Chapter 31 Ethics in Digital Marketing and Social Media

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Introduction

Digital marketing has disrupted traditional communications from a two-step or multi-step approach (Lazarsfeld and Katz, 1955; Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch, 1973; Robinson, 1976) to a different understanding of the communications landscape that comprises: email, websites, search engine optimisation and marketing, blogs, social media networks and social media advertising. Technology has evolved to enable targeted customer experiences resulting in a series of automatic processes including: sequential email flows dependent upon the users' actions, routine reminders when goods are left in website shopping carts, re-targeting via search engines, adaptive and localised goods that are proposed via search engines, data capture by means of downloads from blogs and websites, plus significant amounts of data harvesting via social media networks.

Social media networks provide consumers with varied uses and gratifications (Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch, 1973) such as: social interaction (Krishen *et al.*, 2016), entertainment (Luchman, Bergstrom and Krulikowski, 2014), information (Muntinga, Moorman and Smit, 2011), personal identity and status development (Shao, 2009; Muntinga, Moorman and Smit, 2011), communication (Whiting and Williams, 2013; Luchman, Bergstrom and Krulikowski, 2014), community development (Shao, 2009), relaxation or passing time (Whiting and Williams, 2013), convenience utility (Whiting and Williams, 2013), remuneration (Muntinga, Moorman and Smit, 2011), and surveillance (Whiting and Williams, 2013). Thus in an online environment individuals can express opinions, share feelings, build connections and discover brand products and services, thereby offering a valuable and accessible source of data. This data affords organisations an array of individual consumer information comprising; demographic identifiers, psychographic information and webographic data (Chaffey and Smith, 2008; King, Racherla and Bush, 2014; Hanlon, 2017; Winter and Lavis, 2019), for example:

- Demographic identifiers - names, date of birth, place of birth, home town, relationship status, linked relationships, family members, friendship groups, significant anniversary

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dates, work and education records;

- Psychographics – interests and hobbies, religious affiliations, political views, preferred music, films watched, favourite brands; and
- Webographics – webpages visited, social media pages liked, comments added, downloads performed, videos watched, videos added, purchases made, multisensory and polyphonic artefacts followed, added and created (hashtags, GIFS, memes, emojis), as well as actions taken from website visits.

According to Lamberton and Stephen (2016) the first era of social media (2000–2004) founded digital marketing. Since this time the leitmotivs in the literature have considered the impact of technology with a focus on (i) consumer expression and communication, (ii) decision support tools; and (iii) market intelligence. The macro-level review by Lamberton and Stephen (2016), demonstrated that there was limited consideration of ethics in digital marketing and social media, for example when reviewing the introduction, development and future of social media there were only two questions raised around ethical issues: (a) whether was it ethical to use individuals' conversations as data sources; and (b) whether it was ethical for firms to acquire consumer data.

Additionally, the notion of seeking permission to capture and discuss data is not considered in several earlier studies that utilised different online sources for data, for example: personal blogs (Lin and Huang, 2006), YouTube videos (Lorenzo-Dus, Garces-Conejos Blitvich and Bou-Franch, 2011; Misoch, 2015; Ahmad *et al.*, 2017) and Twitter (Swani, Brown and Milne, 2014; Yoon, Polpanumas and Park, 2017). However, the concept of data anonymity and privacy is considered in some earlier works (Lockett and Blackman, 2004; Trusov, Bodapati and Bucklin, 2010) and some studies requested permission from community managers, but not the participants (Phillips and Broderick, 2014). The overall picture illustrates the infancy of ethics within digital marketing and social media. However, as digital marketing and social media are newer areas in the domain of marketing this is not altogether remarkable. Whilst consumers gained access to the internet and shared content, scholars identified the research opportunities; gathering quantitative material via data extraction and gaining qualitative content through online communities. It has long been recognised that the internet and in particular social media, facilitates unobtrusive access to a rich array of publicly available published material (Kozinets, 2002; Bucklin and Sismeiro, 2009; Sloan *et al.*, 2019). However, reflection of the implications of the data gathering and subsequent usage are secondary and thus the notion of ethical approval for capturing online data lacks consistency.

One of the recognised challenges in online research is the blurred boundaries (Hibbin, Samuel

and Derrick, 2018; Samuel *et al.*, 2018) which has led to multiple approaches from: ‘cafeteria ethics’ where researchers choose their preferred ethical option (Samuel *et al.*, 2018, p. 454); or implied ethics as users signed up to access the social media platform and thus consent has been secured (Hutton and Henderson, 2015), or requirements for ethical approval are ignored as the data is considered as ‘published text’ (Hibbin, Samuel and Derrick, 2018, p. 150), or the notion of a ‘consent waiver’ is adopted (Ravn, Barnwell and Barbosa Neves, 2019. p. 2).

As digital marketing and social media has evolved with such velocity and variation in platform types (Samuel *et al.*, 2018), it is not unusual that there is a lack of guidance in digital marketing and social media ethics amongst both practitioners and academia. Although the Association of Internet Researchers (Markham and Buchanan, 2012) and the British Sociological Association (2017) have attempted to bridge the gap by providing guidelines for researchers.

Within a legal framework, in 2018 the European Union introduced The General Data Protection Regulation to govern the use of data protection and privacy, which was intended to harmonise and update inconsistencies surrounding data protection across Europe. Whilst the application of the legislation focused on organisations, unresolved issues remain, for example, universities are classified as public authorities (not organisations) which enables the processing of data within the ‘public task’ basis and is thus ‘considered to be compatible lawful processing operations’ (Information Commissioner’s Office, 2018, p. 18). However, whilst collecting data for scientific research is within the remit of lawful processing operations, the notion of ethical approval or additional permissions are not addressed. The European legislation focuses on the notion of being fair and lawful and obtaining consent, it does not tackle the thorny issue of data sources, a situation that is echoed worldwide, for example:

- Australia has Privacy Principles (APP) which explicate the context alone and whilst research is considered, the focus concerns government and health records, rather than other forms of research (Australian Government: Office of the Australian Information Commissioner, 2019).
- In China there is a ‘piecemeal approach’ as several legal frameworks govern data, including the more recent ‘Guideline for Personal Information Protection within Information Systems for Public and Commercial Services’ (Kshetri, 2014, p. 40).
- The United States has a fragmented approach, due to the lack of country-wide data protection law, instead providing differing approaches across individual states.

