Social Media Use and Innovations

Editorial Introduction

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This special issue on “Social media use and innovations” of *The Journal of Media Innovation* provides an engaging view into innovative uses of social media as well as approaches for utilising social media in innovation. With three papers included, we cover experiences with an online social network for children (Stephanie Valentine and Tracy Hammond), design by youth for youth in projects on social media for civic engagement (Henry Mainsah, Petter Bae Brandtzaeg, and Asbjørn Følstad), and social platforms for corporate and community innovation (Marika Lüders).

We only have to consider the most widely known social media services to appreciate the speed with which social media evolve. Facebook is entering working life with Facebook at work (<https://work.fb.com/>), Instagram and Snapchat continue to see exponential growth, while Twitter already seems to be past its prime. New social media platforms appear, and established platforms are continuously

modified in response to technological opportunities and emerging user needs. Furthermore, new patterns of use are appearing as social media are taken up by an ever-broadening range of users.

In this changing media landscape, social media innovation and social media use are closely intertwined. We see this, for example, in the use of social platforms for social sharing, knowledge sharing, ideation and open innovation, and in the use of social networks for customer engagement in innovation. Furthermore, social media are used for social innovation to involve and inform citizens in public sector change projects. Political parties increasingly use social media to engage and involve citizens in policy making. Formal and informal interest groups and various organisations use social media to generate civic engagement in causes aiming for social change, just to mention some of the novel and innovative uses of social media that has emerged over the last few years.

Nevertheless, there is still a lack of understanding of how we can more effectively involve users in the purposeful shaping of social media innovations and patterns of use, and how we can best cultivate engaging and enlightening communication among users of social media. We lack knowledge of how to design for engagement in social media, as well as how organisations may benefit from social media for internal and external collaboration.

We have all seen how social media may represent powerful and empowering arenas for communication and collaboration and, at the same time, we have all seen how well-crafted and innovative social media services fail to gain traction. Though social media have been successfully used by innovative companies for customer insight and involvement in product and service development, as well as for new and emerging practices in sharing and collaboration, a long tail of initiatives exist in which social media investments have failed to generate the expected return. Hence, many organisations, commercial enterprises and public sector organisations alike, have failed to harness the insight and people now available through social media.

To address these deficits, in this special issue of *The Journal of Media Innovations* we present three studies that improve our insight into social

media innovation, in terms of how social media are taken up and used in innovative ways, how emerging patterns of use affects social media platforms, and the use of social media for social innovation. The studies offer new ways to combine methods while at the same time addressing new solutions to social media use and innovations. Furthermore, these lessons serve to extend the broad canvas of potential uses and applications for social media.

First, Marika Lüders presents a study on open innovation in which she investigates online collaboration with users online. Both co-creation and open innovation has gained much interest in the research community, but this work is still timely and relevant. The study is based on the use of an open innovation application in two organisations and three municipalities, investigating the relationships between involved actors in open innovation applications and how these affect collaboration and innovation. Her findings suggest that social innovation platforms struggle with cross-domain communication and collaboration; communication break-downs and dead ends are common. Strengthening an organisation's innovation capability require more than technology.

Second, Henry Mainsah, Petter Bae Brandtzaeg, and Asbjørn Følstad present three case studies which provide examples of how young designers can help civic organisations use social media more effectively in engaging younger people. In particular, the presented findings shed light on how design by youth for youth may bridge the generational cultural gap between civic organisations and younger users. Hence, the paper points out future directions for involving youth not only in the design process, but also on facilitating an open process where young designers can be motivated to design for other youth.

Third, Stephanie Valentine and Tracy Hammond present a study on a social networking site developed as a safe place for children to explore and learn how to interact and participate through social media. In the study, the recorded actions of the young users on the site are studied to gain insight into how different social networking features are taken up by the children, and how the different features serve different purposes in the children's efforts towards writing themselves into being in the social context of their friends.

It has been motivating and rewarding to put this special issue together. We hope that the pre-

sented papers will stimulate future discussion and research on social media and innovation.

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