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AIS Electronic Library (AISeL)

Fall 9-30-2008

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Abstract

Since emergence, Web 2.0 applications have been widely adopted at a surprising speed. Among them, Weblog, or called blog, is a web-based application that uses a variety of tools to facilitate self-description and interaction with others. People use blogs for various reasons. However, about 70% of bloggers use it as an on-line diary [4]. While in the old days peoples lock their diaries secretly from their family and close friends, today many are willing to share their life stories, sometimes are very sensitive, to a stranger.

Many research have significantly contributed to our understanding on the issue that providing information privacy protection is believed to be a critical success factor of electronic commerce [1]. However, little research was done to explore the privacy concerns in the context of Web 2.0 applications. Also, it is dangerous to directly apply the findings on e-commerce to the use of blogs since blogs and e-commerce have fundamental differences in term of users' motivations. Therefore, it is necessary for us to conduct a new research. Our focus here is on the diary-like blogs and aims to identify important interpersonal and technological factors that impact bloggers' information privacy concerns.

This study focuses on two folds. First, following the Social Network Theory [3] we examine bloggers' concerns on information privacy from the perspective of strong ties and weak ties. In this perspective, information redundancy and relational embeddedness are two key factors to distinct the strength of a tie. Here, we adopt the multi-dimensional construct IUIPC (Internet Users' Information Privacy Concerns) [5], which consists three dimensions, i.e. collection, control and awareness, to measure information privacy concerns. We test the relationships between tie strength and privacy concerns for two types of information, namely static information and dynamic information.

Second, we look into the role of technology control in moderating the effects of tie strength on bloggers' information privacy concerns. Based on Self-Determination theory [2], we classify technology control into two types: internal control and external control. The internal control guarantees bloggers' autonomy on how and what they want to post in their blogs while the external control ensures a blogger to decide whom has the right to access his/her blogs. Our model will be tested with empirical data. A pilot study will be conducted to assess the measurement development. We will then seek for a partnership with an existing blog website for data collection to promote an online survey. We will try to minimize the common method bias by using both procedural and statistical remedies [6].

It is hoped that this study can have early contribution to the discussion on information privacy issue of Web 2.0 applications. We expect to identify important determinants that influence bloggers' information privacy concerns and we believe the result will generate practically useful implications.

Keywords: Information Privacy Concerns, web 2.0, strength of ties

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