

## Guest Editor's Introduction

### PAJAIS special issue on Social Media and Social Commerce

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Since its emergence in the last decade, social media has rapidly moved from a purely socializing tool to a key professional application (Cummings et al., 2009). Social media and social networks use in commerce has become ubiquitous and is changing the way we communicate, market, sell, and trade (Boyd and Ellison, 2007). The popularity of social networking sites (SNSs) and the emergence of Web 2.0 technologies have brought new developments in e-commerce, which enable individuals to interact with their peers in online communities via social platforms (Liang & Turban, 2011). The social connections and interactions of individuals on the Internet, especially in SNSs, have enabled the expansion of e-commerce to include social commerce (Zeng et al., 2009).

Social commerce is a new stream and subset of e-commerce, which allows consumers to generate content and to reach different markets by integrating consumers' social interactions (Hargadon & Bechky, 2006; Hajli, 2014b; Kim and Park, 2013). It is mediated by social media (Hajli, 2014a, Jeppesen and Molin, 2003 and Shin, 2013) and mostly related to online communities and SNSs (Lu & Hsiao, 2010). Social media differentiates social commerce from conventional e-commerce in that social media utilizes Web 2.0 applications to support users' online interactions and the acquisition of services and products (Liang & Turban, 2011). In other words, social media facilitate consumers to socially interact with each other and gain information related to a product or service online.

Social commerce can be implemented in two ways. One is based on e-commerce websites that leverage social media applications; the other is based on social network platforms which provide e-commerce functionalities (Curty & Zhang, 2011).

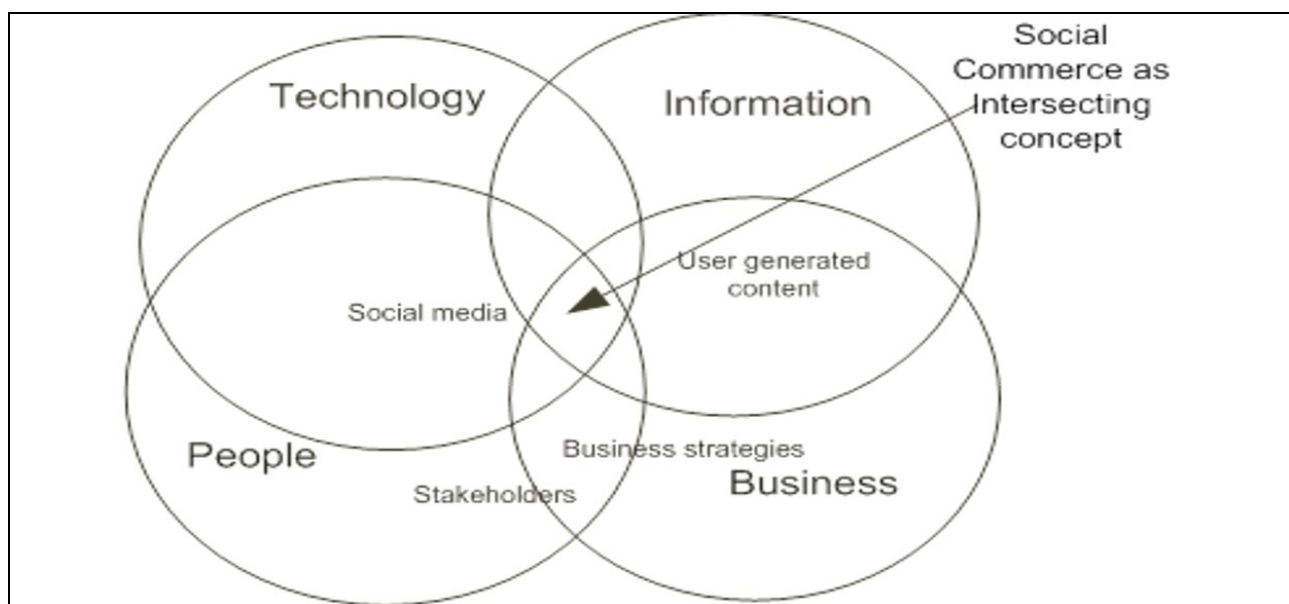
Differences between conventional e-commerce and social commerce can also be distinguished in terms of marketing, customer control and system interaction (Huang & Benyoucef, 2013). Firstly, social commerce mainly focuses on social activities such as sharing, networking and collaborating, while e-commerce, on the other hand, focuses on providing advanced search or product recommendations to maximize shopping efficiency (Huang & Benyoucef, 2013). Secondly, social commerce allows real-time interaction so that customers can use content generated by other customers, not just information from companies. This distinction increases customer control and reduces the distance between customers and companies (Constantinides & Fountain, 2008).