As a result the worldwide legislative landscape around the ethics of data capture and application lacks cohesion and consistency. As a result, data deception has occurred on an international

basis, culminating in the downfall of the data analysis firm, Cambridge Analytica, who worked with Facebook to micro-target users (Isaak and Hanna, 2018) through the promotion of an app which appeared to be a personality test but was a data gathering tool (Berghel, 2018). In this setting where ethical constraints are absent, organisations have recruited consumers to deliver unpaid or undeclared work by creating their content, contributing to the role of influencers and thus further blurring boundaries. Simultaneously the role of individuals has changed as negative and risky behaviours have emerged online, as some seek to amplify their values and principles in a space with a worldwide audience, whilst trying to maintain their privacy.

These issues are addressed in the next section which also considers harmful online behaviour and policies around digital marketing and social media.

Customer data deception

March 2018 witnessed a seminal shift in the relationship of trust with the social media companies. On this date a 27-year-old computer scientist turned whistle-blower provided a journalist with details of how Facebook shared data from millions of user accounts with Cambridge Analytica. Three days after this disclosure Facebook showed platform users how to check whether their data was included in this process and how to better manage their privacy settings (Facebook Inc, 2018).

Subsequently, one-month later Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg admitted that 87 million accounts could have been shared with Cambridge Analytica (Isaak and Hanna, 2018) and thus the social media platform was summoned to the United Kingdom's parliament to provide evidence at the House of Commons (Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee, 2019) where they explained that the practice was both legal and within the framework of European data protection legislation. These disclosures revealed that customer data deception was occurring on an extraordinary scale, as consumers signed up for entertaining apps, such as 'thisisyourdigitallife' (Berghel, 2019) and failed to read the over-lengthy terms and conditions. Thus their identifiable demographic, psychographic and webographic profiles were associated with additional data that was harvested from the app, that was based on the "OCEAN" psychological profile - openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism (Tupes and Christal, 1992; Isaak and Hanna, 2018) and made available to third parties in order to deliver targeted advertisements. It appeared that this practice was ubiquitous and that Cambridge Analytica were 'one of many businesses benefiting from the Facebook feature that enabled third parties to use personal data without consent' (Laterza, 2018, p. 1).

This practice, termed ‘behavioral microtargeting’ (Ward, 2018, p. 133) or ‘political behavioral targeting’ (Dobber *et al.*, 2019, p. 1212) has the negative impact of manipulating voters independent judgement (Ward, 2018) where the outcomes have delivered unexpected election results.

Likewise, to deliver more relevant advertising content, other online firms have been using customer behaviour data, for example, Google harvests data from email content (Raben, 2018) and Apple collects data from product use – whether from an app or asking the voice-enabled search assistant Siri (Apple Inc., 2019). These concepts may seem new as being situated within digital and social media, but the construct of customers as ‘economic units’ where behaviour is linked to economic outputs, along with the notion of customer segmentation, has been considered in the marketing domain for decades (Wyner, 1996). The issue is whether the online targeting can harm consumers.

Whilst Cambridge Analytica may have disappeared from the landscape, similar organisations continue to thrive such as Data Trust (thedatatrust.com) and i360 (i-360.com) with a focus on enhancing political data, although consumers are more aware of data use. Since October 2018 Facebook has publicly shared its library of political and campaigning adverts (Facebook, 2019a), making the content and budgets related to political campaigning more transparent which addresses calls for all political messages in social media to be clearly identified (The Electoral Commission, 2019), although this is not yet widely available in all countries. However coping strategies by users may lead to falsification or omission of data (Norberg and Horne, 2014).

Blurred boundaries

Whilst organisations have been harvesting data concerning individual profiles, the domain of digital marketing and social media has created blurred boundaries between the professional, personal and societal states which an individual may exhibit online. Clark (2000) introduced boundary management in her theory of work/family balance and raised issues concerning how individuals managed these boundaries. Four central concepts of boundary management theory were identified: (i) work and home domains; (ii) borders between work and home; (iii) the border-crosser; and (iv) the border-keeper. Central to this is the notion of permeability where one domain is permeated by the other due to an interaction, or the borderland. This permeability establishes the integration or segmentation from one state to another and according to Kreiner, Hollensbe and Sheep (2006) there are *intra*-identity boundary interfaces where boundaries within identity are

negotiated and *inter*-identity boundary interfaces where those between individual and organisational identities are negotiated. These identities may be integrated where the individual and organisation blends together or differentiated where the two are separate. Thus individuals may have a single identity on a professional work platform such as LinkedIn and a different identify on Facebook or Instagram which do not immediately appear to be connected.

However, blurring boundaries has become commonplace on social media as the platforms facilitate the blending of individual and organisational identities. Individuals are more aware of their online identities as Marwick and Boyd (2011, p. 115) observed that 'participants have a sense of audience in every mediated communication'. This concurs with research from Bareket-Bojmel, Moran and Shahar (2016) who recognised that individuals were using three ‘enhancement’ strategies to better present their online self: (i) presentation of the self in a positive manner (behaviours, attributes, attitudes, and feelings); (ii) presentation of the self in a socially desirable manner; and (iii) self-promotion designed to impress an audience with one’s competence or talent (p. 791). These themes resonate with Goffman’s self-presentation theory where the individual manages their presentation by exhibiting their best self to their audience (Goffman, 1956).

