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Social Media Use and Employee Attitudes Towards Information Security.

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Abstract

Social media has permeated the boundaries of organizations by employees bringing these popular tools from their personal lives into the workplace. Social media services promote openness and information sharing, which may or may not be consistent with an organization's culture, policies and practices. We posit that the practices of social media use and the desired culture of information security in organizations are not compatible. This study will examine the use of social media by employees in both their personal lives and their roles in the workplace. This use of social media will then be examined to determine what effect it has on an employee's perceptions and attitudes towards organizational information security policies.

Keywords: Social media, organizational information security, perception, attitude

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Abstract

Social media has permeated the boundaries of organizations by employees bringing these popular tools from their personal lives into the workplace. While social media have been widely adopted by society, organizations have only recently realized their value (Awazu & Desouza, 2004; Yates, Wagner, & Majchrzak, 2010). The security risks associated with employee use of social media are becoming clearer as the use of these technologies mature (Yates & Paquette, 2010). Social media services promote openness and information sharing, which may or may not be consistent with an organization's culture, policies and practices.

In an information age, organizations have worked to progressively build a culture that understands and adheres to information security practices. Through education and awareness programs, employees have begun to become aware of the importance of being cognizant of keeping proprietary information secure to ensure it does not leak outside the organization. Vigilant organizations should have highly secure technical information systems together with well-developed policies and procedures to help regulate employee behaviors (Stanton, Yamodo-Fagnot and Stam, 2005). Organizations have begun to debate the merits and risks of social media, but this has not slowed its growth within the corporate community. Issues such as how much control over community interaction should be implemented are common amongst those allowing communication and collaboration between external and internal people (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

This study will examine the use of social media by employees in both their personal lives and their roles in the workplace. This use of social media will then be studied to determine what effect it has on an employee's perceptions and attitudes towards organizational information security policies. We hypothesize:

H1: An employee's personal use of social media services is related to an employee's use of social media services at work.

H2: An employee's personal use of social media services is related to an employee's attitudes towards organizational information security policies.

H3: An employee's use of social media services at work is related to an employee's attitudes towards organizational information security policies.

This research study will use a quantitative approach. Participants will be invited to take part in a self-administered, web-based survey. Participants will be recruited in organizations in one of the following three countries: USA, Canada and France. To be eligible participants will have to be employed in an organization that allows the use of social media at the workplace.

Our study has implications for both the academic and the practitioner communities. To the academic community, the proposed framework of research will guide future studies of both information security practices and social media use at the workplace, including how each influence the other. To the practitioner community, the framework provides an explanation of the uses of social media at the workplace and their impact on the organization's overall information security. Organizations may wish to alter their security education programs to include social

media effects based on this research. We hope this research will provide a foundation for future work on social media use and information security.

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