who do the selling are known by many names, such as salespeople, sales representative, agents, sales consultants, etc. Personal selling involves interpersonal interaction between salespeople and individual customers in a one-on-one communication pattern (Kotler and Armstrong 2010, 482-483; Dahlén et al. 2009, 277). Through personal selling, each person can observe the other's needs and characteristics, and make quick adjustments. Personal selling also allows for all kinds of customer relationships to emerge, ranging from matter-of-fact selling relationships to personal friendships (Kotler and Armstrong 2008, 414).

Direct Marketing, in turn, is defined by Kotler and Armstrong as follows:

> Direct Marketing consists of direct connections with carefully targeted individual consumers to both obtain an immediate response and cultivate lasting consumer relationships. Direct marketers communicate directly with customers, often on a one-on-one, interactive basis. Using detailed databases, marketing offers and communications are conducted with narrowly defined segments or even individual buyers (Kotler and Armstrong 2007, 417).

All forms of direct marketing share four distinctive characteristics. Direct marketing is non-public, immediate, customized and interactive. By often using interactive media, the message is usually directed at a specific person, as opposed to addressing a mass audience, thus allowing for a dialog between the marketing team and the consumer. It can involve the use of direct mail, telephone marketing, catalog marketing, direct-response television marketing and kiosk marketing (Kotler and Armstrong 2007, 421-426; Kotler and Armstrong 2008, 415). The immediate and interactive character of direct marketing becomes apparent when thinking of the following examples:

> […] Buyers can interact with sellers by phone or on the seller's website to create exactly the configuration of information, products, or services they desire, then order them on the spot. Some companies such as Dell, Amazon.com, and eBay even began as only direct marketers.

Others like Cisco Systems or Charles Schwab have transformed themselves into direct marketers (Kotler and Armstrong 2007, 417-418).

Direct selling and direct marketing are very important and indispensable elements of marketing in general and the promotion mix in particular. However, in the context of Web 2.0, these promotion tools are not directly applicable for the following reasons.

First, one-on-one communication in a non-public, closed environment, be it in person or via other channels such as telephone or direct mail, are the main characteristics of direct selling and direct marketing. This represents a stark contrast to the many-to-many communication patterns in the public environment of social media.

Second, regarding direct selling, social media channels are usually not used as distribution channels. It might be technically possible, but practically it has not emerged as an environment where companies deploy their sales force to sell products directly to customers. In addition, despite technological solutions such as video conference or Skype telephone software, Fill considers the online environment as an "impersonal medium" which "does not allow for direct personal communication" in the context of direct selling (Fill 2011, 353).

Third, while one-on-one communication is without doubt possible in social media (via personal messages or chat applications), it would rather resemble an e-mail or phone conversation leaving the unique concept of many-to-many communication patterns in social media completely untapped. Since companies communicate in social media as members of a publicly accessible and viewable network, we argue that advertising, sales promotion and PR instruments, are the suitable categories for analyzing corporate social media communication. Communication through these instruments is either impersonal or public, and does not resemble the personal one-on-one communication concept of direct marketing and direct selling. Moreover, the empirical analysis of personal messages or chats would be technically and legally unfeasible.

To illustrate the implausibility of pure direct selling or direct marketing on social media channels, let us imagine tweets on Twitter or any other posts on social media as giant billboards displayed in a public space. You may, of course, address the promotional content on that billboard at a single individual. However, the content is equally communicated to all other passers-by, i.e. the other social media users, potentially shaping their perception, as well. Therefore, even if addressed at an

individual, this kind of content should rather be categorized as advertising, sales promotion, or PR, not as direct selling or direct marketing.

Summary

Having analyzed the different instruments of the promotion mix, this summary presents the final set of analytical category groups used in our analysis of SMM efforts of companies. Although there is, as mentioned earlier, a large amount of literature specifically on SMM (see also Evans and Dave 2010; Zarrella 2010; Hettler 2010; Anderson 2010 or Mangold and Faulds 2009), there is no standardized, widely accepted definition for the term. Hettler summarizes the situation aptly, describing it as a "very young and constantly developing discipline" (Hettler 2010, 255). In this paper, we will not attempt to find the single right definition for SMM. Our goal is rather to offer one possible method for analyzing marketing efforts of businesses in social media.

Based on the discussion above, we would like to consider social media marketing as marketing conducted in the environment of social media and with the help of the set of instruments of the promotion mix, including the instruments of new PR, but excluding direct sales and direct marketing. In other words, we will analyze SMM activities according to the instruments of the category groups 'advertising', 'sales promotion' and 'traditional PR' as well as 'new PR'[20]. However, this definition does neither imply that the analyzed businesses only use these instruments to promote their products or services nor that these category groups are the most important in the promotion mix. Yet, for analyzing marketing activities in social media and answering the central questions of this paper, we consider this definition most viable.

1.2.3 Importance of Social Media Marketing

Now that we have defined social media marketing and its channels through which businesses can pursue their marketing goals, one important question remains. How important is social media marketing, really? Safko sees social media as equally important as all other tools of marketing. He claims that social media is "[…] doing

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[20] See Appendix 1 for the complete list of SMM instruments/categories used for the analysis in this paper.

what the telephone, direct mail, print advertising, radio, television, and billboards did for us up until now. But social media is exponentially more effective" (Safko 2010, 5). Moreover, the following points underline the importance of social media marketing.

First, the Internet in general and social media in particular are increasingly important channels for advertising. When buying a product, the Internet is becoming the most important source of information. Actors in social media are increasingly being trusted when it comes to product evaluations (Pleil 2011, 242).

Second, individualization of consumer behavior is increasing and buyer segments are continuously shrinking. It is getting more and more difficult to classify consumers into certain categories and to supply them successfully with impersonalized and standardized mass advertising (Hettler 2010, 30). Therefore, marketers are shifting away from mass marketing towards developing focused marketing programs designed to build closer relationships with customers in more narrowly defined micromarkets. Companies are doing less broadcasting and more "narrowcasting" (Kotler and Armstrong 2008, 399). Social media supports this trend by helping to keep closer track of customer needs and to interact with targeted consumers (Kotler and Armstrong 2008, 399).

Third, it is important for companies to be where the consumers are, as consumers are no longer passive but have become active by giving useful feedback. Through social media, they are also no longer isolated individuals but connected to each other. Thus, in making decisions, they are no longer unaware but have become informed. Companies have to be a part of the information flow (Kotler et al. 2010, 11).

Fourth, while in the beginning mainly the youth and young adults were using social networks, it has increasingly become a mainstream medium, now also being used by older generations. In addition, people have started spending more time consuming this medium in general. According to a survey conducted by Nielsen, people aged 35-49 showed the biggest absolute growth on Facebook compared to the previous year (Nielsen 2009a, 5). In another part of this survey, social networks were estimated to be the fourth favorite application on the Internet, even ranking better than e-mail. The average usage of social networks internationally is higher than the usage of e-mails with 66.8% and 65.1% respectively (Nielsen 2009a, 3).

Fifth, against the backdrop of the transformation in PR, a survey conducted in 2010 with 1,955 PR professionals from 46 countries revealed that online communication and online media are to become the most important instruments by 2012. Social media as a

PR tool was ranked third regarding its potential for the future, and with 37% is yielding by far the highest growth rate estimates (Zerfass 2010, 69).

How does the growing importance of online media in general and social media in particular affect the traditional media channels? A survey conducted by Veronis Suhler Stevenson in the US in 2007 revealed that the budget for online media was predicted to outrun the budget for print-media by 2011 (Absatzwirtschaft.de 2007). Although this outlook might seem a little too optimistic, it nevertheless demonstrates the unambiguous tendency of advertising priorities (Hettler 2010, 30). Furthermore, advertising effects of major advertising media such as TV-spots are verifiably decreasing (Hettler 2010, 31). While in 1985 about 18% of the TV-audience could remember some of the TV-spots they saw, in 2002 this figure was only at eight percent. Despite a significant increase in advertising budgets of 175% across all means of advertising between 1990 and 2000, brand awareness declined by 80 percent (Scheier and Held 2006, 18). This trend has progressed to an extent that some 'TV' programs have been removed from cable, network or satellite and rather being created just for Internet viewing (Kotler and Armstrong 2008, 400). How little impact traditional media has in buying decisions is also shown by a representative survey of young mothers who are actively using the Internet. Direct and personal exchange, and the usage of social media are preferred over target-oriented, traditional online and offline advertising media (Hettler 2010, 31). Another survey by Nielsen with 25,000 consumers in more than 50 markets around the world revealed that peer recommendations and consumer opinions online are more trusted than ads on TV, in newspapers or on the radio (Nielsen 2009b, 2). As a result, many advertisers are realigning their advertising budgets away from network television in favor of more targeted, cost-effective, interactive, and engaging media. The new challenge for marketers is to reach consumers in new and unexpected ways. Some advertising industry experts even predict that "[…] the old mass-media communications model will collapse entirely" (Kotler and Armstrong 2008, 400).

Despite those trends, other industry insiders note that broadcast television, magazines, and other mass media remain very important. They further elaborate that these traditional mass media still capture a lion's share of the promotion budgets of most major marketing firms and that this fact is not likely to change quickly (Kotler and Armstrong 2008, 399-400). Moreover, social media marketing is not a must-do for all actors in the business world. The value of social media in the marketing mix of a company depends on whether or not this channel helps to build relationships with

stakeholders. Usability may vary according to branch or field of business. While a certain target audience might only be reachable through social media, others are still far away from using those channels (Pleil 2011, 246).

Apparently, there is a wide range of opinions on this topic spanning from predictions of complete extinction of traditional advertising media to claims supporting continued importance and dominance of these traditional channels. However, all the arguments laid out above underline the declining dominance of traditional media and the rise and importance of new social media channels. Kotler and Armstrong offer an accurate description of this trend:

> It seems likely that the new marketing communications model will consist of a gradually shifting mix of both traditional mass media and a wide array of exciting new, more targeted, more personalized media (Kotler and Armstrong 2008, 400).

1.3 Research Design and Method

Research Design

According to Saunders et al., there are three research purposes: explorative, descriptive and explanatory studies. The objective of an explorative study is to clarify your understanding of a certain problem. Descriptive studies portray an accurate profile of persons, events or situations. It can be an extension of, a forerunner to, or a piece of exploratory or explanatory research. Explanatory studies establish relationships between variables. The emphasis is on studying a situation or a problem in order to explain the relationships between variables (Saunders et al. 2007, 134). This paper is a piece of explorative research, as the aim is to look for patterns among the analyzed companies and countries, and since the focus is on gaining insights into the new field of SMM.

As for the research strategy, this paper makes use of case studies. The purpose of case studies is to conduct research that involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence. The case study is most often used in explanatory and exploratory studies (Saunders et al. 2007, 140). Moreover, since the research entails more than one case

study, we will use a multiple case study strategy for this paper (see Saunders et al. 2007, 141).

In observing and analyzing these case studies, we will take a quantitative approach collecting and analyzing numerical data. However, since data analysis procedures that generate or use non-numerical data are also a major part of this paper, multiple methods were chosen. Of the four kinds of multiple methods distinguished by Saunders et al. (see Saunders et al. 2007, 146), the mixed model research was considered to be the most suitable method for the purpose of this paper. It combines quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques and analysis procedures; also combining quantitative and qualitative approaches at other stages of the research process (Saunders et al. 2007, 146).

Concerning the time horizon, Saunders et al. distinguish cross-sectional studies, with a particular phenomenon being studied at a particular time, and longitudinal studies, with events being studied over a certain period of time (Saunders et al. 2007, 148). For this paper, we decided on a longitudinal study with an observation period of one month due to several reasons. First, an analysis over the course of one month allows more precise and accurate measurements of single marketing strategies or activities compared to an analysis over the course of a year. Second, it offers higher accuracy in analyzing trends because more assessment points are available. Last, an analysis over the course of a quarter or a whole year would have exceeded the scope of this paper.

In designing our research, we are aware that the research field and methods chosen impose certain limitations. We suggest a concept to measure and compare SMM activities of businesses based on the current body of literature and on known instruments of marketing communications. What we cannot answer here is how successful the companies eventually are and how customers actually receive the SMM activities. This should be subject to further research by either conducting surveys or using available measuring tools (see Evans and McKee 139-165 or Weinberg 2009, 8-9). Since social media has only recently become subject to research and is constantly transforming at a very fast pace, printed literature on the topic is hard to find and often outdated. Therefore, referencing online sources such as weblogs, articles and websites is indispensable in order to obtain useful and recent data. Further, the observation period of one month may limit the capacity to capture seasonal as well as long-term marketing strategies.

Research Method

For the purpose of this paper, we will analyze the three biggest East Asian countries according to the size of their economies measured by their nominal GDP (World Bank 2011). They are China, Japan and Korea. We will first analyze the social media landscape of each of these countries according to the criteria determined in 1.1.2. In order to answer the central questions of this paper, we will then identify the most appropriate social media platforms for each country. After that, we will introduce the case study company for each country and present the data on their respective SMM activities in the chosen channels.

All unpaid SMM activities in the form of posts, entries, tweets, uploads, etc. on the determined social media channels will be analyzed fusing the 32 different categories in the three main category groups advertising, sales promotion and PR, bearing in mind, of course, that not every marketing activity can be assigned to a single instrument. An advertisement, for example, can also contain elements of PR, and vice versa. Especially on the Web, "[…] the lines between marketing and PR have blurred" (Scott 2010, 24). For the sake of feasibility, we will assign every activity to only one category considering the main statement of each post from an economic point of view. In the case of mixed or 'blurred' entries, sales-related elements will always have priority as every company's ultimate aim is to sell its products or services.

Since there are no standardized methods to objectively measure the success of SMM (Hettler 2010, 234), we will compare the results with a reference-case study. Moreover, although literature on successful SMM design generally emphasizes the importance of the instruments of new PR instruments, hardly any recommendations can be found on how to handle the proportion of new PR and the traditional instruments of marketing communications. The reference case study could also provide an answer to this question by representing a benchmark for East Asian companies.

The American IT company Dell was deemed to be well suited as reference case study as its SMM has previously been mentioned as a showcase model in several marketing related books (Scott 2010, 192; Hettler 2010, 110-117; Weber 2009, 56-57; Weinberg 2011, 26-27, 146; Evans 2010, 55ff) and internet sources (see Fidelman 2011; Balwani 2009; Steiner 2009 or Honeytechblog 2010). With Dell being mainly a PC manufacturer, the decision came naturally to also analyze the most successful PC manufacturer of the chosen East Asian countries as measured by their domestic market

shares. The reason for choosing companies according to the size of their domestic and not their international market share is that only the social media landscapes and marketing activities conducted in each company's domestic market are subject to this paper's analysis. Following these criteria, we chose to analyze Samsung Electronics for Korea, NEC for Japan, and Lenovo for China[21]. Since all three manufacturers not exclusively specialize in PC manufacturing, only two kinds of communications will be taken into account. On the one hand, we will look at the general communication in social media representing the company as a whole. On the other hand, in terms of specific communication on products or on product series, only the PC-related marketing activities, including desktop PCs, mobile PCs, tablet PCs, and PC equipment will be considered. Furthermore, for the sake of feasibility, we will exclusively focus on the nationwide Business-to-Consumer (B2C) communication. Social media accounts representing individual persons of the company or only focusing on a certain region of the country are not taken into account. Unless otherwise noted, all presented numbers are as of June 2011.

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[21] References regarding the market share of these companies can be found in the empirical data presentation of each country.

2 Empirical Framework

2.1 United States of America – Case Study Dell

2.1.1 Social Media

General Facts

As of March 2011, the United States, the country "[…] where internet technology originated" (Endo 2010, 51), was home to 245 million Internet users corresponding to 78.2% of the country's population (Internetworldstats 2011a). The term 'weblog' was created in the US (see 1.1.2). With Twitter, Facebook and YouTube, the three most widely used platforms in the social media channels analyzed in this paper have the same point of origin: the United States. Moreover, the term 'social media', as it is used today, was coined in the US in 2006 after MySpace hit the 100 million-user mark and Facebook officially removed its limitations on entry (Yamada 2011). Therefore, the United States can be described as very influential, to say at least, when it comes to the development of social media.

Findings of the Global Survey of Business Use of Social Networks, by Regus, in which 17,000 senior managers and business owners in 80 countries were surveyed during February 2011, also clearly indicate how important social media is to American companies. In the survey, 43% of US firms declared that they were successfully using social media to acquire new customers (Regus 2011, 6). Furthermore, 50% of US businesses use social media to keep in touch with existing customers (Regus 2011, 10) and 69% of companies think that marketing must now use social networks to be successful (Regus 2011, 15). According to a forecast of eMarketer, four out of five companies in the US with more than 100 employees will use social media marketing by 2011, which is nearly double the usage rate registered in 2008 (42%). This trend is likely to continue the year after that as the forecast predicts that as much as 88% of US businesses will conduct SMM in 2012 (eMarketer 2010b).

Company Overview

The US IT company Dell was founded by Michael Dell in Austin, Texas in 1984. Today the company has more than 5.4 million customers and employs more than 100,000 people around the world. The company designs, develops, manufactures, markets, sells, and provides support services for laptops, netbooks, tablets, smart phones as well as desktop PC, servers, and networking products (Bloomberg Businessweek 2011b). The company also provides IT services and as of the fourth quarter of 2010, it is the world's second biggest PC manufacturer by PC shipments worldwide, only outperformed by Hewlett Packard (Dell 2011a; iSuppli 2011). Hewlett Packard was also leader in the US domestic market with a share of 24.3% in 2010. Dell came in second place with 23.1%, followed by Apple with 10.6% (Ogg 2010).

Regarding Dell's marketing in social media, one thing should be made clear at the outset. No other country analyzed in this paper comes close to the amount of SMM activities conducted by the US IT company. During the 31 days of observation, 2,104 SMM activities from Dell were analyzed and categorized. These activities were distributed as follows: 57 activities in the category weblogs (1.7/day), 1,529 activities in the category microblogs (49.3/day), 496 activities in the category SNS (16/day) and 22 activities in the category video sharing platforms (0.7/day). On the whole, this corresponds to 68 SMM activities per day.

From this data, we can clearly see that our reference case study Dell uses all four of the most important social media channels on a regular basis. Dell keeps various accounts on a variety of social media platforms, an overview of which can be found on the company's website, giving a good exposition on the company's social media policy (Dell 2011b). Unfortunately, this listing of Dell's social media accounts is neither up to date nor complete. This required an additional effort to find unlisted channels through cross-references, manual searches in the relevant social media channels, and text message[22,23] correspondence with the company. In each of the following sections, we will first give an overview of the general use of the respective social media channels in the US before analyzing in more detail how Dell is using each channel.