Personal blurred boundaries

One of the ethical challenges with the blurring of boundaries is the notion of personal material being privately yet publicly shared, alongside publicly available content. This is not a simple continuum between personal and public, but a multifaceted state as other actors may be involved in facilitating the boundary crossing process (Ravn, Barnwell and Barbosa Neves, 2019).
Users may share personal data on public social media platforms, with the intention of updating friends and family, but without considering the wider available access to the same material. Furthermore, whilst users control settings and some may decide that their content is not to be publicly shared, thus establishing their account as private or locked, the challenge is that the user settings of friends and family may not follow this protocol, resulting in content being publicly re-shared amongst their social network, whether intentionally, accidentally or without consideration, thus rendering earlier privacy settings void.

A growing ethical concern is the privacy of personal imagery across social media and the concept of Content Based Image Retrieval (Huang *et al.*, 2018). According to Prosser and Loxley (2008) visual content comprises: (i) found data (such as historical artefacts); (ii) researcher-created (images captured or created by researchers); and (iii) respondent-generated (materials provided or created by respondents). This creates additional complexity where researchers may not be aware of cultural norms, which can result in negative effects when researcher-created images are

shared on social media (Thorpe, Hayhurst and Chawansky, 2017).

In a digital marketing setting, online images are easily retrieved via search engine functionality through dedicated tools including Google and Bing Image Search, as well as the availability of many photo sharing websites, and the advent of instant online storing of images afforded by mobile telephony. The ethical dilemma is that imagery is susceptible to further sharing, online storage or potential malicious distribution (Weng *et al.*, 2015) and that images may contain background information which could reverse any anonymity that may have been granted.

Additionally, photos taken of others without consent, termed ‘creepshots’, may be shared publicly (Highfield and Leaver, 2016, p. 58). Yet when taken in a public place, this is a specialist photography genre known as street, candid or social document photography (Jardin, 2017) where the ethical guidelines focus on the legislation, suggesting that it is allowable to capture images for editorial or fine art purposes without permission (Jardin, 2017). Yet as Batdorff (2015, chapter 8) observed, ‘The camera phone has become so ubiquitous that it’s unrealistic to expect or control privacy in public domains’ and he suggested the crux of this issue is understanding the notion of a ‘public space’.

Methods to enhance and improve images which when combined with artificial intelligence has created 'digital manipulations' (Chesney and Citron, 2019, p. 148) enabling users to alter images for improvement. This was initially a useful digital marketing development that has turned sinister. Termed ectypes and deepfakes (Floridi, 2018), these are copies from an original that appear to represent genuine content. Whilst these media manipulations could be positively harnessed for the benefit of museums and educators who could preserve historical artefacts or re-creating historical scenes for educational endeavours, it has been misused where the digital techniques re-create images or videos, in order to damage the subject in the material. For example this may include politicians purporting making comments that were never made, actors appearing in unsavoury videos of which they were never involved (Day, 2019), resulting in misinformation and character destruction.

Whilst a simple altered image may be discovered, the difference with deepfakes is their lack of resistance to detection and when transmitted in the form of video, seem more authentic. Thus there are concerns that deepfakes could be applied by non-state actors, disrupt politics and threaten democracy (Chesney and Citron, 2019). Solutions being developed include the development of digital watermarks or certificates of authenticity for genuine content (Chesney and Citron, 2019; Hasan and Salah, 2019), as well as the adoption of a total open boundary

management system (Ollier-Malaterre, Rothbard and Berg, 2013) in a more extreme form of lifelogging - recording all aspects of daily life (Parker and Van Belle, 2016; Bolanos, Dimiccoli and Radeva, 2017).

To counter the abuse of a digital technology designed for good, both Facebook and Google have launched programmes to detect deepfakes (Dufour and Gully, 2019; Schroepfer, 2019) and a politician in the United States has proposed legislation in California to outlaw deepfake images before an election (Gardiner, 2019). This is an emerging area requiring further research.

Regardless of whether users have consented to their images being shared or used online, they may have created content that was not intended for consumption by researchers (Ravn, Barnwell and Barbosa Neves, 2019). Yet, as further observed by Ravn *et al*. (2019) within the realm of research, scholars may perceive threads of public intimacy as part of a data set, contributing to an overarching theme or fragments, which when pieced together construct 'ethically important moments' (Guillemin and Gillam, 2004). Wiles *et al.* (2012) suggested anonymisation of images and although not possible in some situations, this is a quandary for researchers, as if the anonymisation is too great, the essence of the image is removed.

Online shaming

Beyond data sharing with or without consent, another factor in the blurring of personal boundaries is the quest for greater accountability of content that is shared online, or statements made in a public space which can be repeated across social media networks, as demonstrated in the concept of online public shaming. Basak *et al.* (2019, p. 208) define this as 'condemnation of someone who is in violation of accepted social norms to arouse feeling of guilt in him or her'. Online public shaming is different from bullying *per se* as it is often a single episode that can result in life changing consequences, such as inappropriate comments that were perceived by the individual to be humorous and were interpreted by the audience as offensive. The characteristics of online shaming comprise: (i) a definite single target or victim; (ii) an action committed by the victim perceived to be wrong; and (iii) a cascade of condemnation from the society (Basak *et al.*, 2019, p. 208).

Notable examples of online shaming include the senior academic and Nobel prize winner Tim Hunt who made sexist comments at a conference that were shared online (Adkins, 2019) and the PR professional Justine Sacco who posted racist remarks on her Twitter feed (Basak *et al.*, 2019). Both examples resulted in temporary job loss or withdrawal from the community, the ultimate penalty for a personal observation being shared in a public space.

The privacy paradox

Within the construct of communication privacy management (CPM) theory, Child and Petronio (2018) placed the emphasis on how individuals described privacy within their context and suggested that CPM is founded on five principles: (i) private information is personally owned; (ii) individuals control the sharing of their information to others; (iii) individuals use privacy controls to manage sharing; (iv) once shared, the information is collectively owned; and (v) if privacy rules fail, boundary turbulence will occur (Child and Petronio, 2011).

