What User Thinks About Privacy on Social Networks: An Empirical Study

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Abstract: *Practically billions of users are using a wide selection of so called "social networks" which serve as a meeting point for individuals, groups etc. Recently, more and more people join multiple social networks on World Wide Web, such as Facebook, Linkedin, Twitter, Google Plus etc. to share information and updates of their lives and at the same time to monitor or participate in different activities. Social networking has become one of the most popular activities on the web, with the top sites boasting hundreds of millions of users, and social networking sites representing an important portion of world's 100 most-visited web sites.*

On social networks, service providers (i.e. facebook, twitter, google plus) have the chance to create unique products or services for each customer where the information provided by users are actually an essential part of the service. For example, we all have a different profile page (and network) based on our information, location etc. and provided by social networking company (service provider). Very sensitive personal data are uploaded to user profiles including but limited to, personal identity, date of birth, photos, job/education information, and location. Scholarship on social networking on World Wide Web is flourishing and privacy issues can be considered as a popular topic on these studies.

In this paper, based on a questionnaire, we try to understand what users think of regarding their private information on social networks. Questionnaire is based on the scale "information privacy: measuring individuals' concerns about organizational practices" developed by Smith, Milberg and Burke (1996). We argue that, if providers can come up with a secure infrastructure, transparent data usage policy and rich privacy options for users to opt-in and out, people will engage in more social networking activities and providers can make more profit.

Keywords: *privacy, user, social network, knowledge, management.*