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[22] DellVlog, text message to author, June 23, 2011.
[23] Dell Enterprise, text message to author, June 28, 2011.

<u>Weblogs</u>

As mentioned in 1.1.2, the term 'weblog' originated in the United States. According to Technorati, a blog search engine and index, in 2010, about half of all bloggers worldwide came from the United States (Sobel 2010). A study conducted by eMarketer in 2010 showed an increase in the use of blogs, a trend that is said to continue in the future. The percentage of US companies using corporate blogs for marketing purposes is predicted to rise to 43% in 2012, up from 34% in 2010 (eMarketer 2010a).

As we can see, an increasing number of companies in the US are using corporate blogs for their marketing efforts. Dell also seems to have grown quite accustomed to the usage of its weblogs. This becomes apparent when considering Dell's regular and frequent use of this social media channel with almost two blog posts a day, along with the nine different corporate blogs on offer. Of these nine blogs, six[24] are relevant for the empirical framework of this paper with the others either focusing on Business-to-Business (B2B) communication or on regions irrelevant to the purpose of this paper. The relevant blogs are called 'Dell Software News', 'DellShares', 'Direct2Dell', 'Education Blog' and 'Washington Report'. Each blog has its own target audience and range of topics.

The data gathered during the observation period clearly show that Dell actively uses these blogs mainly for PR related activities. Almost 95% of the analyzed posts were used for PR purposes, 56% belonging to the group of new PR instruments and 39% to traditional PR. More than half of all blog posts provided content to the readers (both BSC and NBSC). One example is the Washington Report Blog which mainly delivers BSC as well as NBSC on matters regarding healthcare politics and the US healthcare system. In addition, the company uses the comment function of its blogs to react to user comments in the form of SSM, which accounted for about 7% of communication in the channel weblogs. Only two posts, or 3.5% of overall communication in this channel, were used for advertising by introducing new products.

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[24] A complete reference list of all social media accounts analyzed in this paper can be found on the pages 129-132.

<u>Microblogs</u>

According to Alexa, a provider of global web metrics and a well-known and accepted traffic indicator (Tumurcuoglu 2010), Twitter is the most frequently visited microblogging site both in the USA and worldwide (Alexa 2011a; 2011b). Twitter started to gain popularity in the first half of 2009 as a result of high-profile celebrities becoming members and thanks to a shout out on *Oprah*. Since then, it has become more mainstream than any other similar social media platform (Zarrella 2010, 31).

As described in the first chapter, Twitter enables its users to send and receive text-based messages with up to 140 characters. These microposts are referred to as 'tweets' and are delivered to anyone who has signed up to 'follow' a member's messages (Safko 2010, 258-259). The current number of officially registered users can be found in the business section of the About Page on the official Twitter website. At the beginning of 2011, this number was at 200+ million. As of May 2011, there are estimates of more than 300 million users worldwide (Bennett 2011a; Bennett 2011b). According to Loveland, eight percent of American Internet users are registered with Twitter and 72% of the top 100 American businesses on the Fortune 500 list are using Twitter for their business operations (Loveland 2011). Another survey conducted by Pew Research Center between April and May 2011 with 2,277 participants revealed that the ratio of adults using Twitter was 13%, which is a little more than Loveland's eight percent (Smith 2011). As in the US, Twitter is considered to be the most widely used microblogging service and with many companies using it for their marketing activities (see Twitter 2011), it is the most suitable US microblogging service for the purpose of this paper.

Dell is represented on Twitter with ten accounts: @Dell, @DellHomeUS, @DellCares, @Direct2Dell, @DellOutlet, @Alienware, @DellDigitalLife, @DellUniversity, @Dell4Good and @IdeaStorm. Apparently, Dell puts a special focus on this channel as, during the time of observation, 1,529 microblog posts were conducted in total corresponding to an average of 49 microblog posts per day. This amounts to more activities than those on all the other three channels put together. Microblogs can, therefore, by a large margin be referred to as the social media channel most heavily used by Dell. One reason for this might be Twitter's easy accessibility. It can be accessed not only via the Twitter homepage but also through several other interfaces such as smart phone applications, mobile text messaging, Web browser plug-

ins, or e-mail. This is a characteristic that makes Twitter very attractive to advertisers as well (Hettler 2010, 45-46). Another reason for the heavy usage might be the 140 character limitation, which makes it easier and less time consuming than posting a regular blog post, writing a formal e-mail or uploading a video. It is remarkable, though, how many microblog posts contain hyperlinks referring to other content of large scale such as articles, blog entries, websites, videos etc. Moreover, a company can react on any microblog post published anywhere on the whole Twitter platform because all posts are usually visible to the public[25]. This is not possible on other social media platforms such as Facebook, where companies can only react on statements and questions posted in an enclosed environment, e.g. a company's branded page. The most heavily used Dell account on Twitter was @DellCares, which mainly uses the three instruments SSM, SOI and MDR from the new PR category group. Incidentally, these three categories were prevalent in all SMM activities by Dell during the observation period (see 2.1.2).

Social Network Services

According to the Globalwebindex survey, about 50% of surveyed Americans stated that they regularly manage their social network profile (Globalwebindex 2011, 10). Facebook is the most visited and most widely used SNS in the United States, followed by LinkedIn and MySpace (ComScore 2011b; Alexa 2011a). In the general US Web ranking, Facebook takes second place, LinkedIn 11th and MySpace 46th, which shows the enormous gap between these networks which again underlines the popularity of Facebook (Alexa 2011a). In absolute numbers, Facebook has more than 150 million user accounts in the United States, which equals to a penetration of 48.5% of the whole population and 61% of the Internet population (SocialBakers 2011a). Due to the overwhelming domination and penetration of Facebook in the United States, we will use this platform in our analysis as the relevant SNS channel for the United States.

Dell maintains six pages on Facebook that are relevant for this paper. These pages are labeled 'Dell', 'Dell Lounge', 'Dell Go Green', 'Alienware', 'Dell Campus Connection' and 'Dell Outlet'. Dell's use of SNS was second only to its use of microblogs. Overall, 496 activities were observed on Facebook which corresponds to 16 activities per day. The most active Facebook page was 'Dell', the company's main page,

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[25] An option to protect tweets from the public does exist but, when first registering, is turned off by default.

where mostly the new PR instruments SSM and MDR were used. Dell's main page on Facebook and the @DellCares account on Twitter combined contributed to more than half of all SMM activities by Dell observed in this month, which shows that the main three SMM instruments are concerted through these two accounts. 'Dell Lounge', targeted at students, is another very active page by Dell. Posts on music events sponsored by Dell or non-branch specific content on movies and job profiles for graduates are only a few of the many PR activities on there. Other pages on Facebook like 'Dell Campus Connection' or 'Dell Outlet' had a very low activity rate, with less than ten posts each in the observed period. The 'Dell Go Green' page, which is supposed to provide information about all environmental-friendly activities of the company, was even completely inactive. The Facebook page 'Alienware' mainly provides non-branch specific content related to stories about computer gaming characters, or a fictional video story about two competing professional gamers called Joe and Zack. These stories mainly have an entertaining character and do not directly, and most of the times not even indirectly, advertise Alienware products.

Video Sharing Platforms

According to Alexa, YouTube is the most visited video-sharing platform and the fourth most visited website in the United States as of July 2011 (Alexa 2011a). Concerning video sharing platforms, YouTube's closest competitors are Vimeo[26] and Metacafe[27], ranked 80 and 385 respectively (Alexa 2011a). The Video Metrix report of ComScore Inc., a company engaging in Web analytics, confirms the dominance of YouTube in the United States, as well. According to the latest Metrix report, Google sites, driven primarily by video viewing on YouTube, had 142.7 million unique viewers, followed by VEVO with 55.2 million and Yahoo! sites with 53.2 million unique viewers (ComScore 2010a, 2011c). VEVO is a video site co-owned by the music industry companies Universal Music Group and Sony Music as well as by the Abu Dhabi Media Company. It mainly hosts official music videos and original programs by artists for their fans and, therefore, does not constitute a video sharing platform as defined for the purpose of this paper (Stelter 2009). Neither does Yahoo! Video, a video sharing platform that has removed the function to upload movies to its site in December 2010 and deleted all

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[26] http://vimeo.com
[27] http://metacafe.com

user-generated content in March 2011 (Rao 2011). Consequently, YouTube is the dominant video sharing platform in the US. For this reason, and because businesses can maintain official channels to represent their company (YouTube 2011b), YouTube is the chosen video sharing platform for the United States.

Dell maintains many different video channels on YouTube, categorized after regional and target audience preferences. However, the company has one main channel, which is called 'DellVlog' and which summarizes the content of all other Dell channels on YouTube. An exception to this is Dell's Alienware product line, which has its own video channel. We will analyze these two channels as YouTube accounts of Dell.

Dell uploaded 22 videos during the period of observation, which corresponds to 0.7 videos per day. Out of these 22 videos, 9 (41%) qualified as advertising. Most of these advertising videos can be categorized as informative/mixed, which means that these videos provided information about a product by using rational facts combined with emotional elements (see Figure 3 and 4). As mentioned in 1.2.2, this form of mixed advertising is the most common form of advertising in general, and Dell seems to follow that practice on its YouTube channel. Another reason for the heavy use of informative/mixed advertising on Dell's video channel might be the fact that, just as TV advertisements, videos are particularly well suited for transmitting emotional elements. Dell also focuses on videos showing branch and non-branch related content, with about 36% of all uploaded videos. Branch related content videos inform about new trends in the IT industry or about computer games while the non-branch related videos tell the fictional Alienware stories mentioned above.

2.1.2 Social Media Marketing

Overview

In this chapter, we will first give an overview of Dell's social media marketing activities before explaining in more detail how and to what extend Dell uses the different tools of the communications mix in social media.

2,104 SMM activities were observed during the 31 days of observation, which is more than all the activities by the three observed East Asian companies combined.

According to the best practices mentioned in 1.2.2, this is not necessarily a good thing, particularly if a company just spreads advertising content through social media channels in a copy-and-paste manner. However, this did not seem to be the case with Dell. Dell's activities were mainly categorized as new PR, the instruments of which are deemed essential for successful SMM. Moreover, having activities in 25 out of the 32 possible categories[28] of this paper (78.1%), Dell did not only have the most activities in terms of quantity but also the most diversified activities of all analyzed companies.

Figure 1 Dell's SMM Activities by Category Groups
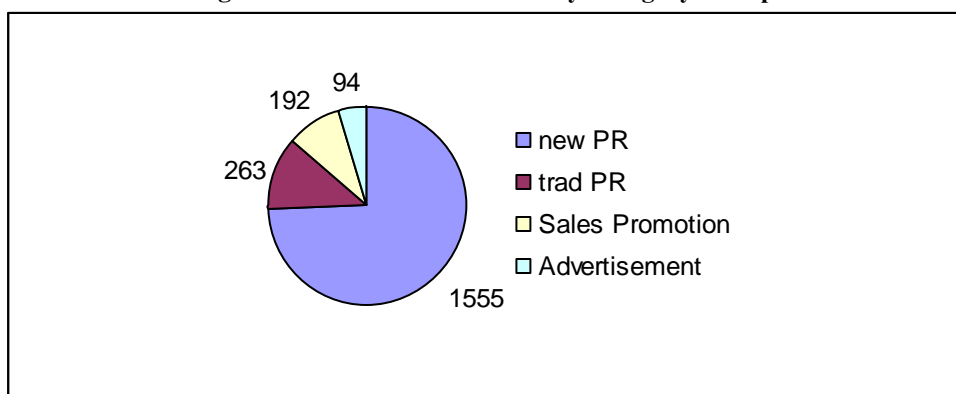
Advertising

From the total of 2,104 activities, only 94 (4.5%) were dedicated to advertising.

Table 10 Overview of Dell's Advertising Activities

	Rational	Emotional	Mixed
Informative	20	2	44
Persuasive	8	0	2
Reminder	6	0	12
Total	94		

Regarding the objective of advertising (left column), informative advertising in a rational or mixed way clearly dominated the advertising activities of Dell. There were 66 (70.2%) informative advertising activities mainly advertising for new or existing products, price changes, and customer value, or helping to maintain the company's image. Reminder advertising is the second biggest group with 18 posts (19.1%). This category includes all advertisements sent out under the slogan 'back to school', which

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[28] See also Appendix 3.

aims at reminding consumers that a product may be needed in the near future, i.e. for the start of the next term at university or school. The remaining 10 advertising activities, corresponding to a little more than 10% of all advertising activities, are mainly third person PC reports, which directly compare Dell products with other brands. Dell deliberately refers to those reports, which indicates that their products were most likely reviewed favorably compared to other products, which again aims at building brand preference.

When it comes to the typology of advertising, 58 posts (61.7%) had both emotional and rational elements, while 34 posts (36.2%) were only of rational nature. Most advertising activities referred to the product website of Dell where products are either advertised only with facts and pictures of the products (rational), or with additional emotional elements, e.g. a picture of a woman happily engaging in some recreational activity, or, in order to communicate family values, of a father with his child.

Figure 2 Ex. Advertising Instrument 'Informative/Mixed' (Dell)

Source: http://www.dell.com/us/p/inspiron-15-intel-n5040/pd?~ck=mn&dgc=SM&cid=51713&lid=1780472

Another kind of informative advertising Dell uses are PC reviews from third party pages such as online PC magazines. These reviews usually present Dell's products in a positive way and contain only information about specifications and attributes as well as pictures of the products. Therefore, they were categorized as rational as well as informative since they communicate customer value, and because Dell refers to them for the purpose of increasing its sales and the awareness of the product.

[49]

Dell also advertises its products through video uploads or microblog posts with hyperlinks referring to uploaded videos. The advertising objectives of those videos are primarily informative with both rational and emotional elements. This is achieved by embedding the products in different scenarios, e.g. a student's dormitory room to advertise laptops for students. The advertisement presented below, for example, contains an entertaining element (emotional) in showing the student dancing in a supposedly funny way (Figure 3) and a clear factual element (rational) in the form of a list of specifics at the end of the video (Figure 4).

Figure 3 Ex. Emotional Element in Advertisement (Dell)

Source: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o17QeeOsBf4

Figure 4 Ex. Rational Element in Advertisement (Dell)

Source: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o17QeeOsBf4

The two purely emotional advertisements registered during the period of observation were online video advertisements from Dell's 'Power to Do More' campaign. This campaign's objective is to create an image of the company (informative) exclusively using emotional elements. It does not communicate any attributes of or facts on any specific product. Emotional elements include the music in the background or the scenery, but also different occupations and real-life situations in which Dell suggests that its products play a vital role in the life of the people in the video.

Figure 5 Ex. Advertising Instrument 'Informative/Emotional' (Dell)

Source: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZwePJyYIav8

Sales Promotion

Dell used four out of the eight possible sales promotion instruments during the time of observation. This is the highest rate of all analyzed companies. However, a lot of sales promotion does not necessarily mean better marketing, as exceedingly aggressive sales promotion could imply that a company wants to use social media only to sell its products and not, in fact, to interact with customers or other users, as it is suggested for successful SMM in the chapter 1.2.2. With 9.1% of all SMM activities, Dell's sales promotion ratio is still comparatively low.

Table 11 Overview of Dell's Sales Promotion Activities

Sweepstakes (S), Contests (C) and Games (G)	122 (S: 106, C: 16)
Premiums	32
Coupons	23
Price Packs (Cents-off Deals)	15
Cash Refunds (or Rebates)	0
Samples	0
Advertising Specialties (Promotional Products)	0
Patronage Rewards	0
Total	192

The most heavily used sales promotion category was 'sweepstakes, contests and games' accounting for 122 from the total of 192 sales promotion activities. As mentioned in 1.2.2, this kind of sales promotion is comparatively cheap and effective when applied online, and very effective, indeed, for building long-term relationships. Incidentally, not only Dell products were given away as prices but also many other things such as VIP tickets for concerts sponsored by Dell or articles of daily use and game consoles.

The three other sales promotion instruments employed by Dell via social media are coupons, cents-off deals and premiums. The 32 premium activities almost exclusively involved promoting the Xbox 360 package (Figure 6) via selected accounts on Twitter and Facebook.

Figure 6 Ex. Sales Promotion Instrument 'Premiums' (Dell)

Source: http://www.dell.com/xbox

[52]

PR

With 1,818 activities, the lion's share of Dell's SMM effort belonged to the field of public relations. While Dell complemented many traditional PR instruments such as press releases, events or sponsorships by using social media, the company predominantly employed new PR instruments during the period of observation.

Table 12 Overview of Dell's Traditional PR Activities

Sponsorships	123
Events	40
News	36
Advertising	32
Public Service Activities	27
Publications	4
Speeches	1
Identity Media	0
Total	263

Table 13 Overview of Dell's New PR Activities

Support via Social Media	670
Maintenance of Digital Reputation	419
Social Online Integration	247
Non-Branch Specific Content	143
Branch Specific Content	50
Integration of Customers	21
Active Word of Mouth	5
Total	1,555

It is obvious that the three instruments employed most by Dell are 'support via social media', 'maintenance of digital reputation' and 'social online integration'. The number of activities labeled as 'support via social media' is even higher than all SMM activities of Korea or Japan in the same period. All in all, Dell seems to consider SMM as a very important instrument to communicate directly with other social media users in order to solve problems with Dell products, to react to negative criticism, or to generally maintain its digital reputation. Here are three typical examples of these three new PR instruments:

Figure 7 Ex. New PR Instrument 'Support via Social Media' (Dell)

DellCares DellCares
@ ▮▮▮▮▮ Oliver, sorry to hear that. Please DM your service tag, Email, OS running on desktop & modem model. We'll check on it. SV

Source: http://twitter.com/dellcares

Figure 8 Ex. New PR Instrument 'Social Online Integration' (Dell)

Source: http://twitter.com/dellcares

Figure 9 Ex. New PR Instrument 'Maintenance of digital Reputation' (Dell)

Source: http://facebook.com/Dell

Apart from these three kinds of activities, Dell uses its social media presence to deliver content either to inform about branch specific news and trends (50 activities) or to communicate non-branch related content such as movie reviews, opinions on the US health care system, or photos and stories about fictional game characters (143 activities).

Among the traditional PR instruments, sponsorship ranked first as Dell sponsored two big musical events in the US in August 2011. They were the open-air festival Lollapalooza[29] and the music discovery platform Noisey[30]. Before and during the concerts, Dell used weblogs, microblogs and SNS to draw attention to them, thus supporting sponsorships with the help of social media.