Thus in a CPM framework, privacy is controlled by individuals who have defined and managed their online privacy, yet there is a disconnect between articulated and actual behaviour as a further nuance of the boundaries occurs with the notion of the privacy paradox (see for example Barth and de Jong, 2017). This is unsurprising as the social media platforms require individuals to disclose an amount of person data (as noted in ***Introduction***) which users share in order to access the networks. The privacy paradox suggests that there is disparity between behaviour and attitudes towards privacy, as individuals self-disclose significant amounts of personal data yet concomitantly have either conscious or sub-conscious concerns about their online privacy. Younger people are often attributed as over-sharing and lack consideration of privacy, although researchers Masur and Scharkow (2016) discovered that young people are concerned with their online privacy, contrary to popular opinion. The challenge is managing the amount of personal data that is disclosed.

Professional blurred boundaries

Within a professional context, openness across social media networks is encouraged as representing best practice. For example, LinkedIn's user agreement stipulates that users should have a single identity (LinkedIn, 2012), rather than portraying multiple selves and the founder of Facebook, Mark Zuckerberg perceived having two identities as a lack of integrity and argued that segregating personal information was challenging in an online setting (Kirkpatrick, 2011), thus proposing the notion of one identity.

Whilst this sounds laudable, according to van Dijck (2013, p. 211) 'Users arguably have a need for multiple 'stories' about themselves, each story concerning different parts of their identities and addressing a limited audience'. This concurs with a statement from Brusseau (2019, p. 1) who self-identified as 'A father in the morning, a lecturer in the afternoon, a husband in the evening'. Another dimension is propounded by Werbin, Lipton and Bowman (2017, p. 30) who stated that

Zuckerberg's one identity stance was 'hegemonic patriarchy seeking to diminish feminist, queer and other intersectional subjectivities'. One identity is thus a simplistic notion that does not apply in all online situations and may traverse too many boundaries.

In an offline setting, customary work behaviour involves attending social events and sharing some level of personal detail, for better integration with co-workers (Dumas, Phillips and Rothbard, 2013; Ollier-Malaterre, Rothbard and Berg, 2013). Earlier research found that blurring the boundaries and using social media within an organisational situation was beneficial for professional networking and strengthening ties, although issues were identified with over-sharing of personal information (Skeels and Grudin, 2009). Other factors contributing towards the blurring of professional and private spaces include longer working hours (van Prooijen, Ranzini and Bartels, 2018) and that some social media networks provide both personal and professional interactions as individuals become online friends with co-workers (Ollier-Malaterre, Rothbard and Berg, 2013). Moreover, Banghart, Etter and Stohl (2018, p. 339) propound that the notion of discrete identities has become 'irrelevant' with the evolution of technology and the social media platforms.

However managing boundaries between both personal and professional identities can lead to boundary turbulence (Child and Petronio, 2011), resulting in failure of boundary management due to 'role conflict' or 'role overload' (Liu and Wang, 2018, p. 1008). To better manage these boundaries and minimise boundary turbulence, individuals have developed behavioural strategies. Ollier-Malaterre, Rothbard and Berg (2013) identified four types of boundary management behaviour and Thunman and Persson (2018) advanced these behaviours into specific roles, using the example of teachers in Sweden who were early adopters of social media for work (Persson and Thunman, 2017). These behaviours and roles are based on the axes of segmentation and integration, where segmentation centres around a mechanism to combat the boundary blurring, thus separating professional and personal states, and integration accepts the lack of distinction and merges the states.

Segmented behaviours identified by Ollier-Malaterre, Rothbard and Berg (2013), were (i) audience boundary management – dividing professional and personal contacts, often resulting in separate social media accounts; and (ii) hybrid boundary management – whilst the professional and personal outwardly appeared to be connected, but these individuals created lists and groups to ensure boundary management. The two segmented roles found by Persson and Thunman (2017) included: (i) the neutral chairman - maintaining their distance, ignoring any issues; and (ii) the privacy protector, also adopting the audience boundary management behaviour where the role segments their identities with separate accounts. However, this practice may not be easily

available to all, as those segmenting their accounts were found to have access to equipment from their workplace, such as iPads in addition to their personal devices. Furthermore, the concomitant management of assorted devices and multiple profiles requires significant effort and digital competence, for example, using separate web browsers for different accounts (Thunman and Persson, 2018) or different email accounts to access online profiles.

Integrating boundary management is manifest as behaviour that embraces social media with a single identity. Ollier-Malaterre, Rothbard and Berg (2013) described integrated behaviour as (iii) open boundary management – merging both professional and personal identities; and (iv) content boundary management – carefully considering the data that was shared. The roles developed by Persson and Thunman (2017) followed a similar pattern with (iii) the moral agent, who assumes open boundary management behaviour and may monitor students' content and bring online issues into the classroom for discussion; and (iv) the moral role model, who exercises control over their private information that is shared, adopting content boundary management behaviour. Integrating social media profiles has been recognised as bringing benefits, such as strengthening social capital (van Prooijen, Ranzini and Bartels, 2018; Tijunaitis, Jeske and Shultz, 2019). Nevertheless, in some business sectors a professional distance is advised, for example the American Medical Association recommends 'To maintain appropriate professional boundaries physicians should consider separating personal and professional content online' (AMA Council on Ethical and Judicial Affairs, 2015, p. 1). Notwithstanding this directive, the blurred boundary of merged professional and personal social media application and the impact on employees remains complex and is an area requiring further research (van Zoonen, Verhoeven and Vliegenthart, 2017).

Whilst employers may be keen for employees to merge the boundaries and harness social media for organisational benefits whilst at work, one emerging issue within the research is the notion of social media overload, as a notion based on too much communication and information which can trigger stress and social media exhaustion (van Zoonen and Rice, 2017; Yu *et al.*, 2018).

Ultimately, whether an individual attempts to maintain boundaries and develops separate accounts for professional and personal use, may become immaterial as another area of research is user identity linkage (Lee *et al.*, 2018), where software can match profiles across networks even where different user names are adopted. This is achieved through software that explores similarities in the content that is posted across social media and subsequently mapped against repeated individuals in their relationship networks, resulting in identification of the segmented private and public accounts and thus the removal of all audience and content boundaries.

