# Why do Bloggers Share with Strangers

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## Extended Abstract

Web 2.0 applications are becoming more and more popular at a surprising speed since their emergence. 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: about 70% of bloggers use it as an on-line diary [4]. Unlike in the old days peoples lock their diaries secretly from others, including their family and close friends, today many are willing to share their life stories, sometimes are very sensitive, to strangers. There have been numerous cases where an individual was fired from his/her job or arrested after confessing to commit a crime on their blog [3] [9], so as many individuals post information and photos of their companies in their blogs without considering the possible repercussion in case their employers can view them from the cyber spaces [7].

In this research, we aim to identify important factors that influence bloggers' information privacy concerns. Many research significantly contributing to the understanding on the issue that providing information privacy protection are believed to be a critical factor to the success of electronic commerce [1]. However, little research was done to explore the privacy concerns in the context of Web 2.0 applications. In fact, it is not appropriate 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. Moreover, in blog, the information is provided in the combination of both passive and active manner. That is, on one hand, many private information, such as address or phone number, oftentimes are reluctant to be given out, are requested when a blogger registers as a user. On the other hand, bloggers voluntarily provide substantiate information on habit, family, preference, and many others, to the readers. Therefore, the privacy model is different from what have been studied for E-Commerce, and subsequently deserve further examination. Our focus here is on the diary-like blogs and on bloggers' active sharing activities.

This study focuses on two folds. First, Blogs have a special social relevance because they allow their bloggers to create and maintain a network of weak social ties. Rooted on social network theory [2], this study captures interpersonal factors from a perspective of "ties". Relations between bloggers and readers are perceived as either strong ties or weak ties. In this perspective, information redundancy and relational embeddedness are two key factors to distinct the strength of a tie. We adopt the multi-dimensional construct IUIPC (Internet Users' Information Privacy Concerns) [8], which consists three dimensions, i.e. collection, control and awareness, to measure information privacy concerns.

Second, we look into the reason why bloggers tend to share their private information with unknown audience. We borrow the concepts of self-awareness in psychology and test its role in mediating the effects of tie strength on bloggers' information privacy concerns. Prior research has shown that the Internet users tend to have the reduced public self-awareness along with the aroused private self-awareness [5] [6]. The concepts of tie strength and private/ public self-awareness are related with the hope to examine bloggers' behind psychological reasons for sharing personal information willingly and actively in their blogs.

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 [10].

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 impact bloggers' information privacy concerns and also find out why these factors have impacts. It is hoped that the result will generate practically useful implications and contribute to business world as privacy concern is a potential barrier for users' participations in web 2.0 applications. Hopefully, this study could provide vendors a better understanding of the customers' demands.

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

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