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[29] http://www.lollapalooza.com
[30] http://ww.noisey.com

Figure 10 Ex. Traditional PR Instrument 'Sponsorship' (Dell)

Source: http://www.youtube.com/lollapalooza
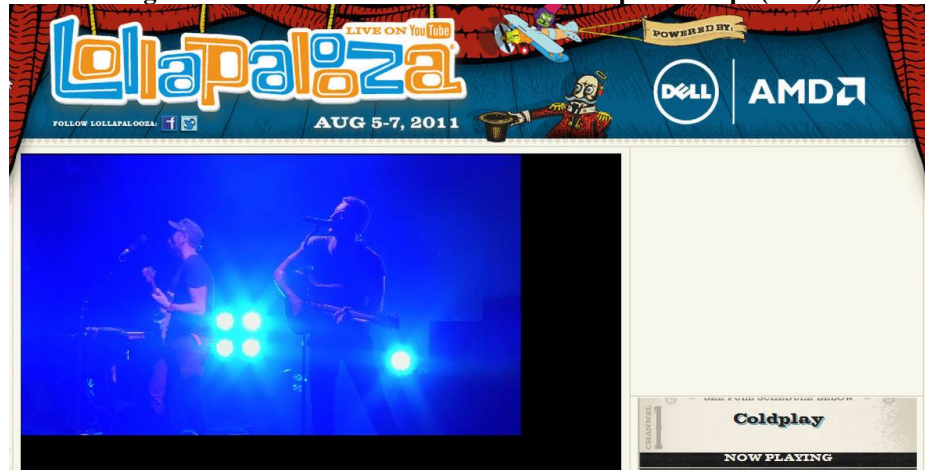
2.1.3 Summary

Dell uses the platforms in the categories microblogs and SNS mostly for direct communications with customers applying the new PR instruments SSM, SOI and MDR. The channels weblogs and video sharing platforms were mostly used for providing branch and non-branch related content. Furthermore, in relation to all activities in each channel, the advertising ratio on the channel video sharing platforms was highest with more than 41%, compared to only 3.5%, 5.1% and 1% for weblogs, microblogs and SNS respectively.

Regarding the question of how SMM was conducted, Dell shows a focus on PR activities in general, and the new PR instruments in particular, with most activities on the social media channel microblogs. The most heavily used instruments are from new PR: 'support via social media' and 'maintenance of digital reputation', followed by 'social online integration' and 'non-branch specific content'. Employment of SMM instruments in the category groups advertising and sales promotion were comparatively low, only having a share of 4.5% and 9.1% of all SMM activities respectively.

In terms of the guidelines mentioned in 1.2.2, Dell seems to be well aware of the successful use of social media. The company did not use its social media presence to merely advertise products or to boost its sales, as the share of SMM activities in the categories of advertising and sales promotion are very low with only 4.5% and 9.1% respectively. Moreover, Dell uses all of the seven categories in new PR, which are said to be important for successful SMM. At the same time, four of those seven were the most heavily used instruments by Dell across all categories.

[55]

2.2 South Korea – Case Study Samsung Electronics

2.2.1 Social Media

General Facts

According to ITU, South Korea had an Internet penetration rate of 83.7% in 2010, ranking first among all Asian countries (ITU 2011). Moreover, South Korea has the highest average broadband connection speed of all countries in the world (Akamai Technologies 2011, 4).

There are several surveys about the usage of social media in Korea. The Ministry of Public Administration and Security, and the Korean Agency for Digital Opportunity and Promotion jointly conducted a survey in 2010 with 2,500 Internet users and found that 75.5% of Korean netizens[31] use social media as their main communication channel. Subjects in their 20s showed the highest ratio with 90%, whereas the age group 50+ had the lowest usage rate, although, with 70.7%, it was still high (Ji 2011). Another survey conducted by Nielsen Korea[32], also in 2010 and with 1,000 people, found that 82.8% of Koreans are using or have experience using social media (Maeng 2011). According to Samsung Economics Research Institute, 67% of Korean CEOs believe that social media will revolutionize the way we communicate. In addition, these CEOs stated that social media is the channel they most often use for communicating with employees and customers (Hahm and Park 2011, 2).

Company overview

Two Korean PC manufacturers lead the Korean domestic PC market with a combined market share of 55%, as of the fourth quarter of 2010. They are Samsung Electronics and LG with a market share of 40% and 15% respectively. Hewlett Packard ranks third with a 11.3% market share (Kang 2011). With 459,000 PCs shipped in the fourth

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[31] 'Netizen': a user of the Internet (Dictionary.com 2011).
[32] http://kr.nielsen.com

quarter of 2010, Samsung is the market leader in the South Korean PC market and, therefore, will be used as case study in this paper.

Samsung Electronics was founded in 1977 and began the production of personal computers in 1983 (Samsung 2011b). The company is headquartered in Seoul and counted approximately 174,000 employees in 2010 (Samsung Profile 2011, 63). Measured by sales, Samsung Electronics is the biggest technology firm in the world (The Economist 2011). The company engages in manufacturing and selling of semiconductors, LCDs, telecommunication products, and digital media products. It offers a vast variety of products ranging from semiconductor products, media and storage products, LCD products, telecommunication products, consumer products to home appliances and many other electrical appliances (Bloomberg Businessweek 2011c).

Just as Dell, Samsung engaged in SMM activities in all four of the analyzed social media channels but with much lower quantity. During the 31 days of observation, a total of 653 SMM activities by Samsung Electronics was registered, analyzed and categorized resulting in the following distribution: 158 activities in the category weblogs (5.1/day), 374 activities in the category microblogs (12.1/day), 90 activities in the category social network services (2.9/day), and 31 activities in the category video sharing platforms (1/day). Put together, this corresponds to approximately 21 SMM activities per day.

Samsung Electronics provides an official list of its social media channels, which seems to be up to date and complete. There were no social media channels to be found apart from those listed in the overview (Samsung 2011a). What is most remarkable in comparison to Dell is the high number of activities in the category weblogs. We will discuss this characteristic in more detail in the following section.

Weblogs

After the term 'weblog' was coined in 1997 in the US, it took four more years until the first community of early bloggers was founded in Korea with the launching of a site called 'Weblog-in-Korea'. With the foundation of AbleClick two years later in 2003, the portal-blog era began, and the weblog started to enter into the Korean mainstream. In quick succession the main Korean portal sites Daum, Nate, Naver and Yahoo Korea

started their blogging services as well, and blogging became an integral part of the Korean Internet culture. Today, the majority of blogs in Korea use portal-based services (La Shure 2009, 80-81).

We can gain a better understanding of the extent to which blogs have become integral to the process of acquiring information in Korea by looking at the very distinct Korean search engine market. The Korean search engine market is dominated by portal-sites, particularly by Naver. In 2009, Naver accounted for 76% of all Internet searches in Korea, compared to less than 3% each for Yahoo! and Google (The Economist 2009). Google started to close the gap in the subsequent two years, but in 2011 Naver still took 70% of the PC-based Internet search market (Choi and Chung 2011).

What makes these portal sites so special? Naver is a Korean based search engine, and it pioneered in categorizing search results into, among others, web pages, videos, news, images - and blogs (The Economist 2009). When conducting a search on Naver, the first category usually displayed after paid and sponsored links, and possibly some other special features, is blogs. Due to the highly active Korean blogosphere, chances are high that someone else already wrote something about the key word of the search. Incidentally, displaying blogs in search results is not a universal practice. Google, for example, removed blogs from search results because they are considered as "clogging up the search results" (La Shure 2009, 83).

How active are Koreans really when it comes to writing and reading blogs? In 2007, Korea ranked second only behind Japan with 43% of the entire population regularly reading blogs. Similarly, the Korea Internet & Security Agency released a report stating that from all Internet users in Korea some 56.8% regularly read blogs and 42.9% maintain their own blogs (La Shure 2009, 81). The most recent data on the Korean blogosphere comes from the Global State of Social Media 2011 survey by Globalwebindex. It revealed that South Koreans still are among the most active bloggers in the world, second only to China. Around 38% of the subjects indicated that they write their own blog (Globalwebindex 2011, 11).

Samsung Electronics officially maintains eight different blogs. Because five blogs are focusing on other product groups, only three are taken into account for this paper. The relevant blogs are called 'Samsungtomorrow' (삼성전자 기업블로그), 'Samsungsbloggers' (삼성 S 블로거 공식 블로그) and the 'Samsung Galaxy Tab blog'. Blog activity by Samsung was quite impressive in terms of quantity and length of the posts, especially in comparison to blog posts by Dell or Lenovo. Samsung Electronics

published 158 blog posts, the highest number of all analyzed companies. Some of the blog posts were as long as 15 or more printed A4 pages with many embedded elements such as pictures or videos. Samsung uses its blogs mostly for advertising in the form of hands-on reviews by Samsung-bloggers, which are explained in more detail in the next chapter. Out of the 158 blog posts, 81 posts, or 51.3%, fell into the advertising category group. As a consequence, it can be subsumed that Samsung deploys almost half of all its activities in the category group advertising (81 out of 163) to the social media channel 'weblogs'. Of all companies, Samsung also shows the highest rate of activity when it comes to direct communication with customers through blog comments. The instruments employed for this kind of communication were 'support via social media' and 'social online integration', which both can be found in the new PR toolbox. In total, Samsung published 39 activities of this kind during the month of observation. In comparison, Dell only published four, Lenovo and NEC none at all.

Apart from these new PR activities, traditional PR instruments were also employed. Samsung posted six blog entries in this subcategory group. Some talked about social responsibility projects, particularly those in Africa (see Figure 11), and some were press releases with news mainly about the ongoing legal disputes with Apple. These activities can be attributed to the traditional PR instruments 'public service activity' and 'news' respectively.

Figure 11 Ex. Traditional PR Instrument 'Public Service Activities' (Samsung)

Translation: (Title) [International volunteer activity in Zambia #2] Going to 'Kafue Solobon', the village ranking first in the world's happiness index
Source: http://samsungtomorrow.com

Another characteristic of Samsung's blogs worth mentioning is that the company tries to involve its customers very actively through many sweepstake activities in its blogs. These sweepstake activities are mostly attached at the end of a blog post, and participants have the chance to win small prices like coffee or ice cream vouchers by posting a comment (see Figure 12). However, these activities were not taken into account in the statistics as every SMM activity could only be categorized once and these sweepstakes did not constitute the main content of the blog posts.

Figure 12 Ex. Sales Promotion Instrument 'Sweepstakes, Contests and Games' (Samsung)
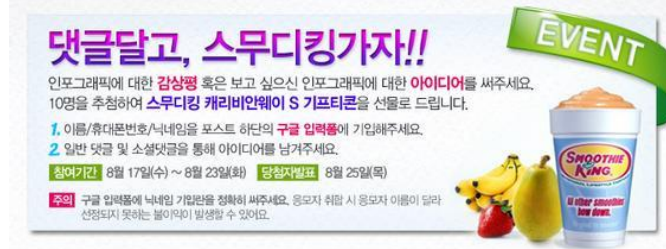
Translation: (Title) Let's leave a comment and go to Smoothie King!!

Source: http://samsungtomorrow.com

Microblogs

With Twitter rapidly gaining popularity all over the world, several local knock-offs emerged in Korea. The most popular among them are Me2Day[33], Yozm[34] and Nate Connect[35]. These microblogging services are run by above-mentioned Naver, Daum and Nate respectively, Korea's biggest Web Portal Sites. Besides that, there are even more services starting to emerge like Yagg[36] or Tocpic[37]. All Korean microblogging services are very similar to Twitter and only slightly differ from each other in terms of registration, the way of following other people, or the maximum length of posts (see Han 2010; Choi 2010 or Eun 2010). All homegrown Korean microblogging services are potential competitors to Twitter, e.g. Naver which has a wide user base because of their blog service mentioned above, or Nate which also owns Cyworld, the largest SNS, and NateOn, the largest instant messaging service in South Korea (Choi 2010).

The official Korean Twitter service started its operations as late as January 2011 (Min 2011). However, with the help of Korean-language third party applications, Twitter had been available in the Korean language long before that. Therefore, at the time when the official Korean service started, Twitter already had more than 2 million Korean users (OikoLab 2011) and a growth rate of more than 3,400 percent (Ungerleider 2011).

As of August 2011, there were more than 4.2 million Twitter users in Korea according to OikoLab[38], a laboratory specializing in collecting and analyzing online

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[33] http://me2day.net
[34] http://yozm.daum.net
[35] http://hello.nate.com
[36] http://www.yagg.kr
[37] http://tocpic.com
[38] http://lab.oiko.cc

data (OikoLab 2011). Furthermore, Korean Twitter users are not only large in numbers but also very active. According to a report by the Korean Communications Commission, 80% of the Korean Twitter users re-tweet or comment tweets of other users, which is a very high rate compared to the worlds average of 10% (Fnnews 2011; Shin 2011). A survey conducted in April 2011 by Nielsen Korea with 1,000 Korean Internet users on the subject of their usage of social media yielded the following results: 31.9% stated that they were using Twitter, with the values for Me2day and Nate Connect being 17% and 6.6%, respectively (Maeng 2011; Nielsen Korea 2011). These results are compounded by the Alexa ranking for Korea, where Twitter shows much higher traffic (rank 15) than Me2day (rank 32) (Alexa 2011e). Looking at this data, it becomes clear that Twitter is the most widely used and most popular microblogging service in South Korea and, therefore, also the most suitable microblogging platform for the purpose of our analysis of SMM activities in this country.

Samsung Electronics is represented on Twitter with four official accounts: @samsungtomorrow, @samsungsbird, @samsungbloggers and @LifeIsTab. Just as Dell, Samsung was most active in the category microblogs with 57.3% of all SMM activities taking place in this social media channel. The company manages most of its direct communication with its customers using microblogs, mainly by employing the new PR instruments 'support via social media' and 'social online integration'. As Samsung does not maintain a specific support account, online support is mostly handled through the company's main Twitter account @samsungtomorrow. Another frequently used account is @samsungsbird, through which the company tries to stay in close contact with customers. This is accomplished using the new PR instrument 'social online integration' (Figure 18) and sweepstake activities on an almost daily basis (Figure 17). Although Samsung's most recent tablet PC was the product most talked about in many of the other social media platforms and accounts, the account @TabIsLife showed no activity at all during the month of observation.

Social Network Services

With 25 million users, a figure corresponding to more than half of South Koreas population, a SNS called Cyworld is the largest and most popular of its kind in Korea. The company behind Cyworld also gained worldwide recognition as a pioneer in the

social networking service industry (Park 2011a). Cyworld was founded in 1999 before being acquired by SK Telecom in 2003. Despite its huge popularity in Korea, its attempts at oversea expansion were thwarted because of linguistic, cultural and technical problems (see Park 2011a or Lee 2011). It is also because of these issues that Cyworld is currently losing a lot of users and popularity to Facebook dramatically fast (Park 2011b; Chung 2011). In addition, Facebook was able to increase page views almost tenfold, whereas Cyworld lost around 15% between January and December 2010 (Park 2011b). According to Alexa, the traffic on Facebook, as of August 2011, not only exceeded Cyworld's traffic, but also the traffic of the associated portal site Nate, from where Cyworld users can directly log in to the SNS (Alexa 2011e). This is of particular significance as users are redirected to the Nate portal site when typing in the official Cyworld web address[39].

Concerning the use of Cyworld for commercial or marketing purposes, only very few profiles of companies exist and there is no function like Facebook's branded pages, through which companies have an official way to represent their brand. Cyworld has just recently started a new sub-network called C-Log[40], where officially branded pages[41] now can be set up. Another attempt at a homegrown Facebook clone is Naver Me, which is part of the 'go social' campaign of Naver to keep up with the competition from overseas. However, it is hardly popular and usage is almost nonexistent. The development of these new homegrown SNS has to be reevaluated in the near future (Lee Yoo Eun 2010). Regarding business SNS, the largest Korean equivalent of the US network LinkedIn is called LinkNow[42], which was founded in 2007 and reached the 150,000 user mark in May 2011 (Kim Taejin 2011).

Although Facebook still lags far behind Cyworld in absolute numbers (3.8 million vs. 25 million users), it recently shows an enormous increase in popularity. Besides that, and contrary to Facebook, Cyworld does not offer any official way for companies to represent themselves on the platform. For these reasons we will take Facebook as the subject of our analysis of SNS in South Korea.

Samsung Electronics maintains two branded pages on Facebook, which are labeled 'Samsung Tomorrow' and 'IT Samsung'. Samsung used its SNS accounts for 13.8% of all its SMM activities during the period of observation. With only about three activities

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[39] www.cyworld.com
[40] http://c.cyworld.com
[41] E.g. the Korean company Hana-Tour http://c.cyworld.com/65899358 (accessed June 14, 2011).
[42] www.linknow.kr

a day, the SNS channel is less heavily used by Samsung than the weblogs channel (5.1/day). Moreover, content is not so much focused on advertising (16.7%) but concentrates more on the instruments of PR (62.2%). The company uses its Facebook pages mainly for SOI activities (35.6%) and SSM (15.6%). Sales promotion instruments, in this case sweepstakes and contests only, contributed to 21.1% of Samsung's SNS activities.

Video Sharing Platforms

The biggest three players in the Korean video sharing market have a combined market share of 66%. These three sites are Pandora TV[43], Daum Video[44] and YouTube (Nielsen KoreanClick 2010). Pandora TV is a video portal and personal broadcasting service based on user-generated content which was founded in Korea in October 2004 and which launched its global service for international users in 2008 (Pandora TV 2011a). Daum Video is a video sharing and streaming service of the portal site Daum, one of the three biggest portal sites in Korea. YouTube Korea officially started its service in January 2008 (Choi 2011).

On all of these sites companies can represent themselves by the means of so-called 'branded channels' (PandoraTV 2011b; Daum.net 2011; YouTube 2011b). Measured by the time spend on the video sharing site, YouTube is leading the Korean market with a share of 25%, followed by Daum Video with a share of 23% and Pandora TV with a share of 18% (Nielsen KoreanClick 2010). Regarding the traffic, YouTube also ranks at the top of the list. According to Alexa, YouTube is the fifth most visited site in Korea, compared to rank 300 for Pandora TV (Alexa 2011e). Daum.net Video was already overtaken by YouTube as soon as July 2010 (Choi 2011), although the portal site Daum.net, which Daum.net Video is a part of, is ranked fourth in Korea and therefore still one place ahead YouTube. However, since only 3.06% of the traffic on the portal site goes to the Daum Video subpage, it is very likely that Daum.net Video is just as far behind in the ranking as Pandora TV (Alexa 2011f). In addition, YouTube Korea's mobile traffic increased ninefold between February 2010 and February 2011, and there is no other country in the world where as many users access YouTube from a mobile

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[43] http://www.pandora.tv
[44] http://tvpot.daum.net

device (Jeong 2011). For these reasons, the most suitable platform on the social media channel 'video sharing platforms' in Korea is YouTube.