Harmful online behaviour

Managing boundaries is partly driven by concern as social media has fostered newer forms of harmful online behaviour where individuals exhibit negative and risky online behaviour from bullying and trolling to ‘dying for selfies’. The role of individuals seeking to amplify their values and principles in a space with a worldwide audience is explored in this section.

Trolls, Sockpuppets and Vandals

Found online, especially in public arenas such as forums and social media platforms, trolling has been described as the act of sharing content designed to provoke reactions, disrupt conversations and often used to waste time (Baccarella *et al.*, 2018) and ‘behaving in a deceptive, destructive, or disruptive manner’ (Buckels, Trapnell and Paulhus, 2014, p. 97) which is why it has been cited as an example of deviant and anti-social behaviour (Ditrich and Sassenberg, 2017; Synnott, Coulias and Ioannou, 2017).

Not all online anti-social behaviour is identical and thus trolls were categorised by Bishop (2014) as: (i) classic trolls, intending to entertain the audience; (ii) anonymous trolls, creating content for self-gratification and the denigration of others; (iii) flame trolls, engaging others for online abuse; and (iv) kudos trolls, offending part of the audience to amuse others. Their behaviour has been explored to understand which elements of the Dark Tetrad of personality – narcissism, Machiavellianism, psychopathy and sadistic personality (Buckels, Jones and Paulhus, 2013) were exhibited and it was found that everyday sadism was exhibited by online trolls, taking pleasure in the vilification of others which is manifest in classic and anonymous trolling. Furthermore, due to the anonymity afforded on the internet, individuals can conduct anti-social behaviour and meet others with similar personality traits (Buckels, Trapnell and Paulhus, 2014). Under the veil of anonymity or identity deception, they can also create multiple fake troll accounts – sockpuppets, which may be of their own making, or controlled by a puppetmaster, or troll farm, in order to repeat the same views and gain attention swiftly (Kumar *et al.*, 2017), effectively creating a reference group that influences the behaviour of others.

Trolling can have a devasting impact on those being abused online, which at worst has included cases of suicide (Bishop, 2014). Some troll behaviour has resulted in legal action and subsequent custodial sentences, although as the number of trolls has increased significantly, jail terms are now exceptional as there are too many cases to prosecute (Synnott, Coulias and Ioannou, 2017).

Another element of online anti-social behaviour is the notion of vandals, who, according to Kumar,

Cheng and Leskovec (2017, p. 947) are those ‘who make destructive edits, prominently on collaborative spaces such as Wikipedia’. Vandals do not enter into a discussion, their aim is to damage online artefacts such as fan pages, web pages and maps. They are often anonymous and may be controlled by puppetmasters to deliberately destroy online material (Wang *et al.*, 2018).

There have been many approaches to combat trolls, sockpuppets and vandals, from campaigns focused on *lolz* - laughing out loud together rather than *lulz* - laughing at loud to belittle or attack others (Bishop, 2014), to algorithmic systems created by researchers that can detect anti-social behaviour and alert the platform owner (Wang *et al.*, 2018). One difficulty with the online vandal detection systems such as ClueBot NG and STiki, is that these find elements such as vandalised content post-publication. These are *post facto* based on linguistic analysis and machine learning of already published material, rather than a pre-identification system that would remove or block behaviour of the vandal before the damage occurs (Kumar, Spezzano and Subrahmanian, 2015).

As Marne Levine, VP of Global Public Policy at Facebook commented ‘These are complicated challenges and raise complex issues’ (Levine, 2013), as content still creeps through the systems as those wishing to share inflammatory material often circumnavigate content detection by creating posts with innocent-sounding names with no connection to the content posted. Within forums, the community and its moderators can often ban trolls. Although yet again, this often occurs after the damaging material has been shared. However in some online spaces there is functionality to pre-moderate all comments before posting, for example with the settings in LinkedIn Groups and the controls on blog commenting tools. Measures to counter deviant behaviour also comprise human intervention as within online groups, researchers have also found evidence of group members regulating anti-social behaviour through exclusion of those breaking the group’s norms (Ditrich and Sassenberg, 2017). Wikipedia vandals are afforded their own project; the Counter-Vandalism Unit (Ayers, Matthews and Yates, 2008; Wikipedia community, 2019) where the community strives to eradicate the damage.

Anti-social behaviour has occurred for centuries offline and whilst online behaviour mimics some of the same characteristics, the difference is the anonymity afforded by the online setting and the speed with which the content can be posted.

Cyber-bullying

Bullying *per se* is not a recent phenomenon and is evident in all countries, across different age groups and settings (Antoniadou and Kokkinos, 2015). Sari and Camadan (2016, p. 317) provided

a comprehensive definition of cyber bullying as ‘a deliberate, repetitive and permanent behavior pattern against a defenseless victim mostly by an unknown group or individual through electronic environments such as text messages, picture/video clips, phone calls, emails, chat-rooms, instant messages and websites’.

Facilitated by technological developments, factors have contributed to the pervasive nature of cyber bullying include: the perpetrator has anonymity (Hinduja and Patchin, 2008; Notar, Padgett and Roden, 2013; Abbasi *et al.*, 2018), the activities transpire in a context where there are often no witnesses present (Abdullah Moafa *et al.*, 2018) and can arise at any time, with time and place boundaries being removed in an always-on culture (boyd, 2014; Abbasi *et al.*, 2018). Through the lens of the Theory of Planned Behaviour, research by Heirman and Walrave (2012) found a strong positive relationship between adolescents’ attitude towards cyberbullying and their behavioral intention to perpetrate it, thus cyber-bullying could be predicted.

Whilst exhibiting anti-social and harmful behaviour, the critical differences from trolling are that with cyber-bulling most victims know the perpetrators, and it more often applies to younger people, teenagers and students (boyd, 2014; Antoniadou and Kokkinos, 2015; Sari and Camadan, 2016).

