INTEGRATING SOCIAL MEDIA AND INFORMATION DISSEMINATION IN AIS COURSES

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ABSTRACT

The advent and rapid proliferation of social media have provided a new venue for individuals and companies to communicate and are now part of our everyday lives. Dependency on social media by businesses and individuals has greatly deepened because of workstyle and lifestyle changes brought about by the pandemic. The legitimacy and privacy of information presented on social media have caught the attention of social media users, researchers, and regulators. This study encourages incorporating social media and its influence for the purpose of information dissemination as it pertains to Accounting Information Systems (AIS) courses in both synchronous and asynchronous learning modalities. Background information as well as suggested learning objectives, reading materials, and class activities are provided in order to facilitate class instruction.

Keywords*: Social Media; Information Dissemination; Regulation FD; SEC regulation*

1. INTRODUCTION

According to the Security and Exchange Act of 1934 Release No. 69279: Report of Investigation Pursuant to Section 21(a) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934: Netflix, Inc., and Reed Hastings, an increasing number of firms have started to distribute important information via social media, rather than via traditional press releases or Forms 8-K. Even though the SEC (U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission) has provided guidance on the use of company websites since 2008, it does not specifically cover the use of social media channels, such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram. Recent cases of posting company financial and non-financial information on its C-suite's personal social media have attracted SEC's attention. These cases include but are not limited to, the CEO of WebMediaBrands twitted the company's pending acquisition information on his own Twitter account; Netflix's CEO, Reed Hastings announced the company's viewing hours on his Facebook, which was followed by a stock price surge. SEC's investigation resulted in a final release of SEC 21(a) that probes the application of Regulation FD (Fair Disclosure) and the SEC's 2008 Guidance on the Use of Company Web Sites to the use of emerging technologies, including social media channels. Researchers also found evidence about the association between information dissemination over social media and market reaction and liquidity. New instances of using social media usage to post company financial and non-financial information in recent years consistently challenge the existing regulations and rules.

The AICPA Core Competency Framework for Entry into the Accounting Profession suggests competencies from functional, personal, and broad business perspectives. They all explicitly list technology elements in their requirements. Accounting professionals are expected to obtain technology adaptability and skills. After reviewing accounting competency from variable sources, the Pathways Commission suggests three perspectives of competencies, including technical knowledge, professional skills, as well as professional integrity, responsibility, and commitment. It specifically mentions that due to developing technology, individuals must maintain their knowledge current. To accommodate these suggestions, Accounting Information Systems (AIS) instructors need to enforce lifelong learning and incorporate emerging content relevant to accounting students' competency into their in-class lecturing.

Extant AIS education studies have compiled and summarized the topical coverage for undergraduate AIS courses (Badua et al. 2011; Badua; Murthy and Ragland 2009; Bain et al. 2002). Curricular development indicates a core composition of business cycles and processes, internal controls over traditional settings