Samsung Electronics maintains one main video channel on YouTube called 'SamsungTomorrow', on which video content is uploaded in both English and Korean. Of all companies analyzed, Samsung used the social media channel 'video sharing platforms' most heavily in relation to all its other SMM activities. Moreover, following the trend of content on the channel 'weblogs', content by Samsung on the 'video sharing platforms' channel was clearly focused on advertising, i.e. all 31 activities belonged to the category group advertising. Consequently, we can safely subsume that Samsung uses the two social media channels 'weblogs' and 'video sharing platforms' mainly to make (potential) customers aware of its products in order to increase its sales.

2.2.2 Social Media Marketing

Overview

During the observation period, 653 SMM activities by Samsung Electronics were registered. This is fewer than Lenovo and Dell but more than NEC. Divided into the three main category groups, Samsung had 163 advertising activities, 95 sales promotion activities and 395 PR activities. Out of the possible 32 SMM instruments, Samsung used 13 categories and therefore less than Dell and Lenovo.

Figure 13 Samsung's SMM Activities divided by category groups
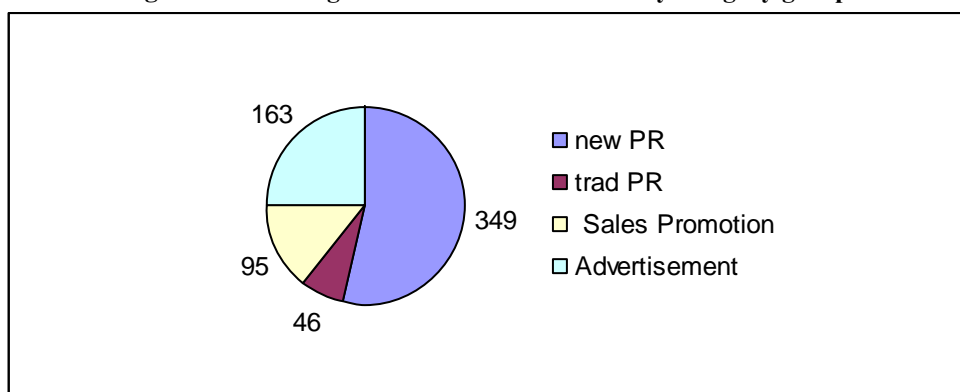
<u>Advertising</u>

With 163 activities or 25% of all SMM activities, Samsung ranked first in advertising among all companies analyzed, in nominal as well as in relative terms.

Table 14 Overview of Samsung's Advertising Activities

	Rational	Emotional	Mixed
Informative	69	10	80
Persuasive	1	0	3
Reminder	0	0	0
Total	163		

Looking at this table, two types of advertising apparently dominate Samsung's activities in this category group: informative advertising with exclusively rational elements and informative advertising with mixed elements. These two categories have a share of 42.3% and 49.1% of all advertising activities respectively.

Most of the 69 informative advertisements with exclusively rational elements came in the form of blog posts in which the attributes and benefits of a product are shown in real-life situations. In other words, official Samsung-bloggers explain how a product works and what it looks like, usually with photos they took themselves. As these blogs talk about new products and sometimes suggest new ways of using them, but at the same time provide rational facts such as attributes and functions of the products, these posts can be classified as informative advertising with rational elements.

The larger group of informative/mixed advertising is mainly composed of videos and blog posts in which Samsung presents the attributes of its products combined with emotional elements such as a love story with university students, or showing the product together with celebrities.

Figure 14 Ex. Advertising Instrument 'Informative/Mixed' (Samsung)

Note: A celebrity presenting and working with a product of Samsung.
Source: www.samsungtomorrow.com

Figure 15 Ex. Advertising Instrument 'Informative/Mixed' (Samsung)

Note: Love story of students (product presented by the right student).
Source: www.samsungtomorrow.com

The remaining 10 informative advertisements exclusively containing emotional elements are usually videos in which neither attributes nor functions of a product are shown but rather beautiful sceneries or images to connect with the audience on an emotional basis.

Figure 16 Ex. Advertising Instrument 'Informative/Emotional' (Samsung)

Source: www.youtube.com/watch?v=EqDk9ao93Ak

Sales Promotion

During the time of observation, Samsung had 95 activities in the category group of sales promotion, which corresponds to 14.6% of all SMM activities.

Table 15 Overview of Samsung's Sales Promotion Activities

Contests, Sweepstakes, and Games	95 (S: 71, C: 24)
Samples	0
Coupons	0
Cash Refunds (or Rebates)	0
Price Packs (Cents-off Deals)	0
Premiums	0
Advertising Specialties (Promotional Products)	0
Patronage Rewards	0
Total	95

However, all 95 activities were conducted through only one sales promotion instrument: 'sweepstakes, contests and games'. As mentioned in the chapter on the theoretical framework, this instrument is usually used on the Internet to get customers involved, thus building long-term relationship rather than boosting short-term sales. From this, the impression arises that Samsung does not use its sales promotion activities at all to boost short-term sales.

Samsung staged its 71 sweepstakes and 24 contests on a regular basis and on all social media channels except the video sharing platform. Particularly on Twitter, these sweepstakes and contests were fast-paced with deadlines usually on the same day. Small prices such as free coffee, gift cards or earphones were given away almost on a daily basis.

Figure 17 Ex. Sales Promotion Instrument 'Sweepstakes, Contests and Games' (Samsung)

Translation: [Quiz] Who is currently gaining popularity in different fields such as poetry and filmmaking, and the main guest on this week's 'Tab Class'? Have a look at our hint: bit.ly/yQ9GpH We will give away culture gift cards to 10 followers who answers this correctly and retweet (Ends 8/19, 1800)
Source: www.twitter.com/samsungsbird

PR

Despite having the lowest proportion in PR-related SMM activities compared to the other case studies, still nearly 60.5%, i.e. still more than half of Samsung's SMM activities, can be attributed to the category group PR.

Table 16 Overview of Samsung's Traditional PR Activities

News	16
Events	9
Public Service Activities	8
Advertising	7
Sponsorships	6
Publications	0
Speeches	0
Identity Media	0
Total	46

Table 17 Overview of Samsung's New PR Activities

Social Online Integration	212
Support via Social Media	121
Branch Specific Content	7
Non-Branch Specific Content	5
Maintenance of Digital Reputation	4
Integration of Customers	0
Active Word of Mouth	0
Total	349

The tables clearly show that SSM and SOI dominate this category with a total of 333 activities, which corresponds to 84.3% of PR activities, as a whole, and to 95.4% of all new PR activities. Both these activities were staged in the three social media

channels weblogs, microblogs and SNS. SSM activities included help via the comment function of blogs and of Facebook, or assistance provided in microblog posts on Twitter. As for SOI, Samsung has come up with several ways using this instrument. Besides joining in with conversations via the comments function, Samsung tries to get fans of its branded page on Facebook involved by asking many questions or their opinions on a wide range of topics unrelated to business such as weather, hobbies, habits, or topical events in the media. Figure 18 shows an example for such a poll, in which Samsung is asking its fans how they usually end a telephone conversation.

Figure 18 Ex. New PR Instrument 'Social Online Integration' (Samsung)

Translation: Question: What do you say when you end a telephone conversation?
Answer 1: oh~
Answer 2: hang up~
Answer 3: Ok, I got it~
Source: http://www.facebook.com/SamsungTomorrow

The third PR instrument most heavily used by Samsung is 'news', a traditional PR instrument. In the 16 posts during the 31 days of observation, Samsung informed its publics on company developments once every two days on average. As mentioned above, the main topic of this month was the legal dispute with Apple about copyright infringements of Samsung's tablet PC. Other examples for press releases during the month of observation include the correction of false rumors about the launch date of a product.

2.2.3 Summary

Samsung Electronics stages most of its activities in the microblogging channel but at the same time very actively uses its corporate blogs. Of all analyzed companies, Samsung was the most active on the blog channel. One explanation for the strong focus on blogs might be the unique search engine market of the country and the corresponding fact that

blogs are often used as a source of information. Moreover, most blog entries were extensively long, and Samsung displayed a uniquely high usage of new PR instruments on its blogs. In addition, many blog posts invited readers to interact with the company through the attached sweepstake activities.

Just as with Dell and Lenovo, the instrument most heavily used by Samsung is one of new PR. Somewhat similar to Dell, Samsung particularly focuses on the new PR instruments 'social online integration' and 'support via social media'. Contrary to its US counterpart though, it uses its SMM channels much more to advertise for its products. With a share of 25% of all its SMM activities falling into the category of advertising, Samsung shows the highest advertising rate of all analyzed companies. However, with regard to the economic success of Samsung's SMM activities, the most used instrument is still one of new PR. Furthermore, Samsung used five out of the seven possible new PR instruments during the time of observation.

2.3 Japan – Case Study NEC

2.3.1 Social Media

General Facts

In 2010, Japan had an Internet penetration rate of 80%. What is particular about Internet usage in Japan is that there are more mobile Internet users than wired ones (ITU 2011; Takeme2japan 2009). According to Dentsu and the Lehman Brothers' forecast on online advertising spending in 2010, Internet advertising expenditures as a ratio of total advertising expenditures are higher in Japan than in the US with 13.3% for Japan and 11.6% in the United States (Dentsu 2011, 21; TechChrunch 2008). However, the results of the Global Survey of Business Use of Social Networks showed that in Japan a full 53% of businesses have not devoted any part of their budget to marketing in social networks. This demonstrates how, from a business perspective, SMM has yet to gain significance (Regus 2011, 12). In addition, only 37% of the surveyed companies use social media to contact existing customers, compared to 79% in China or 50% in the

United States (Regus 2011, 10). Another finding showed that 67% of businesses in Japan think that marketing must now make use of social networks in order to be successful, which is below the global average of 74% (Regus 2011, 15).

Although the oldest and largest SNS in Japan, 'Mixi', had been in operation since 2004, the term 'social media' did not become known and popular until the end of 2010. Yamada attributes this not only to the rising popularity of Facebook but also to the popularity of the microblogging service Twitter in Japan (Yamada 2011).

Company overview

The Japanese PC market is mainly dominated by domestic PC manufacturers. In 2010, the top three market leaders took more than 50% of the domestic PC market share in terms of PC shipments. They are NEC, Fujitsu and Toshiba with market shares of 19.5%, 19.4% and 11.6% respectively, with the top selling companies only separated by 0.1% (Tamura 2011). Newer data (Q1 2011) reaffirms NEC's market leadership with a 18.4% market share compared to Fujitsu's 18.2% (BCN 2011). Therefore, NEC will serve as case study for this paper.

NEC is headquartered in Tokyo and was established in 1899. Major operations of the NEC Group include IT Services (consulting, outsourcing etc.), Platform (software products), Carrier Network (network integration and products aimed at network telecommunication carriers), Social Infrastructure (broadcasting, aerospace, defense etc.) and Personal Solutions (PCs, displays, peripheral devices etc.). Including its subsidiaries, the NEC Group counted 115,840 employees as of March 2011 (NEC 2011b). NEC started to do research in computers in 1954, announced its first PC in 1979, and its first laptop-sized PC in 1991, before eventually claiming leadership in the Japanese PC market (NEC 2011c).

NEC is the only company analyzed in this paper, which did not use all four relevant social media channels for its SMM activities. Moreover, out of the two channels where NEC is officially represented, only one was actually used during the period of observation. As a result, NEC stands out with the fewest number of SMM activities not only overall but also by channel. During the 31 days of observation, a total 162 SMM activities by NEC was registered, analyzed and categorized resulting in following distribution: 0 activities in the category weblogs, 162 activities in the category

microblogs (5.2/day), 0 activities in the category SNS, and 0 activities in the category video sharing platforms. This corresponds to 5.2 SMM activities per day.

NEC publishes a complete and up to date overview of its social media accounts on its website (NEC 2011a). Due to the lack of representation on the social media channels weblogs and SNS, only microblogs and video sharing platforms were subject to observation. However, as the statistics above show, NEC did not upload a single video in the category video sharing platforms during the period of observation, i.e. all marketing activities by NEC were registered in the social media channel microblogs.

Weblogs

In 2007, Japan was home to the largest and most active blogging culture in the world (Sifry 2007). According to a survey by Globalwebindex, 24% of Japanese Internet users write their own blog (Globalwebindex 2011, 11) and 74% also read blogs (Kotler et al. 2010, 7). Moreover, there are more blog posts in Japanese than in any other language in the world, one reason for that being that Japan has a number of very popular blog network and service sites (Hunt 2010). In 2010, more than one million active blogs were uploaded to Japanese servers additionally every month, which is far more than in any other Asian-Pacific country (Endo 2010, 52).

In 2009, Marsh-Research[45] and Japan.Internet.Com[46] surveyed 300 Internet users between 20 and 60+ about their habits using weblogs. Results showed that 41,7% had experience or were writing a blog and that the by far most actively used blog services in Japan were Ameba, FC2 and Yahoo! Blog (Japan.Internet.Com 2009). According to the most recent Alexa-rankings, these sites are still the most visited today, with all three sites among the six most popular websites in Japan (Alexa 2011d).

On some blog service sites, companies can set up their own business blog accounts (Hunt 2010). This is possible, for example, on the most popular blog service site Ameba (Ameba 2011), which also offers additional functions in order to enhance socializing, such as video sharing, online communities, and gaming (Hunt 2010).

NEC, however, does not run a corporate blog. There is no corporate blog listed in the social media overview on NEC's website, and the company confirmed upon

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[45] http://www.marsh-research.co.jp/
[46] http://japan.internet.com/

inquiry[47] that it does not maintain a corporate blog. The fact that Japan had the world's largest and most active blog culture in 2007 and still has a vibrant blogging community today, seems not to be reason enough for NEC to actively participate in this culture. Considering that NEC staged only very little or no social media activity whatsoever in the other channels as well, not running a corporate blog seems to be a part of NEC's overall marketing strategy of just not using social media very intensively.

Microblogs

The microblogging service Twitter, imported from the US, played a major role in coining the term social media in Japan. Yamada states two principal reasons for the splendid reception of the microblogging service by the Japanese. First, it enables the distribution of personal information in an uncommonly open way. Second, it is very popular as a communication tool among companies. Twitter is used particularly often for spreading news and directly communicating with customers. This goes even so far that Yamada sees a new form of relationship between businesses and private persons emerging induced by the imported microblogging service (Yamada 2011). In November 2010, Twitter overtook Mixi as the most-visited social media destination in Japan. In December 2010, Twitter reached 14.6 million unique visitors compared to 13.5 million on Mixi. Twitter's surge in visitor means an increase in market traction of 176% compared to the previous year (ComScore 2011a).

According to the survey by Globalwebindex, 10% of Japanese netizens were actively using microblogging services in 2010 (Globalwebindex 2011, 10). A report by Nielsen Japan[48] stated that the reach of Twitter Japan was even higher with 16.3% in summer 2010 (Hunt 2010). Furthermore, as of January 2011, data by ComScore showed a steady growth, making Japan the country with the third highest reach (22%) among all countries using Twitter after Brazil (23.4%) and the Netherlands (26%) (ComScore 2011d). Finally, in June 2011, Japan even overtook Brazil and ranked second with 26.6%, coming up closely behind the Netherlands with 26.8% (Loveland 2011). There are many applications and supporting services available in Japan, such as Twib and Twinavi, which connect microblogging services to social media services (Hunt 2010). Twitter is also used by Japanese politicians, e.g. during the upper house elections in

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[47] NEC webmaster, e-mail message to author, July 7, 2011.
[48] http://jp.nielsen.com

2010 emulating the presidential campaign of Barack Obama in 2008 (Endo 2010, 49-50). According to Twitter's official Japanese blog, Japan currently holds the world record in tweets per second. After the victory of Japan over Denmark at the FIFA World Cup in June 2010, tweets per second rose to a remarkable 3,283, which exceeded the frequency of tweets after the Los Angels Lakers beat the Boston Celtics in the NBA Finals in the United States in the same year (Twitter 2010).

There are no viable competitors to Twitter in Japan. Ameba, Japan's largest blog service site, started its microblogging service in December 2009. At the beginning of 2010, Twitter had almost five times more visitors than Ameba. Furthermore, the time spent on Twitter was almost five times higher (Netratings 2010). For these reasons, Twitter will be used as microblogging platform for collecting data on our Japanese case study.

NEC maintains 11 accounts on Twitter. However, only four of them are relevant for the empirical framework of this paper. The remaining accounts either deal with other product groups or focus on B2B communications. The following four Twitter accounts are subject to our analysis: @NEC_jp_pr (NEC プレスリリース), @NEC_ad (NEC 広告宣伝), @NEC_jp_event (NEC イベント) and @blwisdom (ビジネスに役立つ「次の一手」 Wisdom). Although Twitter is the only social media channel on which NEC staged any activities during the month of observation, not a single one of these accounts specializes in PC-related B2C communication. On the one hand, three accounts (@NEC_jp_pr, @NEC_ad and @NEC_jp_event) only tweet on general topical issues regarding the whole NEC group. However, almost one third of all tweets published by these three @NEC accounts focused on B2B related products or topics which are irrelevant for the purpose of this paper. On the other hand, NEC maintains the @blwisdom account (see Figure 21), which mainly supplies content unrelated to the PC branch of NEC. NBSC made up as much as 76% of all analyzed microblog posts, i.e. of all SMM activities by NEC.

Social Network Services

According to Globalwebindex, only 18% of Japanese Internet users chose to manage their social network profile in September 2010. This is not only the lowest rate

compared to all other countries analyzed in this paper but also of all countries subject to the Globalwebindex survey (Globalwebindex 2011, 10).

With more than 21 million users, Mixi is the largest Japanese SNS (Oyo 2011). It was founded in 2004, and in the first years, you were only able to join the network if a friend who was already a member invited you. Since March 2010 the network has been open to everyone. One special characteristic of Mixi is that members are free to choose whether to use their real names or just a nickname. Besides that, it has typical characteristics of a social network (Han 2011, 73). However, Mixi does not offer any particular functions enabling SMM, as businesses have no way of creating an official profile through which to brand their company and communicate with users. According to Han, this situation might change in the near future as Mixi planned to add this function by the end of 2011 (Han 2011, 81; Hoffman 2011).