Social media networks have attempted to intercede with harmful online behaviour as van Laer (2014, p. 95) noted ‘Facebook has the option for users to report friends and mark posts as spam and Twitter allows users to block and report followers’. Combined with interventions for the social media networks, the future of widespread cyber bullying may be limited as researchers have been exploring methods to tackle cyberbullying including using sentiment analysis and machine learning (Purba, Asirvatham and Murugesan, 2018) and whilst not perfected, schemes for automatic detection of cyberbullying have been piloted (Hong, Isa and Ashianti, 2017), although cyber-bullies may circumvent these systems. However better education of the impact of this behaviour within schools (Notar, Padgett and Roden, 2013), along with mitigation strategies to manoeuvre harmful online behaviour (boyd, 2014) may provide a more effective longer-term solution.

Dying for selfies

In 2013 selfie was nominated as word of the year (Oxford Dictionary, 2013). This online self-portraiture phenomenon (Kedzior and Allen, 2014) has witnessed the development of an extreme practice known as daredevil or risky selfies, defined by Chen *et al.* (2019, p. 2) as 'pictures displaying the social media user in a dangerous situation' and these have also been nominated as *killfiles* due to their unintended consequences (Lamba *et al.*, 2017; Santacroce, Martinotti and Di Giannantonio, 2017). This is a phenomenon that spans domains with articles from telematics, travel, healthcare and medicine, safety promotion, consumer studies and psychology.

Seeking celebrity status on image-sharing social media networks such as Instagram, has led to people taking greater risks to achieve Instafame (Marwick, 2015), a behaviour where individuals challenge themselves and others to obtain more extreme images in order to prove their endeavours and share with a wider audience. Evidence has found that 120 to 250 fatalities have been reported due to this phenomenon (Lamba *et al.*, 2017; Bansal *et al.*, 2018) which has been described as being 'on the edge between physiological and psychopathological processes' (Santacroce, Martinotti and Di Giannantonio, 2017, p. 468). According to Wang, Yang and Haigh (2017) those sharing selfies may be demonstrating a need for popularity and engaging in strategic self-presentation. In addition to attention-seeking behaviour, the increase in selfie deaths has also been attributed external factors including 'best selfie competitions' (Bansal *et al.*, 2018, p. 3), encouraging greater risks for better images.

Ethical issues surrounding dangerous selfies are impacting the wider society and actions to mitigate dangerous selfies has varied according to the context and has included guidance to specific groups (Flaherty and Choi, 2016) and creation of safe selfie campaigns (BBC News, 2015). Other actions include the establishment of no-selfie zones in several contexts, from historical monuments to sporting events (Flaherty and Choi, 2016; Lamba *et al.*, 2017; Bansal *et al.*, 2018) as well as the creation of safe selfie spots. Whilst the literature has indicated this behaviour is more common in younger people (Bhogesha, John and Tripathy, 2016; Jain and Mavani, 2017; Wang, Yang and Haigh, 2017; Bansal *et al.*, 2018; Chen *et al.*, 2019), the issue is communicating the consequences of risky behaviour which is a long-standing conundrum.

The ethics of gaining content from customers

Whilst individuals exhibit risky online behaviour, organisations gamble when garnering online

artefacts. Earned media or user-generated content (UGC) concerns non-organisational media activity on third-party sites, for example: posts on social media, comments in community forums, online ratings and reviews, feedback on blogs, reaction on podcasts or videos (Stephen and Galak, 2012; Chang *et al.*, 2018). Typically, earned media is created by customers and is also referred to as User-Generated Content (UGC) and User Created Content (OECD Directorate for Science Technology and Industry, 2006). UGC is manifested in numerous formats: text, hyperlinks to other content, moving or fixed images, audio, music, animation, video or a mix of these elements (Naab and Sehl, 2017).

Crowston and Fagnot (2018) considered UGC as 'voluntary participation from virtual team members' (p. 90) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) defined user created content (UCC) as (i) content made publicly available over the Internet, (ii) which reflects a "certain amount of creative effort", and (iii) which is "created outside of professional routines and practices" (OECD Directorate for Science Technology and Industry, 2006, p. 4). Motives for individuals that create and share this content are said to include; the perceived need for contributions, domain expertise, curiosity, fun and positive feedback (Crowston and Fagnot, 2018).

The essence of user-generated content is that it is personal, published and outside the domain of the contributor (Naab and Sehl, 2017) and consequently there are many advantages of UGC for organisations: it often costs nothing to create (Vanden Bergh *et al.*, 2011); users actions in social media are shared with their networks, as well as across the brand pages, widening the potential audience (Colicev, O'Connor and Vinzi, 2016); other consumers identify blog articles created by other users as more credible (Kim and Hanssens, 2017); search engine results are often based on user-generated content (Petty, 2012); user generated content can assist the consumer decision journey (Vázquez *et al.*, 2014); and UGC can transform elements of a business (Dong and Wu, 2015).

This contrasts with disadvantages of user generated content for organisations, for example the content is outside the organisation's control (Vanden Bergh *et al.*, 2011), it is without guarantees and can be unpredictable, creating risk as the organisation may be promoted negatively as well as positively (Kumar, Choi and Greene, 2017).

Ethical issues around UGC include obtaining free, unrewarded content from customers and the notion of content integrity which considers fake and deceptive content.

Different methods of obtaining user generated content have been employed, such as directly petitioning customers, one example is TripAdvisor which has a Review Express programme deigned to obtain content from guests as ‘review solicitation programs generate additional postings’ (Litvin and Sobel, 2019, p. 375). The automated nature of this programme facilitates immediate and constant content being gathered from ‘users’. Other methods of gaining UGC are via ‘calls to action’ (Westberg *et al.*, 2018, p. 30) which Westberg *et al.* (2018) have classified as firms inviting users to: (i) collaborate; (ii) compete; (iii) celebrate; and (iv) consume.

The call to collaborate asks for content to be shared by posing questions, the answers to which could result in prizes being awarded. The call to compete centres around an integrated competition with a pre-requisite for purchase to be made. The call to celebrate harnessed the camaraderie around a larger event and the research by Westberg etc al (2018) investigated alcohol brands and in this example, it was about a national team's performance. The final action was the call to consume which was more explicit, directly inviting and normalising consumption - in this case of alcohol - and sharing these images.