However, with e-commerce, customers have little or no control over the host websites. The companies who own the websites control the messaging and information exchanges (Huang & Benyoucef, 2013). Finally, regarding system interaction, social commerce offers a more social, interactive, and collaborative online experience, whereas e-commerce provides merely one-way browsing; that is, information from customers is rarely sent back to businesses, which can be later used to support customers' problem solving and decision making (Huang et al., 2012). Most importantly, social media actually enhance the networked value creation by customers because the collective outcomes produced from online customers are usually better (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Social media and social commerce demand new issues and the development of new theories, and may be one of the most challenging areas of information systems (IS) in the coming decade (Liang & Turban, 2011). In this special issue, we focus on examining the impact of social media and social commerce research from a multi-disciplinary perspective.

## Overview of the Selected Articles

Social media and its use in commerce is a rapidly growing research area for information system scholars (Richter et al., 2011; Zhou et al., 2013). Due to the interdisciplinary nature of this domain, scholars can map and analyze relationships generated by social media artifacts among people, teams, departments, organizations, or even geographical regions or markets (Wang & Zhang 2012) using diverse theories and research methods (Zhou et al., 2013). Several frameworks have been proposed to outline and understand social commerce research, such as identifying social media and commercial activities as two fundamental elements (Liang & Truban, 2011). In view of the multi-disciplinary nature of social commerce, we adapt the four-component model from Wang and Zhang (2012) to highlight the contributions of the selected studies to this special issue. Wang and Zhang's model emphasizes people and information, in addition to technology and business. Integrated with these four components, we add four elements to complete the model and provide a clear illustration for the overview of our special issue, as shown in Figure 1 below.



**Figure 1 - Social commerce as intersecting concept of social media, business strategies, stakeholders, and information: A multi-disciplinary perspective**

In this special issue, each selected study has contributed to some inter-connected parts in the model. First, in the paper entitled "Role of Social Media on Information Accessibility", the authors examine the impact of social media usage on information accessibility. In a broader sense, the study focuses on both technology and information. More specifically, refer to our figure 1, social media, reflects a portion of technology while at the same time it also includes access to user generated content. The second study by Ahmed & Ibrahim investigates how SMEs employ their business strategies to create business value through using Facebook. This study focuses on business and people, and studies the social media (i.e., Facebook) use from a business strategies perspective. The study entitled "An Empirical Examination of Continuance Intention of Social Network Sites" focuses on users' (People) continuous intention to use Facebook, a social media (Technology). Alam's study contributes to this special issue by introducing the idea of examining the use of Facebook from different stakeholder's perspective in a public sector context. Finally, we introduce the paper of Thomas Friedrich, a review study on the factors influencing consumers' adoption of social commerce. Social commerce is the central concept of our model in Figure 1. Table 1 below provides a summary of studies included in this special issue.

<b>Table 1 - A Summary of this Special Issue</b>				
<b>Included Studies</b>	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Data Source</b>	<b>Methodology</b>	<b>Major Findings/ Contributions</b>
Role of Social Media on Information Accessibility	Technology & Information	171 organizations in Malaysia	Survey	Interactivity, trust, and institutional pressures are significantly related to social media usage, which improves information accessibility.
Business Value of Facebook: A Multiple Case Study From a Developing Country	Business & People	Five SMEs in Pakistan	Case Study	'Personal touch' in the one-to-one interactions with the customers was a key factor for the success of Facebook marketing strategies.
An Empirical Examination of Continuance Intention of Social Network Sites	People & Technology	204 Facebook users in Hong Kong	Survey	Perceived critical mass, social presence, and social norms are major factors determining continuance intention for SNS users.
Empirical Analysis of Posts and Interactions: A case of Australian Government Facebook Pages	People, Technology & Information	147 Australian government FB pages	Exploratory mixed methods	Providing an understanding of government Facebook phenomenon at the federal level from a demand side perspective.
On the Factors Influencing Consumers' Adoption of Social Commerce – A Review of the Empirical Literature	People & Technology	61 academic publications	Literature Review; vote-counting	Trust has received the most attention in the literature on social commerce adoption.

## Conclusion

This special issue covers key elements of social media and social commerce research from a multi-disciplinary perspective. The four articles selected together cover the four components identified in Figure 1 (technology, information, people and business) by investigating the role and impact of social media, stakeholders, business strategies and user generated content. Social commerce, as we position, is the intersecting center of the four elements. From our observation, it seems that most studies fall into two elements – People and Technology. Studies focusing on Business and Information are relatively fewer in number but more work has started to emerge in recent years. What is missing in the literature, however, is an understanding of the dynamic iterative nature of these components through recursive use over time. In addition, research on Government 2.0 or digital era government and social media is still scarce in the literature. Given that governments are increasingly embracing social media applications such as Facebook pages, twitter updates, YouTube videos, and blogs for digital interaction with citizens (Mergel, 2013), this trend continues to grow and future research is encouraged in this area.

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