There are two other Japanese SNS which do not only have large membership but are also very successful economically: GREE[49] and Mobage Town[50]. They offer some of the typical SNS features, such as personal messages, chat in communities and music sharing, but the main focus of these sites is on gaming. The reason for their economic success is twofold: They sell advertising space, and they sell virtual items to users for decorating their personal profile pages (Saitou 2009). However, as with Mixi, no official profiles or accounts of companies can be found on these sites, either. In addition, whereas many articles and blogs talk about the economic success of these platforms, no references can be found to SMM activities through branded pages or accounts. There is no information on this matter in the terms and conditions of the sites, either (see GREE 2011 and Yahoo-MBGA 2011).

According to the Global Survey of Business Use of Social Networks, only 23% of Japanese firms declare that they successfully use social networks to acquire new customers, which was the lowest rate of all countries subject to the survey. In addition, only 21% of Japanese firms believe that customers are reaching out to them through social networks (Regus 2011, 6). One possible explanation for this phenomenon is that, particularly in Japan where Mixi is most popular, using social networks is rather associated with personal blogging and instant updates. "Professional social networking is a less culturally relevant concept and yet to make inroads" (Regus 2011, 6).

None of the Japanese SNS platforms discussed so far is viable for the research of this paper, which brings us to the fastest growing SNS in Japan: Facebook. The

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[49] http://gree.jp
[50] http://yahoo-mbga.jp/

Japanese version of Facebook started operation in May 2008 (Han 2011, 74) and with 104.42%, it had by far the highest relative growth rate of all Asian Facebook versions in the six months from January to June 2011. The number of accounts grew from 1.8 million at the beginning of 2011 to 3.7 million in June 2011 (Socialbakers 2011b). With 3.7 million Japanese users, Facebook has a penetration rate of 2.93% in Japan (Socialbakers 2011a). Due to its page function, Facebook is the largest SNS that provides the possibility for businesses to maintain an official account. Therefore, Facebook will be used for the analysis of SMM activities on SNS in Japan.

NEC, however, does not run an official company page on Facebook. As a result, no empirical data from this social media channel can be included in this part of the paper. One possible reason for the lack of NEC's representation on Facebook is that the US American SNS has only recently become popular and that it still has a very low penetration rate, in particular when compared to Mixi. However, among the SNS on which companies can officially be part of the network, Facebook is the most widely used and the most popular, leaving no alternative choice of subject for the analysis in this paper. This might lead us to the assumption that NEC either does not want to be among the first movers in the Japanese business community or that it does not see the need to do so, as the penetration rate of Facebook is still very low.

Video Sharing Platforms

According to the Asia-Pacific Video Metrix by ComScore, which surveyed the usage of online video platforms in China, Japan, Australia, Malaysia, Hong Kong and Singapore in January 2010, Japanese netizens are very actively watching videos on online platforms. With 60 million views, Japan had the second highest number of unique visitor views on online video platforms in January 2010, only outrun by China. With regard to the time spend on those platforms, Japanese users even rank first, with an average of almost 13 hours in the month of January 2010 (ComScore 2010b).

Which are the video platforms the Japanese are spending so much time on? According to the same source as above, the most watched video platforms are on Google Sites, which includes YouTube, followed by sites hosted by Dwango Co. Ltd, which includes Nico Nico Douga (ComScore 2010b). Nico Nico Douga is a Japanese video sharing site with 17 million users, including over 770,000 premium account users.

Moreover, Nico Nico Douga offers a variety of advertising services tied to products from Amazon and Yahoo Shopping (Hunt 2010). According to Netratings, there are a number of additional big players in the Japanese online video hosting market, such as Veoh and Dailymotion (Netratings 2009). In the most recent Alexa rankings, these two online video platforms rank 121 and 60, respectively, while Nico Nico Douga and YouTube ranked 14 and 4, respectively (Alexa 2011d).

The point that companies can maintain an official representation on YouTube has been made several times throughout this paper. The same applies to YouTube Japan (see YouTube 2011c). Nico Nico Douga also offers the option to maintain a video channel for official corporate representation. Contrary to YouTube, however, this option is not for free (Nico Nico Channel 2011). Dailymotions, too, offers a way for companies to present themselves or their products by the means of an 'official content' label appearing next to the video. This service is free of charge (Dailymotion 2011).

Looking at all Japanese video sharing platforms, YouTube clearly emerges as the dominating service. We will therefore use it as the basis of our analysis of SMM activities on the video sharing platforms channel in Japan.

NEC maintains one official channel on YouTube, labeled 'NEConlineTV'. Several videos on NEC PC products had been uploaded before the period of observation. However, during the period of data collection, not a single video was uploaded on the 'NEConlineTV' channel. Consequently, as with weblogs and SNS, NEC's activity rate for the channel 'video sharing platforms' is zero.

2.3.2 Social Media Marketing

General overview

With its 162 SMM activities during the time of observation, NEC had the lowest SMM activity rate of all companies analyzed. In addition, its SMM was least diversified, with activities in only 7 out of 32 possible categories and 99.4% of all SMM activities can be placed in the category group of new PR. NEC thus adheres to the basic rule of successful SMM by not using social media exclusively for sales related matters.

Whether NEC is likely to have success, though, will be discussed in chapters 2.3.3 and 3.

Figure 19 NEC's SMM Activities Divided by Category Groups
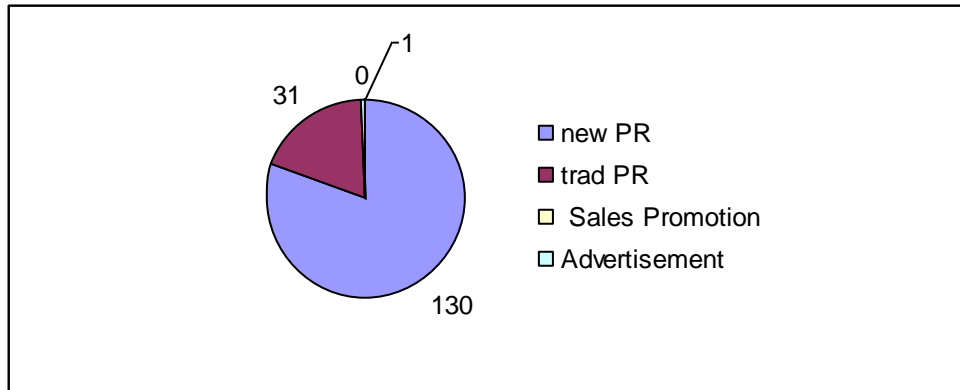
Advertising

NEC only conducted one activity in the category group advertising calling attention to the introduction of a new printer (see Figure 20). It qualified as advertisement because it presents a newly available product. Furthermore, the advertisement was of the rational type, as it only contained technical facts and the price of the product.

Table 18 Overview of NEC's Advertising Activities

	Rational	Emotional	Mixed
Informative	1	0	0
Persuasive	0	0	0
Reminder	0	0	0
Total	1		

Figure 20 Ex. Advertising Instrument 'Informative/Rational' (NEC)

Translation: (Title) Compact, lightweight and power-saving printer for A4 pages
Release of the new 'MultiWriter el' series
Source http://www.nec.co.jp/press/ja/1108/0401.html

Sales Promotion

NEC did not have any activities in the in the field of sales promotion. Hence, NEC does not try to boost its short-term sales through sales promotion instruments, such as coupons or cents-off-deals. In addition, and unlike all the other companies analyzed in this paper, NEC does neither try to get customers involved with sweepstake or contest activities in order to meet long-term relationship goals.

PR

PR is the only category group in which NEC staged SMM activities on a regular basis during the period of observation.

Table 19 Overview of NEC's Traditional PR Activities

Sponsorships	17
Public Service Activities	12
Events	2
Advertising	0
Publications	0
News	0
Speeches	0
Identity Media	0
Total	31

Table 20 Overview of NEC's New PR Activities

Non-Branch Specific Content	123
Support via Social Media	6
Social Online Integration	1
Branch Specific Content	0
Integration of Customers	0
Maintenance of Digital Reputation	0
Active Word of Mouth	0
Total	130

Looking at the tables above, it becomes apparent that the bulk of activities consisted of non-branch related content, published from the @blwisdom Twitter account. However, this channel is not directly associated with NEC's PC business. Yet, it is an official NEC Twitter account and provides useful content about the business world.

Figure 21 NEC's @blwisdom account

Translation: (Title) Useful for business 'the next move' Wisdom
Source: http://twitter.com/blwisdom

One example for NEC's use of the NBSC instrument is the so-called 'Sengoku Warlords Diagnosis'. Followers of @blwisdom receive invitations for this personality test on an almost daily basis. With a questionnaire, the participants can first analyze their personality by answering six questions. Based on the results, they can then choose to receive customized content according to their strengths and weaknesses in business skills such as negotiating or leadership.

[81]

Figure 22 Ex. New PR Instrument 'Non-Branch Specific Content' (NEC)

Translation: (Title) Warlord Diagnosis
Source: http://www.blwisdom.com/busho/

As another example for NBSC, NEC tweets about a business dictionary that the company provides on its wisdom website free of charge. Yet another example is a tweet about a blog post giving advice on job interviews.

Figure 23 Ex. New PR Instrument 'Non-Branch Specific Content' (NEC)
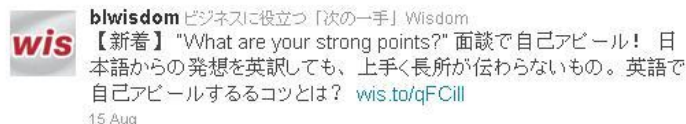
Translation: [New arrival] "What are your strong points?" Be self-confident at the interview! However, even if you know what to say about your strengths in Japanese, you might not manage to translate it convincingly into English. What are the tricks to get across as self-confident in English?
Source: http://twitter.com/blwisdom

Apart from the strong dominance of non-branch specific content, NEC also uses two traditional PR instruments: 'sponsorships' and 'public service activities', with 17 and 12 activities, respectively. Tweets on sponsorships were mainly about NEC's sponsorship activities in the field of sports, e.g. the Karuizawa 72 golf tournament.

Figure 24 Ex. Traditional PR Instrument 'Sponsorships' (NEC)

Translation: 20th NEC Karuizawa72 tournament
Source: http://www.nec.co.jp/event/nec-karuizawa72/

[82]

As another example, @blwisdom tweeted several times about the activities of the 'Green Rockets', a rugby team that is also officially sponsored by NEC.

Figure 25 Ex. Traditional PR Instrument 'Sponsorships' (NEC)

Translation: (Title) The team that protects the company!! Report from the field
Source: http://blog.blwisdom.com/green/

The 12 public service activities generally emphasized NEC's efforts regarding environmentally friendly or energy-efficient projects.

Figure 26 Ex. Traditional PR Instrument 'Public Service Activities' (NEC)

Translation: (Title) Now active initiatives by NEC worldwide
Source: http://www.nec.co.jp/environment/energy/effort.html

[83]

The fourth most frequently used instrument of NEC is 'support via social media'. The six activities in this category informed the public about disturbances or instances of malfunction in the system not directly answering any customer inquiries. Moreover, NEC only tweeted a single reply addressed at another user during the 31 days of observation. All of the other 161 tweets posted by NEC in this month were impersonal and one-directional.

2.3.3 Summary

NEC shares some minor similarities with our benchmark company Dell. NEC focuses its activities on the microblogging channel and it mainly used a new PR instrument by providing non-branch specific content. Apart from these basic similarities, NEC's SMM activities are hardly comparable to those by Dell in terms of quantity and diversification. In addition, the NBSC provided was repetitive and hardly diverse, particularly compared to Lenovo's NBSC (see 2.4.2). Moreover, direct communication or dialogs with other users were almost zero. Despite its market leadership, NEC did not maintain a single social media channel, account, profile, or video channel dedicated to its PC branch for end-consumers. NEC adheres to the basic rules of successful SMM by not just broadcasting advertisements and trying to boost sales through social media. However, NEC only employs three out of the seven new PR instruments and hardly engages directly with customers. Even though the majority of NEC's activities were conducted using new PR instruments, almost 100% of the Japanese company's communication was one-sided.

There may be several reasons for the small number and the one-sidedness of NEC's SMM activities. First, despite the vibrant blogging culture in its domestic market, NEC did not find the way or need to participate in it. Looking only at the data collected on NEC, one could easily conclude that the Japanese blogosphere is limited to private use and does not include open communication between companies and their customers. Second, Facebook, although being the most suitable SNS for our analysis of SMM in Japan, still only has a penetration rate of less than 3% compared to over 50% in the United States. Third, as explained in 2.3.1 and most likely also due to the two reasons just mentioned, Japanese businesses in general and NEC in particular do not prioritize or dedicate much attention to SMM. This low level of appreciation for the commercial

use of SMM could be explained by the late introduction of social media itself, as this concept only gained popularity a year prior to our analysis. Another explanation for the low SMM activity rate of NEC might be that, even though NEC leads the PC market in Japan, it is not clear how much of the company's sales are generated by deals with business clients. The large number of social media accounts and the high rate of activities dedicated to B2B communication possibly indicates a high proportion of business clients. However, NEC does not run a corporate blog or maintain a presence on a SNS for B2B communication, either.

It will be interesting to follow the development of both social media in general and SMM in particular in Japan in the near future. Mixi's announcement to start a function similar to Facebook's page function is a clear indicator that Japanese homegrown social media try to adapt to this recently introduced concept of SMM.

2.4 China – Case Study Lenovo

2.4.1 Social Media

General Facts

As of March 2011, Chinas Internet penetration rate was at 35.7%. With its 477 million users, China has the largest Internet population in the world (Internetworldstats 2011b). In the years between 2004 and 2010 the Chinese Internet user base increased by as much as 312% (CIC 2011a).

Sam Flemming, chairman and founder of CIC, a social business intelligence provider, claims that "China has the most complex, fragmented and developed social media landscape in the world […]" (CIC 2011a). According to the Global Survey of Business Use of Social Networks, 65% of Chinese firms declared that they successfully use social media to acquire new customers, which was the highest rate among the surveyed countries (global average 47%). 79% of the surveyed businesses in China use social media to keep in touch with existing customers (Regus 2011, 6, 10). In addition, 63% of Chinese businesses actively allocate a part of their marketing budget to social

networking in order to reach their customers, again ranking first (global average 34%). 76% believe that marketing must now use social networks in order to be successful (Regus 2011, 15).

The fact that Chinese companies find SMM that important is not a coincidence, as the number of social media users in China is expected to grow from 207 million in 2010 to an estimated 488 million in 2015. Moreover, several studies show that the Chinese actively do follow brand and product websites, forums and social network sites with a lot of enthusiasm, often promoting favorite products to their numerous online connections (eMarketer 2011). While between 1994 and 2003 bulletin board systems, review sites and instant messenger services started to emerge, blogging, online video, social networks, wikis, microblogging, location based services and group purchase have flooded the social media scene since 2004 (CIC 2011b, 9).

Company overview

Lenovo dominates the Chinese PC market, leaving far behind its three competitors, which all occupy a similar share of the market with a maximum difference of 0.4%. In terms of PC shipments in the fourth quarter of 2010, Lenovo held a domestic market share of 32.2%, followed by Acer, Dell and HP with 7.8%, 7.5% and 7.4% respectively (Sina Tech 2011). According to Lenovo's financial report for the first quarter 2011, the company still leads the market with a share of 31.7% (Lenovo 2011c). As market leader of the Chinese PC market, Lenovo will figure as the case study for China in this paper.

Lenovo, formerly Legend and New Technology Developer Inc., was founded in 1984 by chairman Liu Chuanzhi. Originally acting as a retailer for imported PCs from overseas, Lenovo started to produce and sell its own brand of computer products in 1990. In 1996, the company became the market leader in China for the first time and, in 1999, the top PC vendor in the Asia-Pacific region. In 2003, the Lenovo brand was born, and one year later the company acquired IBM's Personal Computing Division (Lenovo 2011a). Moreover, in June 2011, Lenovo announced its acquisition of MEDION AG, a German leader in PC and multimedia products, mobile communications services, and consumer electronics. Lenovo became the world's third largest PC vendor in terms of total shipments in the first quarter of 2011 (Lenovo 2011c). Lenovo is headquartered in

Beijing and currently employs around 27,000 people (Sina Finance 2011; CNNMoney 2011).

Lenovo showed activities in all four of the relevant social media channels. Yet, in contrast to the companies analyzed in South Korea and Japan, Lenovo employs homegrown social media platforms. This fact leads to some unique characteristics in Lenovo's SMM, as well as to a higher reach of people compared to the imported microblog services and SNS in South Korea and Japan.

During the 31 days of observation 1,066 SMM activities by Lenovo were recorded, analyzed and categorized resulting in the following distribution: 2 activities in the category weblogs (0.1/day), 875 activities in the category microblogs (28.2/day), 153 activities in the category SNS (4.9/day) and 36 activities in the category video sharing platforms (1.2/day). In total, this corresponds to approximately 34 SMM activities per day. It is obvious that Lenovo is the company with the most SMM activities of all East Asian companies analyzed.

Lenovo offers an official overview of its social media channels on its homepage (Lenovo 2011b). However, as with Dell, the list is not complete. It therefore requires additional effort to find the remaining channels with the methods mentioned above. The findings of our research on Chinas social media channels in general and Lenovo's social media usage in particular are discussed in the next sections.

Weblogs

China has a very large and very active blogging community. According to Globalwebindex, 42% of Chinese Internet users write their own blogs, which is the highest rate in the world (Globalwebindex 2011, 11). CIC states that the actual number of blog users in China is as high as 294 million (CIC 2011a), which corresponds to even 61% of the 477 million Chinese Internet users mentioned above.

It is said that Fang Xingdong and Chen Tong, two very influential bloggers, started the era of the popular blog in 2005 opening the door for average netizens to start their blogs (CIC 2011b, 13). In the subsequent years, blogging has become mainstream, enabling greater expression of individuality and opinions (CIC 2011b, 15). The biggest Chinese blog-providers in terms of market share in 2010 were Tencent, Sina and Baidu with a market share of 48%, 19.6% and 9.6% respectively (Chinalabs 2010a). Not

surprisingly, the associated portal sites of these three blog providers are occupying the top three ranks in the Alexa ranking for China (Alexa 2011c).

Lenovo uses the platform of one of these blog-providers (Sina) and maintains one official blog called ThinkPad@Yamatolab (ThinkPad@大和实验室). This blog does not represent the whole company but rather Lenovo's ThinkPad product line, which was acquired together with IBM. During the time of observation, Lenovo only posted two SMM activities on this blog. The two posts both belonged to the category group of advertising, one referring to the product placement in the movie 'Transformers 3', and the other presenting the development and benefits of a new model in the ThinkPad product line. Therefore, Lenovo's blog activities can be characterized neither as lively nor as diversified since it is almost inactive and focuses only on advertising its products.