Content integrity concerns whether the material is authentic as there have been cases of fake reviews solicited by companies, which remove the customers' trust (Stevens *et al.*, 2018). This is a domain of much research and an online fake review assessment tool based on machine learning was created by scholars at Cornell University (Ott *et al.*, 2011) enabling any user to add a review and immediately assess whether the content is more likely to be true or deceptive (*Review Skeptic*, 2013). Where deception has occurred in online content, firms have been required to remove advertising where it appears that the user is voluntarily supporting a product – creating positive and promotional user generated content - whilst being paid to produce the material (see for example: Federal Trade Commission, 2016; Advertising Standards Authority Ltd, 2019 - and see Chapter 29, Advertising ethics and self-regulation and Chapter 33 Ethics of promotion including paid media advertising and the dimensions of fake promotions).

The role of influencers

One growing area in terms of both integrity and authenticity is the surge in influencer generated content. The concept of influence is well documented and the literature includes the early work into political influence conducted by Lazarsfeld and Katz (1955) which nominalised the opinion leader – an informal expert trusted by their peers. Digital marketing has seen the growth of Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs), micro-celebrities or influencers who are being engaged by organisations to promote their goods due to the nature and size of their online following. In his *Diffusion of Innovations* theory Rogers (1962) identified five adopter categories for the success of new

products, one of which was the group of Early Adopters who were opinion leaders that were motivated to adopt new products and seek information before others (Hanlon, 2019), thus influencers is not a new concept, but a rebranded form of opinion leader. Indeed Freberg *et al.* (2011, p. 90) suggested Social Media Influencers (SMI) were a 'type of independent third party endorser who shape audience attitudes through blogs, tweets, and the use of other social media' and thus whilst celebrities can be influencers, influencers might not be celebrities and hence the rise of the 'micro-celebrity'.

In a media environment where traditional marketing such as newspaper readership and terrestrial television viewing has decreased, new methods of communication have emerged through social media networks such as WeChat, YouTube and Instagram. In these platforms the influencers engage in self-branding and develop a 'unique selling point, or a public identity that is singularly charismatic and responsive to the needs and interests of target audiences' (Khamis, Ang and Welling, 2017, p. 192). According to Jerslev (2016) digital marketing elements including social media have germinated the SMI which could be described as the personification of a branded online self where individuals implement affective labour through significant personal disclosure, within an open boundary management structure (Ollier-Malaterre, Rothbard and Berg, 2013; Raun, 2018) and may gain reward for these services. The SMI is said to be 'expected to perform various kinds of labour, many of which are time and energy consuming but not necessarily economically profitable' (Raun, 2018, p. 100) in order to retain audience attention.

There are distinctions between those gaining income from the practice of influence to those sharing opinions without reward. Categories of influencers have been described in a binary context, as both professionals or hobbyists (Harrington, 2017) as well as alchemists or artists (Dion and Arnould, 2016), where the professionals or alchemists explicitly understand the rules and thus perform accordingly, 'in return for payment or sponsored products and services, influencers often produce content on social media platforms that are similar to advertorials' (Dhanesh and Duthler, 2019, p. 4).

A much debated ethical issue within the area of influencers is that the commercial relationship with the product owner may not be disclosed and as research has found that where no disclosure is provided, the followers assume the impartiality of the content (Carr and Hayes, 2014). However Raun (2018, p. 103) found that with YouTube the advice provided by influencers was entangled to such an extent that it was necessary to explain when content was not commercial reviewed, by adding the phrase '*Not a sponsored video*' to the content. Therefore the line between paid for and earned media can be blurred and thus the content created could be considered as deceptive

or hidden advertising, where the fans or followers are unaware – or deceived – that payment was made for content placement. This was critical where an influencer is considered trustworthy, because fans will forgo their usual checks and accept the information provided (Chu and Kamal, 2008). However research has identified that whilst this is unethical practice and falls foul of local guidelines, it is also weak practice, as full disclosure of commercial arrangements was more likely to offer greater credibility for the SMI and the brands promoted (Carr and Hayes, 2014; Dhanesh and Duthler, 2019).

Similar to data privacy regulations, the legislation regarding disclosure of sponsorship or benefit in kind varies according to country. For example, in Europe and the United States those gaining money by promoting goods or services are required to disclose the commercial relationship. Another approach has been found where in 2018 the United Arab Emirates took a further step to regulate aspects of digital marketing and influencers are required to register and obtain an operating licence (National Media Council, 2018; Dhanesh and Duthler, 2019).

In order to manage the vagaries of the sponsorship arrangements, a new business phenomenon of social media influencer intermediaries have emerged to connect influencers and brands. These intermediaries have formalised the process by offering services to both brand owner (investigating the influencers' authenticity and followers, supervising campaigns) and influencers (creating the contracts and managing the rewards), providing a structured approach to the relationship (Stoldt *et al.*, 2019) thus protecting both parties and ensuring legislative guidelines are more likely to be followed.

Policies and codes of conduct

The social media platforms' user agreements

Within these blurred boundaries and data misuse there are inevitably, appeals for social media platforms to recognise their responsibility in caring for the data (Murphy, 2009). The main process for obtaining consent is a binary approach that provides users with the simple option of either consenting to the conditions to gain access, or failing to consent and subsequently access is denied. Furthermore, the codes of conduct or terms of service vary in nomenclature, format and content across the different social media platforms which are complex (Custers, van der Hof and Schermer, 2014), for example:

- Facebook has a Terms of Service as well as a data policy (Facebook, 2018, 2019b), which combined are eleven pages of text.
- WeChat has a Terms of Service and separate privacy policy totalling 21 pages (WeChat,

2018b, 2018a).

