

**Private-public paradox in social technology consumption: Moving beyond Technology Acceptance models towards a dynamic Paradox Theory of ongoing technology consumption.**

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**Purpose:** Consumers are now in post-adoption phases of digital social technology consumption. This technology constitutes the technical system or artifact as well as humans in the network. However, consumer technology literature is still largely asking questions relating to factors/conditions under which consumers adopt interactive social technologies. These are predictive, linear and derive from positivist assumptions. The challenge now facing marketers and consumer researchers is to understand *why* consumers continue to consume social technology and *how* they are doing so? To answer these substantive questions, the paper identifies and explores the issue of privacy in SNS or Social Networking Sites. In particular, the research explores the current issue of *privacy paradox*, which suggests that consumers continue to disclose information in spite of privacy concerns (Smith et al., 2011; Stewart, 2016), highlighting a conflict and tension in consumers' technology consumption experience. In exploring the literature, the research identifies a gap in our understanding of privacy in relation to social technology. General privacy has been largely conceptualised in relation to information and disclosure, whilst privacy as social interaction between the consumer and technology has not been given as much attention. Commensurate with prevalent theoretical conceptions (Ajzen, 2011; Smith et al., 2011), this is an either/or view of privacy. In contrast, this research argues that privacy is *both* information *and* social interaction management and conceptualises it as a co-creation process achieved through interaction between the consumer and the wider social technology. Here, social technology (SNS) is both operant and operand (Halliday, 2016; Vargo and Lusch, 2004). It influences and is influenced by the consumer-actor whose privacy-related awareness is becoming active. To underscore this conception of privacy and explore its individual perceptions, tensions and anxiety in the social technology context, the research argues for a paradox, *both-and* perspective (Poole and van de Ven, 1989; Smith and Lewis, 2011). A paradox perspective addresses the issue of a) social interaction, b) closely relates to tensions precipitated by technology both inherent in technical systems (of the form X-not X, such as competence-incompetence) and socially constructed (identified in this research as X-Y, such as privacy-public) and c) takes a long-term consumption time horizon. Furthermore, a growing number of studies are applying paradox as a lens to identify persisting tensions in various technology contexts (Barcelos and Rossi, 2014; Baron et al., 2006; Mick and Fournier, 1998). In contrast yet contributing to these debates, this research explores privacy as a tension between the private and the public in SNS. To this end, the paper develops an initial conceptual framework drawing out eight research questions to be explored further empirically.

**Methodology/Approach:** Conceptual development following a critical review of technology adoption and use models, consumer technology paradox literature and information privacy research.

**Findings:** The theoretical development proposes an alternative model for understanding privacy as a process of co-creation achieved through interaction between the individual and social technology (SNS) and draws out six research questions for further exploration. The developing model more powerfully explains the consumer concerns-behaviour paradox as identified in extant research (Peltier et al., 2009; Smith et al., 2011; Stewart, 2016) and augments firms' understanding of privacy in relation to digital platforms and consumer-decision making.

**Originality/Value:** This paradox perspective offers new insight into the theoretical nature of consuming technology as process of coping and managing opposing paradoxical tensions. This significantly advances knowledge in an area of increasing importance to marketers: ongoing social digital consumption and likely future reactions of consumers to firm-instigated interactions.

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