Microblogs

According to the Globalwebindex survey, 32% of Chinese companies stated that they regularly used a microblogging service in 2010 (Globalwebindex 2011, 10). The most widely used microblog service around the world, Twitter, is basically blocked by the Chinese government (Webb 2010), and only an exclusive group of 50,000 participants is allowed to use the service (Safko 2010, 261).

As a result, it is necessary to focus on the local microblogging services in China. The pioneer in this field was Sina[51], a portal site which first launched its microblogging service in August 2009. From the end of 2009 to the beginning of 2010, Sohu[52], 163[53] and Tencent[54] followed. These four services are the key players in China, but others such as Xinhuanet[55], People[56], Ifeng[57] and Hexun[58] have launched their own microblogging services as well (CIC 2011b, 21).

One particularity in Chinese microblogging worth mentioning stems from the Chinese language. A microblog message in Chinese can convey much more information than in English. Webb demonstrates how a 114 characters message on a Chinese

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[51] http://www.sina.com
[52] http://www.sohu.com
[53] http://www.163.com
[54] http://www.tencent.com
[55] http://t.home.news.cn/index.jsp
[56] http://t.people.com.cn/index.action
[57] http://t.ifeng.com/
[58] http://t.hexun.com/default.htm

microblog translates into 430 characters in English, which would be beyond the limit of a microblog post on Twitter for example. Hence, microblog messages in China can even be considered as "mini-blogs" (Webb 2010).

Among the above-mentioned services, Sina Weibo[59] is the most popular, with more than 140 million users. Some estimates even suggesting a number beyond the 150 million mark (Chen 2011). Taking the seventh place in the Alexa ranking, Sina Weibo is currently the most frequently visited social media site in China (Alexa 2011c). The company behind the microblogging service is Sina, one of the biggest media firms in China. It was founded in the 1990s by Stanford graduates, setting up Sina Weibo in August 2009. Sina Weibo is also very popular with celebrities and the elites of media, entertainment, sports, business, academia and government (Bishop 2011, 2). Businesses can use Sina Weibo for marketing with so-called 'verified accounts' guaranteeing for the authenticity of corporate profiles. At the time of writing, there were approximately 5,000 businesses and 2,700 media accounts on Sina Weibo (Bishop 2011, 4). Since it has the highest market penetration and most traffic of all microblogging services in China, we will look at Sina Weibo to analyze Chinese corporate SMM activities on the 'microblogs' channel.

Lenovo maintains a vast amount of accounts on Sina Weibo, and as already mentioned above, an official and complete list of all microblogging accounts was not available as of July 2011. An extensive research effort on Sina Weibo yielded more than 20 rather diversified accounts run by Lenovo, seven of which met the criteria for an analysis in this paper. Most of the remaining accounts are either no longer in use, focus only on a certain region or city, or represent products not covered in this paper. The seven accounts relevant for this paper are: Lenovo@Weibo, ThinkPad@Weibo, IdeacentreB@Weibo, Ideapadz@Weibo, LenovoServiceChannel@Weibo, LePad@Weibo and ShopLenovo@Weibo.

With 82.1%, Lenovo conducted the largest share of all its SMM activities on the social media channel microblogs. The platform, Sina Weibo, has a number of unique characteristics affecting the SMM instruments employed, which sets it apart from Twitter, the dominant microblogging service anywhere else in the world. There is the language difference, as mentioned above, which enables Chinese users to pack up much more information in a post than an English user can give in a tweet. Another unique feature allows Weibo users to attach elements such as images or videos to their posts,

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[59] http://weib.com

which makes them more look like blog posts than microblog posts. With another unique function users can react to and at the same time forward other Weibo users' microblog posts, resembling a combination of the 'reply' and the 'retweet' functions on Twitter. With this, users can answer to a microblog post of another user attaching the original microblog post right below the reply, which does not, however, affect the 140-character limit. In addition, the reply will appear as a normal post on the user's channel and can be seen by all followers. This allows companies to very comfortably re-post favorably written posts by other users, e.g. including positive criticism about the company or a product. Moreover, photos may be attached showing other 'fans' using the product in action, which can be classified as word of mouth advertising. Lenovo, too, uses this feature on Sina Weibo to actively spread such favorable posts; an activity that qualifies as 'active word of mouth' (AWOM). Lenovo used this instrument 95 times during the time of observation, compared to only five times by Dell and not at all by Samsung and NEC. This comparatively high number is most probably due to the fact that Sina Weibo offers this special feature. By employing AWOM in this special way, Lenovo can project the impression that it is simply reacting to another user's posts, while in reality, it most probably aims at spreading the favorable content on its own channel. This method seems more subtle than retweeting a post on Twitter. No additional information, e.g. a reply or comment, can be added to a retweet on Twitter. Companies retweeting favorable posts about themselves too frequently would just appear to be constantly blowing their own trumpets.

Let us compare this special function on Sina Weibo as employed by Lenovo and a retweet on Twitter by Dell. Only the first line on the top is Lenovo's reply to the user, everything below is the original microblog-post by a Lenovo customer (Figure 27). Dell on Twitter, however, can only repost (retweet) the exact copy of the original tweet (Figure 28).

Figure 27 Ex. New PR Instrument 'AWOM' (Lenovo)

Note: A user talking favorable about a Lenovo product.
Lenovo communicates with this user while at the same
time attaching (and presenting) the original, favorable
post in its own channel.
Source: http://weibo.com/ideapadz

Figure 28 Ex. New PR Instrument 'AWOM' (Dell)
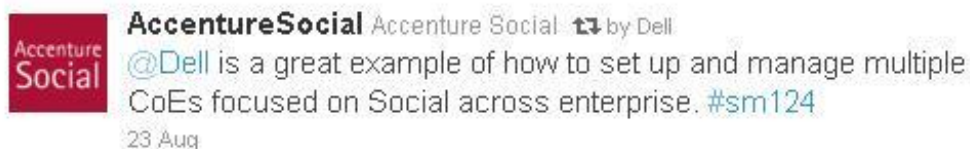
Note: Dell retweeting a favorable post of another user.
Source: http://twitter.com/Dell

Social Network Services

According to Globalwebindex, 48% of Chinese Internet users regularly maintained their
SNS profile in 2010 (Globalwebindex 2011, 10). CIC claims that China had 235 million
SNS users in the same year (CIC 2011a). Another source, eMarketer, estimates the
number a little bit lower, at 207 million users, but expects that this number will more
than double rising up to 488 million SNS users in 2015 (eMarketer 2011).

However, as is the case with the microblogging service Twitter, the most widely used SNS internationally, Facebook, is blocked by the Chinese government (Webb 2010). Hence, Chinese-made SNS dominate the Chinese market and play a vital role from an economic point of view. This is illustrated by the fact that 65% of Chinese businesses believe that customers are reaching out to them through social networks (Regus 2011, 6).

When it comes to reviews of books, movies and music, Douban[60] is the leading social network with 50 million users. It was founded in 2005 by Yang Bo and initially followed the model of MySpace. However, while MySpace has mainly lost its appeal in the West, Douban has remained popular in China (Sherman 2011b).

Another popular SNS is Kaixin001[61], which attracts users by focusing on browser-based online games (Pluslingo 2011). Its core user base are white-collar workers, which is viewed favorably by advertisers (Bishop 2011, 6; Pluslingo 2011). Yet, official key data is not available as Zhang Shanshan, public relations manager of the Beijing-based website, declined to disclose user numbers and other operational details of Kaixin001 (Pluslingo 2011). However, according to Anlysys International in Beijing, Kaixin001 has about 120 million registered users (Analysys International 2011).

This leads us to another Chinese SNS called Renren[62], meaning 'everyone' in English, which was created by graduates of a prestigious university to support communication between students (Pluslingo 2011). According to Analysys International, Renren leads China's growing social-networking market with more than 160 million registered users (Analysys International 2011). Renren has the same basic functions and features as Facebook, even the blue-and-white design resembling the American original (Pluslingo 2011). Despite these similarities, Renren cannot be considered as 'China's Facebook'. Unlike Facebook in the US, Renren is not the dominant SNS in China but only one among many popular ones (Sherman 2011a). Furthermore, in contrast to Facebook, which has successfully expanded its target group now covering 12-60 years, Renren has predominantly remained a student network (Sherman 2011b).

On both of the two most heavily used SNS in China, companies can maintain an official page (RenRen 2011; Kaixin001 2011). However, due to the stronger user base and higher market penetration as well as to the higher Alexa ranking (19th) compared to

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[60] http://www.douban.com
[61] http://www.kaixin001.com
[62] http://www.renren.com

Kaixin001 (37th), we will look at Renren for analyzing SMM activities on the SNS channel in China.

Lenovo maintains two pages on Renren, one official corporate page and another page regarding its ThinkPad product line. These two pages are named 'Lenovo' and 'ThinkPad Little Black Friend' (referring to the mascot of the ThinkPad product line). However, there was no activity at all on the 'Lenovo' corporate page during the period of observation. All activities in SNS mentioned below are from the 'ThinkPad Little Black Friend' page.

Lenovo staged a total of 153 total SMM activities on the SNS channel, corresponding to 14.4% of all SMM activities. SNS, therefore, is the second most heavily used social media channel by Lenovo. Lenovo mostly uses this channel to communicate directly with its customers through the instruments SSM and SOI. Although this channel staged only 14.4% of all SMM activities, it accounts for more than 50% of all SSM and SOI activities. SNS also seems to be the only channel where the company reacts on negative comments, as all four MDR activities were observed on this channel. Another characteristic is that all sales promotion activities in this channel were sweepstakes and contests. From this we can conclude that, in the SNS channel, Lenovo focuses on long-term relationship building by getting customers involved in sweepstakes and contests and by employing the new PR instruments SSM and SOI.

Video Sharing Platforms

As of 2010, China had 284 million online video users (CIC 2011a). However, the world's leading video sharing platform YouTube is blocked by the Chinese government as well, sharing the fate of Twitter and Facebook (Webb 2010). According to Top Sites Blog, which uses a combination of Alexa ranking, popularity and users' reviews, the three most popular video sharing platforms in China are Youku[63], Tudou[64], and Ku6[65] (Top Sites Blog 2011). Looking only at the current Alexa ranking, the three platforms are ranked 10th, 13th and 58th respectively (Alexa 2011c). Chinalabs confirms this ranking and states that, as of 2010, Youku took a market share of 30.6% followed by Tudou with 23.3% and Ku6 with 14.3% (Chinalabs 2010b).

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[63] http://www.youku.com
[64] http://www.tudou.com
[65] http://www.ku6.com

Youku is an Internet television company founded in 2005 and headquartered in Beijing. Besides user-generated content, it also offers professionally produced content under the Youku brand, including television serial dramas, movies, event reports, variety shows, and music videos. Moreover, companies can maintain an official representation through branded channels for themselves or their products (Bloomberg Businessweek 2011; Youku 2011). On account of these facts, the strong popularity and the large market share of Youku, it is the video sharing platform of choice for the analysis of SMM activities on this channel in China.

Although Lenovo does not mention any official video page on any video sharing platform in the social media overview on its website, an extensive search yields three Lenovo video pages on Youku. They are the two product line channels 'Lenovo B5 Video Channel' and 'ilovethinkpad Video Channel' and a page especially made for matters of corporate social responsibility called 'Lenovo Youth Welfare Video Channel'. Yet, activities in these three video channels appeared only very sporadically and irregularly. There was no activity at all on the 'Lenovo B5 Video Channel'. There were six video uploads spread over only two days on 'ilovethinkpad', whereas all of them were informative advertisements with rational or mixed elements. The third channel on Lenovo's corporate social responsibility activities published 30 videos in total. However, all of them were uploaded on a single day, and most of them are not videos in the traditional sense. They are rather like presentations in the form of consecutive photos with an underlying text containing information about volunteer work in fields such as environmental protection, animal welfare or social welfare projects.

Another interesting yet puzzling fact is that Lenovo barely uses its own channels for official videos such as TV commercials or product presentations. Although video links are often posted on the microblog or SNS channels, only very few of them refer to the official video channels of the company. These posts more often refer to video uploads on channels of other private users.

2.4.2 Social Media Marketing

General overview

During the period of data collection, Lenovo staged 1,066 SMM activities, which is the highest number among all East Asian companies analyzed. In terms of diversification, Lenovo also ranks first with 22 out of 32 categories used. One special category was even added in the course of the analysis (see section 'sales promotion' in this chapter). In compliance with the guidelines of successful SMM and just as our showcase model Dell, Lenovo effected the lion's share of its total SMM activities in the field of new PR (56.8%).

Figure 29 Lenovo's SMM Activities divided by category groups
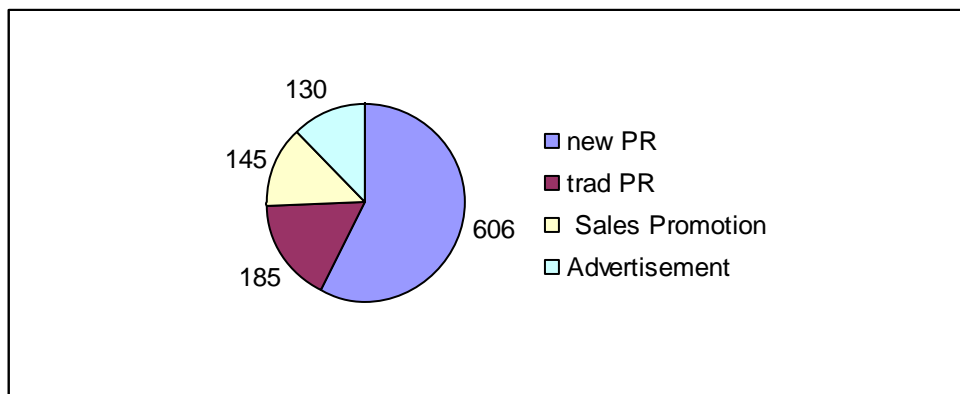
Advertising

With 130 advertising related activities, which corresponds to a 12.2% share of all SMM activities, Lenovo published more advertisements than Dell, but less than Samsung in both nominal and relative terms.

Table 21 Overview of Lenovo's Advertising Activities

	Rational	Emotional	Mixed
Informative	24	70	25
Persuasive	1	3	6
Reminder	0	0	1
Total	130		

The most remarkable fact is the high number of informative advertisement exclusively containing emotional elements. One reason for this can be found in the nature of Lenovo's advertisement videos, which usually try to convince customers using emotional elements such as thrilling or romantic stories. In order to affect the costumers, the focus on these stories is not on the product itself or on its attributes but rather on the emotional part. The example below shows an informative advertisement exclusively using thrilling and emotional elements.

Figure 30 Ex. Advertising Instrument 'Informative/Emotional' (Lenovo)

Note: A video in which the advertised PC of Lenovo is the subject of a thrilling police hunt.
Source: http://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XMjMwMTI2ODA0.html

The second and even larger group among Lenovo's informative/emotional advertisements is product placements. Within these activities, Lenovo either refers to or shows its product placements in the latest movie 'Transformer 3' or in a popular talent show called 'Super Girl'. These advertisements can be seen as informative, since they help building a company image, and as emotional, since they do not describe any product attributes or facts but rather try to stir emotions by implementing the product into a good movie plot or placing it in the context of celebrities (see Figure 31).

[96]

Figure 31 Ex. Advertising Instrument 'Informative/Emotional' (Lenovo)

Note: Celebrities of the talent show 'Super Girl' presenting Lenovo products.
Source: http://weibo.com/ideapadz

Another feature of the advertising related posts by Lenovo is the emphasis on 'Chinese-ness' in order to distinguish its products from those of western competitors. In these advertisements, Lenovo tries to connect with its customers on an emotional basis by stressing that its products are "made by Chinese" and "designed for Chinese customers". One example for this is a persuasive advertisement that compares Lenovo's tablet PC with Apple's iPad by focusing on emotional elements and by emphasizing the 'Chinese-ness' of the product.

Figure 32 Ex. Advertising Instrument 'Persuasive/Emotional' (Lenovo)

Translation: (on the screen): LePad is better at understanding China!
Source: http://weibo.com/mylepad

Sales promotion

With a 13.6% share of all SMM activities in sales promotion, Lenovo is ahead of Samsung and NEC, but still behind Dell. Similar to Dell and Samsung, in Lenovo's sales promotion activities sweepstakes and contests dominate.

Table 22 Overview of Lenovo's Sales Promotion Activities

Contests, Sweepstakes, and Games	135 (S: 102, C: 33)
Limited Edition	7
Price Packs (Cents-off Deals)	3
Samples	0
Coupons	0
Cash Refunds (or Rebates)	0
Premiums	0
Advertising Specialties (Promotional Products)	0
Patronage Rewards	0
Total	145

Lenovo organized the largest number of contests compared to the other companies, which is mainly due to the many design contests on its SNS channel. In these contests, Lenovo gets its customers involved by asking them to propose wallpaper designs with the logo of its ThinkPad product line.

Sweepstakes are organized on an almost daily basis and on several accounts on the microblogging platform. Prices to be won in the sweepstakes and contests range from cinema tickets, T-shirts, key-holders, small devices such as small digital cameras to signed autographs from celebrities of the 'Super Girl' talent show.

The second most frequently employed sales promotion instrument is limited editions. Through this instrument, the company attempts to boost sales by limiting the quantity of a certain product and by emphasizing that this product is not infinitely available. However, this method is not listed in Kottler and Armstrong's list of sales promotion instruments. Fill describes limited editions as a "special feature" of sales promotion (Fill 2009, 539). He further characterizes it as "[…] a value-adding form of sales promotion", 'value-added' meaning that "[…] a company offers 'something extra' while leaving core product and price unchanged". This 'extra' might be a different color, a special function or a special package (Fill 2009, 539). Based on this explanation, we added this extra category to the list of sales promotion instruments.

Figure 33 Ex. Sales Promotion Instrument 'Limited Edition' (Lenovo)

Translation: (Title) K1 First Product Release
The new member of the LePad family
'White Network' - limited Edition, only 2000 pieces nationwide
Source: http://weibo.com/mylepad

The last of the three sales promotion instruments used by Lenovo is cents-off deals. With this kind of activity the company tries to draw attention to price-reduction campaigns through microblogs in order to stimulate short-term sales.

<u>PR</u>

As with every other company analyzed in this paper, Lenovo had most of its SMM activities in the field of public relations, particularly in new PR. A total of 791, or 74.2%, of all SMM activities were classified as public relation instruments, 56.8% as new PR and 17.4% as traditional PR.