- Twitter has a single User Agreement which comprises their Terms of Service, Privacy Policy, the Twitter Rules and Policies, although this is 34 pages of text (Twitter, 2019).
- Google's Terms of Service has 6 pages (Google, 2019).
- Bing is part of Microsoft and thus the terms and conditions incorporate all aspects of Microsoft products and is 33 pages (Microsoft, 2019).

Thus the balance of power, in controlling access to the social media platform rests with the platform owner (Murphy, 2009). Many consumers fail to read the terms and conditions as they are lengthy and 'usually drafted from a legally conservative perspective, from which a privacy policy that is vague or all-encompassing is seen as somehow benefiting the company if things go wrong' (Goldfarb and Tucker, 2013, p. 10).

Nevertheless, there is an alternative technique to the granulated data analysis where anonymity can be removed. Within digital marketing, Apple Inc has adopted a more stringent approach termed *differential privacy* (Apple Inc., 2018). This ensures individuals cannot be identified from the elements of data provided (Zhu *et al.*, 2017) due to strict methods of privacy-preserving data analysis, where a software barrier is placed between the raw data collected and the analyst (Microsoft Corporation, 2012). This process warrants that researchers can only investigate the aggregated data and cannot access the original sources of information, ensuring de-identification is preserved.

Digital marketing policies in firms

Transparent social media policies are said to benefit organisations (Goldfarb and Tucker, 2013) to promote trust and remove privacy concerns. Although not legally required, regulated sectors such as financial services and healthcare are likely to follow official guidance (Loop and Malyshev, 2013; Pillow *et al.*, 2014) and to confirm that their users understand how their data is used in different channels. In other sectors, some organisations have formulated their own social media policies in the absence of clear frameworks (Gilstrap and Minchow-Proffitt, 2017), although the orientation of social media policies is often inward-looking concerning staff, organisational privacy and confidentiality (Johnston, 2014; Hebblewhite, 2017; Shah and Jha, 2018) rather than external users.

Pasquini and Evangelopoulos (2017) termed the approach to social media policy within the higher education sector as 'sociotechnical stewardship' where the steward aids the community (p. 231).

This is a nurturing approach that takes a positive stance which was also suggested by Goldfarb and Tucker (2013) who recommended changing the notion of privacy from ‘a compliance burden to thinking of treating data with courtesy as a fundamental part of the relationship with their customers’ (p. 10). Again, this concerns the balance between the legally required content as well as a respect for the data captured and whilst requiring further research, this may provide a proactive path for those involved in all aspects of digital marketing.

Future directions of digital and social media marketing ethics

Digital and social media marketing may be approaching the end of fourth era and whilst this will continue to evolve as the social media platforms recognise the need to address dishonesty and deception, the users possess greater understanding of authenticity, fake news, data deception and rights to privacy. Users have developed a range of management strategies, although as personal and professional boundaries collide (Ollier-Malaterre, Rothbard and Berg, 2013), it will become increasingly more challenging to separate the different identities and thus a new form of open / content management boundaries may occur where in-app settings afford greater separation between audiences, or that users adapt and adopt strategies of careful sharing.

However, harmful online behaviour such as trolls and cyber-bulling are unlikely to be eradicated. Thus earlier educational intervention about the harm caused may contribute to a reduction in this anti-social behaviour (Sari and Camadan, 2016; Chan, Cheung and Wong, 2019). Whilst mechanisms are being developed to detect the potential in individuals to engage in cyber-bullying (Hamiza Wan Ali, Mohd and Fauzi, 2019), it would be difficult for an educational establishment to deploy these amongst students, without fear of greater invasion of privacy.

Another solution could be regulation, though the legislation is fragmented and struggles to keep up with emerging nefarious practices such as deepfakes. Licencing all digital media services in one location – such as the United Arab Emirates – may be possible, but rolling this out across entire continents where the regulations vary according to location, is a herculean task.

As we move towards the next era of digital and social media marketing, an open ethics standard may develop for researchers wishing to harness data. Ward and Wasserman (2014) proposed an epistemology of open ethics founded on ‘the right to the right to be listened to, and to be understood’ (p. 834). They argued that media ethics were primarily parochial and controlled by professionals and there was a need for a panoramic open construct created on a global scale by citizens as well as professionals. Their aim was the removal of control and dominance from the

social media platforms and the Global North and thus the notion of open ethics is a common ground rather than consensus, with a belief in a dialogic and participatory approach. The notion of dialogic ethics is also considered by Gilstrap and Minchow-Proffitt (2017) who suggested negotiation to manage the legal and community requirements. This resonates with other researchers who have recommended the adoption of enlightened data principles (Morey, Forbath and Schoop, 2015, p. 104) that focuses on (i) educating users as to what data is captured and how this is utilised; (ii) passing control to the users so they can decide who accesses which data segments; and (iii) using the data to deliver value in the form of more relevant content. Vayena *et al.* (2016, p. 423) proposed a new ethical framework that considered big data and 'how the benefits can be captured in a way that respects fundamental principles of ethics and privacy'.

For researchers, Samuel *et al.* (2018) recommended better practices by changing categories of text research and considering ethical issues along a continuum from commencement to after-care. Winter and Lavis (2019, pp. 2-5) proposed the notion of (i) active listening where researchers consider all artefacts holistically, moving beyond textual analysis to incorporate memes, GIFs, imagery and video, and (ii) adaptive listening where researchers construct a nuanced understanding of the digital space moving across platforms to investigate themes.

Common to these proposals for new ethical frameworks, is the concept placing the user at the centre, rather than the organisation.

Digital marketing and social media ethics may need to remove the previous approaches of consequentialist and deontological ethics, as the example of Cambridge Analytica highlighted that the ends failed to justify the means, and that the means failed to justify the ends. Thus this new era of digital and social media marketing may see the development of universal dialogic ethics, which are adopted by all social media platforms and online services, that are supplemented with contextual ethics to address local perspectives. Whichever ethical structure is adopted, digital and social media marketing is an emerging domain (Misirlis and Vlachopoulou, 2018) where privacy has become a concern for consumers (Kumar, 2018) that will need to be addressed by both organisations and researchers.

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