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Table 23 Overview of Lenovo's Traditional PR Activities</td><td colspan="2">Table 24 Overview of Lenovo's New PR Activities</td></tr>
<tr><td>Public Service Activities</td><td>142</td><td>Non Branch Specific Content</td><td>258</td></tr>
<tr><td>Events</td><td>13</td><td>Social Online Integration</td><td>107</td></tr>
<tr><td>Advertising</td><td>8</td><td>Support via Social Media</td><td>101</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sponsorships</td><td>7</td><td>Active Word of Mouth</td><td>95</td></tr>
<tr><td>Speeches</td><td>6</td><td>Branch Specific Content</td><td>41</td></tr>
<tr><td>News</td><td>5</td><td rowspan="2">Maintenance of Digital Reputation</td><td rowspan="2">4</td></tr>
<tr><td>Publications</td><td>4</td></tr>
<tr><td>Identity Media</td><td>0</td><td>Integration of Customer</td><td>0</td></tr>
<tr><td>Total</td><td>185</td><td>Total</td><td>606</td></tr>
</table>

The most heavily used PR instrument was NBSC, and it was in fact the most used instrument of all SMM instruments during the time of observation. Lenovo employed this instrument primarily in its microblogging channel with more activities in this category than any other company. The same applies to the second most heavily used instrument, 'public service activities', from the traditional PR group. This leads us to the assumption that Lenovo's priority in SMM lies in providing content on topics unrelated to its business and emphasizing activities demonstrating its corporate social responsibility.

The non-branch specific content is generally on topics such as fashion, interior design, humor, food, philosophy, celebrities, movies, inventions and other. Below are some examples of NBSC posts:

Figure 34 Ex. New PR Instrument 'Non-Branch Specific Content'

Sources: http://weibo.com/ideapadz; http://weibo.com/ideacentreb
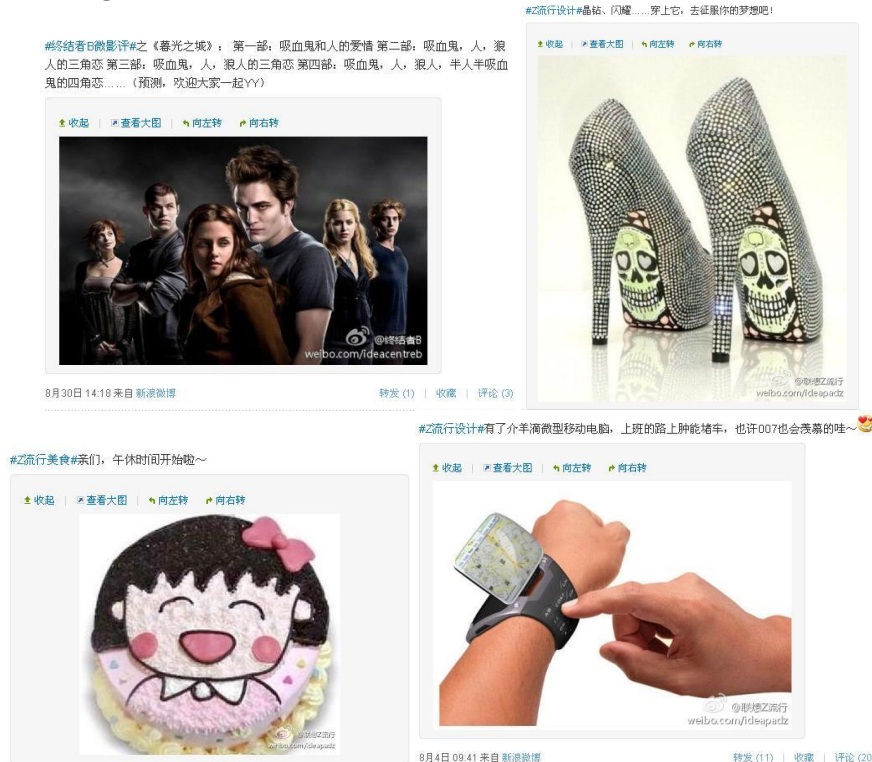
Regarding the SMM activities categorized as public service activities, Lenovo applied two different strategies. One way how Lenovo tries to build goodwill with the public is by posting about and showing off efforts that other people are making in this field. These posts include articles on activities of other organizations or groups involved, for example, in the protection of the environment or of cultural heritage. Other posts are about creative innovations made by third parties for the protection of the environment. Such inventions included a chair made of recycled newspapers or a lamp working with water. The second way Lenovo uses this instrument is through posts on its own activities or events dedicated to a cause in the fields mentioned above.

Figure 35 Ex. Traditional PR Instrument 'Public Service Activities'

经过激烈的角逐，20强终于新鲜出炉！他们是：@美味书斋 @零距-让环保更满意 @成都观鸟会 @江苏青年环境交流中心 @随手拍自行车出行障碍 @武汉绿色基金 @板栗乐土 @脊椎中国公益平台 @大虎自然商店 （排名顺序不分先后）（未完）

Note: Lenovo presenting its team, which was participating in cause-related activities.
Source: http://weibo.com/lenovo

SOI is the third most frequently applied PR instrument in general and the second most applied new PR instrument in particular by Lenovo. The company publicly communicates directly with other people through the comment function of its SNS channel (see Figure 36) or through its microblog accounts. This communication is sometimes about trivial things like the weather or just wishing a good morning to everyone. Lenovo also reacted to positive statements or other various comments/posts addressed at the company.

Figure 36 Ex. New PR Instrument 'Social Online Integration' (Lenovo)

Translation: User: [After winning a price in a contest] Thank you IBM, thank you Lenovo, thank you little black friend
Lenovo: What a nice acceptance speech!
Source: http://page.renren.com/600014223

Lenovo's 'support via social media' activities either answered questions regarding products and contests, or provided proactive support for well-known problems regarding the products of the company.

[102]

Figure 37 Ex. New PR Instrument 'Support via Social Media' (Lenovo)

#联想服务频道答用户问#尊敬的联想用户，关于已注册全球联保机型享受国外售后服务的
方式，可查看：http://t.cn/aRyDnV，选择Support & Warranty 并选择您所在国家以及您的
联想电脑主机编号即可查询到服务信息，分享给大家 @郁闷的大板砖

Source: http://weibo.com/lenovotsc

2.4.3 Summary

Just as all other companies analyzed in this paper, Lenovo focuses its SMM activities on its microblogging accounts. However, Lenovo has different priorities when it comes to the SMM instruments applied. Lenovo provides, above all, content, and especially NBSC, which is an instrument of new PR. The second most frequently used instrument is a traditional PR instrument through which Lenovo tries to build goodwill with its publics by posting about its own or others' activities in the field of social and environmental welfare. The ratios of advertising and sales promotions are higher than those of Dell, with 12.2% and 13.6%, respectively, but just as with Dell, activities involving instruments of PR and particularly of new PR dominate Lenovo's overall SMM activities.

Regarding the successful use of SMM from an economic point of view, Lenovo uses all seven categories of the new PR group and has low advertising and sales promotion rates. Furthermore, of the six SMM instruments most heavily used by Lenovo, four belong to the new PR instruments. In addition, Lenovo found a particularly effective way to actively spread word of mouth with the unique function of Sina Weibo discussed above.

[103]

3 Analysis

Introduction

After analyzing the four case studies in isolation, this chapter will compare the results in order to answer the key questions of this paper. First, we will give answers to the questions regarding the SMM environment and activities of the East Asian companies, before discussing whether there is something that could be called the 'East Asian way of SMM'. After this, we will deal with the sub-questions of this paper. However, as these questions have already been discussed at length in the course of the analysis in chapter two, we will merely repeat the most significant points before presenting some other interesting findings. A summary and suggestions for further research will conclude this chapter.

SMM Environment in East Asia

First, let us take a look at the social media environment of the three East Asian countries discussed in this paper. The main difference lies in whether East Asian companies can use homegrown social media for marketing purposes or not. With regard to the channels microblogs and SNS, companies in South Korea and Japan can only rely on the growing popularity of imported social media from the US. There are virtually no local, homegrown social media platforms, and if there are, they do not support similar marketing opportunities. The advantage of this situation is obvious, as it is very easy to copy successful SMM strategies from overseas, since the composition of the platforms is the same. However, this comes with a price tag: low penetration. The imported platforms were all introduced only quite recently and therefore lack in absolute user-numbers compared to the homegrown platforms, which makes it less attractive for businesses to make use of them. In contrast, Chinese companies can build on homegrown social media. Even though they are copied, they are not imported and therefore better established, having a much higher penetration rate. This makes them very attractive for businesses and might explain the higher amount of SMM activities by

the Chinese company analyzed in this paper, compared to those in South Korea and Japan.

A vibrant and active blogging culture is characteristic for all three East Asian countries. However, as can be deduced from the results of the case studies, corporate blogs are almost never used in China and Japan. South Korea stands alone with a very high activity rate in this channel. Concerning the SNS environment, Lenovo and Samsung do have and use SNS for their SMM activities, whereas NEC in Japan does not even have an official company page in this social media channel. Regarding video sharing platforms, all three countries have a dominant platform with a very high usage rate and penetration. However, the SMM activities on these platforms differ greatly. Whereas in the Korean case study videos were uploaded frequently and regularly, the Japanese company did not upload a single video during the period of observation. The Chinese case study does run official video channels, but does not really use them and instead refers to other sources for its videos, e.g. video channels of other private users.

SMM Activities in East Asia

If we compare the SMM activities of the three East Asian companies, results are equally diverse. As a ratio of all SMM activities, Samsung advertises its products almost three times more than Lenovo. Whereas Samsung mostly uses informative advertising with both rational and emotional elements, Lenovo focuses mainly on informative advertising with exclusively emotional character by placing its products in the context of stories, movies or celebrities. NEC published only one advertisement, but even that differed from those of the other two East Asian companies, as it was an informative advertisement containing only rational elements.

Regarding sales promotion, the case studies in China and South Korea do share the focus on the instrument 'sweepstakes, contests and games'; the Japanese company however does not have any activity in this group of SMM activities. Moreover, whereas Lenovo does use some sales promotion instruments like limited editions or cents-off deals to boost short-term sales, Samsung and NEC do not use any of such sales promotion instruments at all.

Comparing the instruments applied in the field of PR, one can also find more differences than similarities. Whereas both NEC and Lenovo mainly focus on NBSC,

the content and quantity of the NBSC provided by these two companies show a high degree of variation. Samsung, however, hardly provides any content be it branch or non-branch specific, but rather focuses on direct communication with its publics employing the new PR instruments 'social online integration' and 'support via social media'.

East Asian Way of SMM

It is apparent that in many cases two out of the three East Asian companies show some similarities regarding their SMM environment and activities. However, which characteristics are shared by all three East Asian companies? Furthermore, do these characteristics indicate an 'East Asian Way of SMM'?

First of all, all three companies seem to be aware of the importance of social media in general. All companies analyzed in this paper are effectively represented in social media, although to various degrees, and each of the companies dedicates a specific section of their official websites to their social media policy and activities. All three companies had most of their activities on the social media channel microblogs, and the most heavily used instrument by all three belongs to new PR. The heavy usage of instruments of new PR indicates a focus on long-term relationship building and exceeds mere broadcasting of advertisements or other efforts to boost product sales. Therefore, even though to various degrees, all three countries basically comply with the guidelines for successful SMM mentioned in 1.2.2.

Another aspect all three companies have in common is the non-usage of certain SMM instruments. First, all three companies did not conduct any or almost no activity in the category 'maintenance of digital reputation', which implies that either users in these countries do not openly complain or criticize companies or, quite on the opposite, that people do publicly criticize, but the companies do not react. Second, the 'integration of customers' was not much of a priority for any of the businesses, as well. Whereas Dell demonstrates very clearly how a company can make use of this instrument, none of the East Asian businesses seems to be aware of the importance of this instrument so as to get their customers involved in the development of new products and make them feel like 'insiders' in order to increase brand loyalty.

These commonalities are not large in numbers, but they represent what comes closest to an 'East Asian way of SMM'. In summary, we can define the East Asian way of SMM as basically microblogging-focused, with little attempts to maintain digital reputation or integrate its customers in the development of its products, but all the way adhering to the basic rules of successful SMM by not misusing social media for only sales promotion or advertising.

Amount and Success of SMM

Looking at the results presented in this paper, we can also answer the question of how and to what extent East Asian businesses conduct marketing in social media and whether they are likely to be successful or not. The guidelines emphasize the importance of long-term relationship building activities and reputation management with SMM and warn against misusing social media for only sales related matters. However, the right proportion of these components is not mentioned. Therefore, the proportions of the reference case study Dell will act as a benchmark for the East Asian companies.

Taking into account the amount and diversity of its SMM activities, our reference case Dell seems to be a high benchmark for the East Asian competitors. Dell had more activities than all East Asian businesses put together not only using the most diverse set of SMM instruments, but also conducting the majority of its activities in the category group of new PR, which is said to be most important for a successful SMM strategy. Looking at both the amount of SMM activities and the diversification of SMM instruments applied, Lenovo in China ranked first among the East Asian companies but still had only half as many activities as its American counterpart. South Korea's Samsung Electronics ranked second with almost a third of Dell's activities and NEC in Japan ranked third with not even 10% the amount of activities of the US company of reference.

Figure 38 Overview SMM Activities by Country
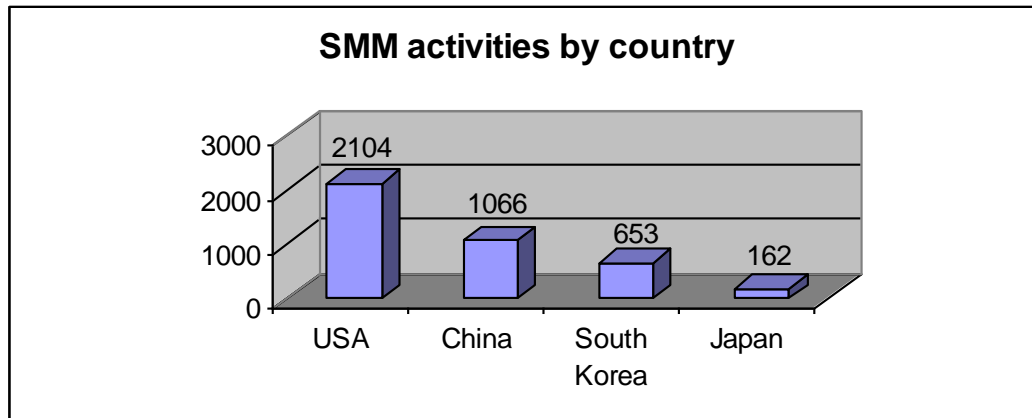
In the context of successful SMM, we should not fail to point out the special role of the sales promotion instrument 'sweepstakes, contests and games'. As mentioned in 1.2.2, companies today use this instrument on the World Wide Web to get users involved, to make them engage with the company and to build long-term relationships rather than to just boost short-term sales. Moreover, since most of the times the prices given away in these contests are not related whatsoever to the products of the company, we are not going to count this instrument as a sales-related marketing activity in the following comparison, despite it being associated with the 'sales promotion' group of instruments.

Regarding the proportions of the sales-related marketing activities[66] against long-term or relationship building activities[67], Dell sets the benchmark with 8% to 92%. Lenovo comes closest to this benchmark with 14% to 86%. Samsung showed many advertising activities and has therefore a proportion of 25% to 75%. Although Samsung does not perform as well as Lenovo did, it still adheres to the recommended guidelines for successful SMM by having ¾ of its activities in non-sales related activities. NEC presents a 1% to 99% proportion, but this result has to be treated with caution due to the small amount and poor quality of activities, and due to the lack of variety of instruments within these 99%.

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[66] Category groups advertising and sales promotion, without the sales promotion instrument 'sweepstakes, contests and games'.
[67] Category groups traditional PR and new PR, as well as the sales promotion instrument 'sweepstakes, contests and games'.

Other Findings

The results of this paper confirm some of the findings of the Asia-Pacific Social Media Study conducted by Burson-Marsteller. Concerning the regional comparison, Burson-Marsteller found out that top Asian companies are much less active in social media than their western counterparts (Burson-Marsteller 2010, 9). The results of the individual countries also show similarities. They include China's relatively new focus on microblogs in general and on the services of Sina Weibo in particular (Burson-Marsteller 2010, 23); Korea's generally high amount of sales-related marketing and comparatively even allocation of SMM activities among the four social media channels (Burson-Marsteller 2010, 31); and Japan's inactivity in general and especially in corporate blogs, SNS and video sharing platforms (Burson-Marsteller 2010, 27).

Regarding the small amount of activities by Asian companies openly embracing criticism voiced in social media, Lagorce suggests a connection to the concept of 'losing face' in Asian cultures or to that of strong hierarchy in Asian organizations (see Lagorce 2011). Actzero.inc, a consulting business for social media in Japan, mentioned in a text message to the author that because of the "[…] high responsibility companies [in Japan] have to bear in the society, direct communication with customers in social media is avoided because of the fear of making any mistake in public"[68]. From the results in this paper, and especially in the case of Japan, we can confirm a possible connection to the concept of 'losing face', as this might explain the low usage rate of new PR instruments related to direct communication with customers of NEC. This topic might also be of interest for further research particularly concerning the theme of conflict management in East Asia and the underlying notion of harmony in Confucianism (see Leung et al. 2002).

Summary

The results of this paper show that East Asian companies are clearly aware of the importance of SMM, but react to this new trend in very different ways. Businesses in South Korea and Japan can use the same social media platforms as companies in the US letting them easily imitate successful SMM strategies from overseas. However, it seems

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[68] @ActzeroInc text message to the author, July 20, 2011.

that the companies are not putting as much effort in the channels microblogs and SNS as their US or Chinese counterparts, probably because penetration rates are comparatively low. China, by contrast, has its own, homegrown platforms with much higher penetration rates, which could be one reason why Lenovo puts more effort in SMM showing much more SMM activities than Samsung and NEC.

Compared to the reference case study of Dell, no East Asian company comes even close to the range and quantity of SMM activities. Yet, the relative proportions of the SMM category groups applied are, to a certain degree, similar to Dell. The main activities of all East Asian businesses take place in the category group of PR and the most frequently used instrument is one of the new PR subcategory. Beyond that, however, the SMM activities of each East Asian company differ significantly.

The SMM activities of the South Korean case study are equally distributed on all four social media channels, but have the highest amount and relative proportion of advertising. Among the different advertising categories, the company prefers advertisements with rational as well as emotional elements. However, Samsung's SMM strategy does not focus on advertising as the Korean company dedicates all other activities from the category group of sales promotion to long-term relationship building, and the activities of the PR category group are still the majority. Therefore, Samsung's SMM strategy seems to be in line with the recommended practices of successful SMM in the guidelines mentioned in 1.2.2.

Japan's PC manufacturer NEC actively uses only one of the four possible social media channels and prefers to distribute information rather than communicate with customers in a two-way manner. The instruments used in the new PR subcategory are very limited, and attempts to build up long-term relationships with its customers through social media are virtually non-existent. Apart from a single advertisement in one month, SMM activities dedicated to increasing sales, such as advertising or sales promotion instruments, are not used at all. However, in having a low activity rate in the category groups advertising and sales promotion, the Japanese company does adhere to the most basic rule of successful SMM. Regarding the small amount of activities openly engaging customers through social media, ActzeroInc's statement implies a connection to the concept of 'losing face' in the specific context of Japan.

Lenovo's high amount of SMM activities and wide range of categories used could be explained by the high penetration rates of its homegrown social media platforms, particularly regarding the channels microblogs and SNS. This, in turn, seems to

motivate the Chinese company to put more effort in SMM than its East Asian counterparts. Lenovo focuses mainly on the instruments of the new PR group and puts much effort in building long-term relationships with its customers. This happens through two-way communication as well as by providing content or getting customers involved through events like sweepstakes or contests. In addition, Lenovo tries to build up a good reputation with a high amount of activities in the category 'public service activities'. Moreover, the Chinese company comes closest to the benchmark set by Dell, particularly when it comes to the proportion of sales related marketing and relationship-building recommended for successful SMM.

The similarities of the East Asian companies in their SMM efforts do not suffice for a definition of an 'East Asian way of SMM'. However, the low activity rates in the engagement of open criticism and the integration of customers in the development of products indicate some tendencies. Furthermore, all East Asian companies dedicate a section of their websites to their social media policy and channels, and conduct more than half of all their SMM activities in the social media channel microblogs.

Beside the results in the context of East Asian businesses, this paper also shows the challenges and opportunities awaiting companies from overseas which consider starting SMM activities in East Asia. We identified the most popular platforms on which SMM activities are possible, in the most important social media channels of all three East Asian countries. Additionally, by showing examples of established local players, the results give first insights regarding the set of SMM instruments these local players use to communicate with their customers at home.

Based on the results of this paper, several aspects might be of interest for further research. First, research on the receiving end of SMM activities, i.e. on customers and other users of social media, in the form of surveys or other methods is of great importance. Only by doing this can companies obtain valuable feedback on whether their SMM activities are as effective as they should be. Moreover, for countries like South Korea and Japan, which only use the imported social media from the US, results of these surveys could eventually lead to country specific guidelines for SMM as opposed to the currently available western theory on economically successful SMM. Second, a longer observation period with regular updates of the social media landscape could provide even deeper insight, as this field of research is in constant transformation. A few weeks after the data collection for this paper was finished, the author continued to stumble upon additional accounts of every company analyzed in one or more social

media channels, even for NEC. This shows how fast SMM is developing and how important it is to keep track of the social media landscapes and SMM activities. Third, further research should focus on a wider variety of companies and industries and might include B2B communication as well. Last, with regard to the concept of 'losing face' in the context of marketing communication, the results could be a useful input for other interdisciplinary studies on this topic.

This paper presents one possible approach to categorize and measure SMM. All in all, there is a need for a more solid theoretical framework as this field of marketing is very new, and particularly, because public relations, which is said to be the main area of responsibility of social media, is in the middle of a transformation.

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Social Media Account List

USA – Dell

Official Social Media Channel Overview

http://content.dell.com/us/en/corp/about-dell-social-media.aspx

Weblogs

Overview
http://en.community.dell.com/dell-blogs/default.aspx
Direct2Dell
http://en.community.dell.com/dell-blogs/direct2dell/b/direct2dell/default.aspx
Dell Software News
http://en.community.dell.com/dell-blogs/software/b/software/default.aspx
DellShares
http://en.community.dell.com/dell-blogs/dell-shares/b/dell-shares/default.aspx
Washington Report
http://en.community.dell.com/dell-blogs/health-care/b/washington-report/default.aspx
Education Blog
http://en.community.dell.com/dell-blogs/education-blog/default.aspx

Microblogs (Twitter)

@Dell
http://twitter.com/Dell
@DellHomeUS
http://twitter.com/DellHomeUS
@DellCares
http://twitter.com/DellCares
@Direct2Dell
http://twitter.com/Direct2Dell
@DellOutlet
http://twitter.com/DellOutlet
@Alienware
http://twitter.com/Alienware
@DellUniversity
http://twitter.com/delluniversity
@DellDigitalLife
http://twitter.com/DellDigitalLife
@Dell4Good
http://twitter.com/Dell4Good
@IdeaStorm.
http://twitter.com/IdeaStorm

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SNS (Facebook)

Dell
http://www.facebook.com/dell
Dell Lounge
http://www.facebook.com/DellUniversity
Dell GoGreen
http://www.facebook.com/dellgogreen
Alienware
http://www.facebook.com/Alienware
Dell Campus Connection
http://www.facebook.com/DellCampusConnections
Dell Outlet
http://www.facebook.com/DellOutlet

Video Sharing Platforms (YouTube)

DellVlog
http://www.youtube.com/user/DellVlog
Alienware
http://www.youtube.com/user/AlienwareChannel

South Korea – Samsung Electronics

Official Social Media Channel Overview

http://samsungtomorrow.com/

Weblogs

Samsung Tomorrow Blog
http://samsungtomorrow.com/
Blue Logger
http://samsungblogger.com/
Samsung Galaxy Blog
http://blog.naver.com/galaxyblog

Microblogs (Twitter)

@samsungtomorrow
http://twitter.com/samsungtomorrow
@bluelogger
http://twitter.com/bluelogger
@samsungsbird
http://twitter.com/samsungsbird

@LifeisTab
http://twitter.com/LifeisTab

SNS (Facebook)

삼성전자 (Samsung Tomorrow)
http://www.facebook.com/SamsungTomorrow
IT's Samsung
http://www.facebook.com/ITsamsung

Video Sharing Platforms (YouTube)

Samsung Tomorrow TV
http://www.youtube.com/user/SamsungTomorrow

Japan - NEC

Official Social Media Channel Overview

http://www.nec.co.jp/site/ja/accountlist.html

Weblogs
n/a

Microblogs (Twitter)

@NEC_jp_pr
http://twitter.com/NEC_jp_pr
@NEC_ad
http://twitter.com/NEC_ad
@NEC_jp_event
http://twitter.com/NEC_jp_event
@blwisdom
http://twitter.com/blwisdom

SNS (Facebook)
n/a

Video Sharing Platforms (YouTube)

NEConlineTV
http://www.youtube.com/user/NEConlineTV

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China - Lenovo

Official Social Media Channel Overview

http://appserver.lenovo.com.cn/About/SocialMedia.aspx

Weblogs

ThinkPad@yamatolab
http://blog.sina.com.cn/yamatolab

Microblogs (Sina Weibo)

联想 (Lenovo)
http://weibo.com/lenovo
ThinkPad
http://weibo.com/lenovothink
终结者B (IdeaCentre B)
http://weibo.com/ideacentreb
联想Z流行 (Ideapadz)
http://weibo.com/ideapadz
联想服务频道 (Lenovo Service Channel)
http://weibo.com/lenovotsc
乐Pad乐自由我 (My LePad)
http://weibo.com/mylepad
联想官方网上商城 (Shop Lenovo)
http://weibo.com/shoplenovo

SNS (RenRen)

Lenovo 联想
http://page.renren.com/600007954
ThinkPad小黑
http://page.renren.com/600014223

Video Sharing Platforms (Youku)

ilovethinkpad
http://u.youku.com/user_show/uid_ilovethinkpad
联想B5 (Lenovo ideacentre B5)
http://u.youku.com/user_video/uid_联想B5.html
联想青年公益 (Lenovo Youth Social Welfare)
http://u.youku.com/user_video/id_UMzU5MzcwNjY0.html

Abbreviations

4 'P's	Product, Place, Price and Promotion (see Table 2)
AIDA	Attention Interest Desire Action (see Strong 1925)
AWOM	Active Word of Mouth (see Table 9)
B2B	Business-to-Business
B2C	Business-to-Consumer
BSC	Branch Specific Content (see Table 9)
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IOC	Integration of Customer (see Table 9)
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
LCD	Liquid Crystal Display
MDR	Maintenance of Digital Reputation (see Table 9)
NBSC	Non-Branch Specific Content (see Table 9)
PR	Public Relations
SMM	Social Media Marketing
SNS	Social Network Services
SOI	Social Online Integration (see Table 9)
VSP	Video Sharing Platforms

List of Tables and Figures

Tables

Appendix

Appendix 1: List of SMM instruments used in this paper

Instruments of SMM	Country 1	Country 2	Country 3	Country 4
Advertising				
Informative/Rational				
Informative/Emotional				
Informative/Mixed				
Persuasive/Rational				
Persuasive/Emotional				
Persuasive/Mixed				
Reminder/Rational				
Reminder/Emotional				
Reminder/Mixed				
Sales Promotion				
Samples				
Coupons				
Cash Refunds				
Price Packs/Cents-off Deals				
Premiums				
Advertising Specialties				
Patronage Rewards				
Contests/Sweepstakes/Games				
Public Relations				
(traditional)				
Advertising				
Publications				
Events				
Sponsorships				
News				
Speeches				
Public Service Activities				
Identity Media				
(new)				
Branch Specific Content				
Non-Branch Specific Content				
Integration of Customers				
Support via Social Media				
Social Online Integration				
Maintenance of Digital Reputation				
Active Word of Mouth				
Total				
3 main category groups, 32 categories				

Appendix 2: Overview analyzed SMM channels/country

	Weblogs	Microblogs	SNS	VSP
USA – Dell	Yes: 6	Twitter	Facebook	YouTube
Korea – Samsung	Yes: 3	Twitter	Facebook	YouTube
Japan – NEC	No	Twitter	Facebook	YouTube
China – Lenovo	Yes: 1	Sina Weibo	RenRen	YouKu

Appendix 3: Overview of SMM activities – all countries

SMM Activities (B2C/nationwide/computer products)	USA (Dell)	South Korea (Samsung)	Japan (NEC)	China (Lenovo)
Advertising				
Informative/Rational	20	69	1	24
Informative/Emotional	2	10	0	70
Informative/Mixed	44	80	0	25
Persuasive/Rational	8	1	0	1
Persuasive/Emotional	0	0	0	3
Persuasive/Mixed	2	3	0	6
Reminder/Rational	6	0	0	0
Reminder/Emotional	0	0	0	0
Reminder/Mixed	12	0	0	1
Sales Promotion				
Samples	0	0	0	0
Coupons	23	0	0	0
Cash Refunds	0	0	0	0
Price Packs/Cents-off Deals	15	0	0	3
Premiums	32	0	0	0
Advertising Specialties	0	0	0	0
Patronage Rewards	0	0	0	0
Contests/Sweepstakes/Games	122	95	0	135
(Limited Edition)	(0)	(0)	(0)	7
Public Relations				
(traditional)				
Advertising	32	7	0	8
Publications	4	0	0	4
Events	40	9	2	13
Sponsorships	123	6	17	7
News	36	16	0	5
Speeches	1	0	0	6
Public Service Activities	27	8	12	142
Identity Media	0	0	0	0
(new)				
Branch Specific Content	50	7	0	41
Non-Branch Specific Content	143	5	123	258
Integration of Customers	21	0	0	0
Support via Social Media	670	121	6	101
Social Online Integration	247	212	1	107
Maintenance of Digital Reputation	419	4	0	4
Active Word of Mouth	5	0	0	95
Total	**2104**	**653**	**162**	**1066**
3 main category groups, 32 (33) categories				

Appendix 5: Abstract

This paper provides an analytical approach to assess and compare the East Asian social media marketing (SMM) environment and the strategies of East Asian businesses in the IT industry. SMM activities of selected case studies are compared to find out whether a so-called 'East Asian way of SMM' does exist or not. In addition, this paper will also analyze whether the SMM strategies of the East Asian businesses are likely to be economically successful according to the current guidelines on successful SMM.

To answer these questions, the author chose a theoretical framework based on the underlying theories of Web 2.0 and marketing communications. Since SMM is a new and comparatively unexplored field of research, a possible model for analyzing SMM strategies is suggested. For the empirical data, a multiple case study approach was chosen. These case studies comprise the three biggest East Asian businesses from the IT industry in Korea, Japan and China, as measured by their domestic market shares, which are Samsung Electronics, NEC and Lenovo. However, due to the lack of objective measuring methods for SMM in some aspects, a US company of the same industry renowned for its SMM strategies served as a reference case study of this paper.

The results of this paper show that the SMM environment and strategies of East Asian businesses differ in almost all aspects from each other. This is mainly due to the fact that in Korea and Japan imported social media platforms from overseas are used for SMM, whereas in China only domestic social media platforms are used. However, some similarities could be detected in the SMM channels and instruments used by the East Asian companies, which indicate a trend but are not enough to name it an 'East Asian way of SMM'. It turned out that all three case studies have a special focus on the social media channel microblogs and follow the basic rules of the guidelines on successful SMM. In addition, it was brought to light that, in contrast to the US counterpart, all East Asian companies neither show any open reaction to criticism nor openly try to integrate other users of social media in the development of its products. With regard to the reaction on criticism made public via social social media, we give a possible explanation, which is linked to the cultural concept of 'losing face' that is prevalent in Korea, Japan and China.

Zusammenfassung

In dieser Masterarbeit wird eine analytische Methode präsentiert, um das Social Media Marketing (SMM) Umfeld in Ostasien und die SMM Strategien von ostasiatischen Unternehmen der IT-Branche zu untersuchen und zu vergleichen. Die SMM Aktivitäten von ausgewählten Fallstudien werden verglichen, um festzustellen, ob ein sogenanntes „ostasiatisches Modell des SMM" existiert oder nicht. Überdies analysiert der Autor, basierend auf aktuellen Ratgebern für ökonomisch erfolgreiches SMM, wie wahrscheinlich der ökonomische Erfolg der Fallstudien bezüglich ihrer SMM Konzepte sein wird.

Um die Fragen dieser Masterarbeit zu beantworten, wird ein theoretischer Rahmen herangezogen, welcher auf den zugrundeliegenden Theorien des Web 2.0 und der Marketingkommunikation beruht. Da SMM ein neues und relativ unerforschtes Forschungsgebiet darstellt, wird, basierend auf den oben genannten Theorien, ein mögliches Modell zur Analyse der SMM Aktivitäten vorgeschlagen. Im empirischen Teil dieser Arbeit werden dann die SMM Aktivitäten von mehrerer Fallstudien miteinander verglichen. Diese Fallstudien umfassen die drei größten ostasiatischen Unternehmen der IT-Branche, gemessen an deren inländischen Marktanteilen. Diese drei Unternehmen sind Samsung Electronics in Südkorea, NEC in Japan und Lenovo in der Volksrepublik China. Da jedoch noch keine objektiven Methoden zur Messung von SMM Strategien existieren, dient ein amerikanisches Unternehmen, welches in derselben Branche tätig und bekannt für seine erfolgreichen SMM Strategien ist, als Referenzfallstudie.

Die Ergebnisse dieser Arbeit zeigen, dass sich sowohl das SMM Umfeld als auch die Strategien der analysierten ostasiatischen Unternehmen in nahezu allen Belangen stark voneinander unterscheiden. Dies lässt sich hauptsächlich darauf zurückführen, dass die Unternehmen in Südkorea und Japan größtenteils importierte Social Media Plattformen für SMM Aktivitäten benutzen, während in der Volksrepublik China vorwiegend Plattformen inländischen Ursprungs verwendet werden. Die Gemeinsamkeiten aller drei ostasiatischen Unternehmen weisen in Summe zwar eine gewisse Tendenz auf, jedoch reichen diese nicht, um von einem „ostasiatischen Modell des SMM" zu sprechen. Es stellt sich überdies heraus, dass alle untersuchten Unternehmen ihren Schwerpunkt auf die Social Media Plattform „Microblogs" legen und die Grundregeln der Ratgeber für ökonomisch erfolgreiches SMM, wenn auch in

unterschiedlichen Ausmaßen, befolgen. Darüber hinaus zeigt sich, dass, im Gegensatz zur amerikanischen Referenzfallstudie, keines der ostasiatischen Unternehmen innerhalb der Social Media auf öffentliche Kritik reagiert und andere Anwender von Social Media bei seiner Produktentwicklung einbindet. Bezüglich der Reaktion auf öffentliche Kritik in Social Media schlägt der Autor eine mögliche Erklärung vor, welche auf dem kulturellen Konzept des „Gesicht verlierens" basiert, das in den hier analysierten Ländern vorherrscht.

Appendix 6: Lebenslauf

Persönliches

Name:	Gerhard Kenji Schautzer
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Ausbildung

03/2010 – 03/2011	**Sogang University** (Seoul, Südkorea) Stipendiat der Korea Foundation: einjähriges Sprach- und Kulturprogramm
07/2009	**Beijing Normal University** (Peking, China) Sommeruniversität: chinesische Sprache und Kultur
Seit 10/2008	**Universität Wien** Institut für Ostasienwissenschaften Studiengang: Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Ostasiens (Masterstudium) Masterarbeitsthema: Social Media Marketing in Ostasien
07/2007	**Shaoxing University** (Zhejiang, China) Sommeruniversität: chinesische Sprache und Kultur
10/2005 – 10/2008	**Universität Wien** Institut für Ostasienwissenschaften Studiengang: Japanologie Bakk. phil. – mit ausgezeichnetem Erfolg
09/1998 – 06/2003	**Business.Academy.Donaustadt** (HAK) Schwerpunkt: Wirtschaftsinformatik und betriebliche Organisation

Sprachkenntnisse

- Deutsch: Muttersprache
- Englisch: Verhandlungssicher
- Japanisch: Fließend
- Koreanisch: Fließend
- Chinesisch: Gute Kenntnisse
- Spanisch: Grundkenntnisse

Sonstige Auszeichnungen und Zeugnisse

- 5-facher Erhalt des Leistungsstipendiums der Universität Wien
- Erhalt eines 1-jährigen Stipendiums der Korea-Foundation (2010)
- Erhalt des Leistungsstipendium des Konfuzius-Instituts Wien (2009)
- Englisches Sprachzertifikat (TEPS): Level 1+ (max.)
- Koreanisches Sprachzertifikat (TOPIK): Level 4/6
- Chinesisches Sprachzertifikat (HSK-alt) Level 3/12