

Journal of
**Social
Media for
Organizations**

**A New Journal for a
New Niche: Editorial
Statement**

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ABSTRACT

The Journal of Social Media for Organizations (JSMO) aims to serve the public interest as the leading channel for *open* dissemination of scientific contributions on *social media* in commercial, governmental, and non-profit *organizations*.

JSMO:

- Is an **open access** journal for disseminating scientifically rigorous enquiry into the behavioral and technical aspects of social media used in organizations.
- Adopts a **systems-level approach**, considering social media as systems in which people and technologies play significant roles.
- Provides a **balanced scientific publication** for scholars and professionals to publish important findings that might not fit within existing publications of collaborative or social technologies, which often emphasize technology over people.
- Aims to become an **authoritative journal** addressing technology-mediated collaboration and social interaction.

This editorial statement describes the motivation and scope of the new journal, outlines the publication context in which it appears, explains the properties that differentiate it from existing publications, and describes how the journal will work.

JOURNAL SCOPE

The **Journal of Social Media for Organizations** is an open-access, peer-reviewed journal. Its goal is to become the primary outlet for open dissemination of high-quality research on social media for organizations. The term “organizations” refers broadly to stable communities that have internal structures and processes, such as formal or informal roles and practices, and a collective identity. Business enterprises, government organizations, non-profit or volunteer organizations, and local civic communities are included. On the other hand, the journal scope is limited to research on social media; that is, social technologies designed for (or studied in) such organizations. In brief, *the scope is identified by the organization, as the setting for new technologies and studies, and social media, as the class of technologies of interest. This is a new niche in need of a publication outlet.*

The intended audience of JSMO consists of academic, government, and corporate researchers; designers of social media systems; and information technology decision-makers who want to enhance their organization’s use of social media. The intended contributors are academic, government, and corporate researchers as well as anyone who has thoroughly analyzed and cogently described their organization’s experiences with social media.

Consistent with the disciplines of reference — Human-Computer Interaction (HCI), Computer Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW), and Social Computing —JSMO aims to maintain an internal balance between contributions about technology per se and contributions from behavioral science that investigate how people use or change social technologies. Therefore, contributions may include well-motivated descriptions of new technologies, empirical investigations, analyses, theories, and case studies. Examples of topics of interest can be found in JSMO’s call for participation.

GROWTH OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN ORGANIZATIONS

The motivation for this new journal is rooted in the growth of social media. The science and engineering of social and collaborative technologies advanced rapidly after the Web became the default platform and, through it, several web-based tools became widely adopted (O'Reilly and Battelle, 2004). It is now possible for crowds of hundreds or even thousands of people to share knowledge (using such tools as wikis, blogs, forums and microblogging sites), perform outsourced tasks (using such “crowdsourcing” tools as Amazon Mechanical Turk), form and leverage social networks by organizing friendship or professional ties (using social networking platforms), and predict future outcomes (using “prediction markets” such as *hsx.com*).

Social media are increasingly introduced in organizations to serve work-related purposes, with the goals of improving collaboration, increasing and exploiting social and intellectual capital, enhancing situation awareness, streamlining processes, becoming more responsive to customers, and working more effectively with partners. In a 2011 survey in the United Kingdom, one-third of employees reported using social media at work, with 35% of daily social network users stating that use was solely for business (Flacy, 2011). Unlike prior transformative collaborative technologies such as email and intranets, which were primarily adopted within organizations before being more widely adopted by the public at large, many social media have succeeded first outside the workplace in the consumer and recreational domains, and then spread to organizations. Business scholars have named this trend of technology diffusion the “consumerization” of IT in organizations (Moschella et al., 2001).

Making the best use of social media for work purposes, whether in industrial, government, academic, or not-for-profit settings, *is not as simple as deploying a “Facebook for the organization.”* Reports of poor adoption of social media in organizations are common (e.g., Holtzblatt et al., 2010; Dugan et al., 2010). The design of these tools often omits important features of organizations (e.g., roles, processes, existing work practices, culture, legacy systems) and our understanding of their successes and failures is poor (e.g., Convertino et al., 2010). With unrealized potential and poor understanding, enterprise social media is an emerging focus of academic and industrial research.

After several social technologies succeeded on the Web, adaptations of these tools started to appear in organizations (e.g., social bookmarking tools, wiki engines, and proprietary platforms such as IBM's Lotus Connections, Microsoft's SharePoint, SAP's NewWeaver, and Jive Social Business Software). It soon became evident that transferring these technologies from the public Web (or the consumer space) to the organization space necessitates understanding the requirements of an organization's members as well as those relating to the organization itself as a new type of setting. In fact, organizational intranets and the Web are quite different (Stenmark, 2008). Organizations have different constraints as well as different opportunities. The scale is smaller; shared practices, roles, and control structures may already be in place; the members have motivations, skills, and duties associated with the organization's aims. The task before the designers is not a mere translation of consumer platforms into organizational tools.

A simple example of a relevant research challenge for organizations is how best to accommodate the different generations found in the workforce. Many Baby Boomers (born between 1946 and 1964) are still in the workplace, often in positions of authority. Baby Boomers, as a group, have embraced social media much less than their younger colleagues from the Millennial generation, born between the early 1980s and the early 2000s (e.g., Leung, 2013). Most organizations comprise multiple generations and thus will benefit from social media platforms that meet heterogeneous needs.

HOW THE PUBLICATION SCENE HAS CHANGED

It is helpful to understand the evolving publication context that forms the backdrop for this new journal. Major trends include the rise of open access, the changing role of conference versus journals as publication venues, the growth and splintering of related conferences, and the increase in numbers of social media publications specifically.

In 2001 a community of scholars launched a worldwide campaign, called the Budapest Open Access Initiative, to promote open, internet-based access to all new peer-reviewed research. Although not the first initiative to use the expression “open access,” this is the first to articulate it clearly as a goal and propose concrete guidelines for realizing it across disciplines and countries (Open Society Foundations, 2012). Ten years later, the campaign has made an impact on scientific communities, and attracted the attention of publishers and national governments.

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In the U.S., once the ACM and IEEE began archiving conference proceedings, HCI and CSCW shifted to emphasize conference publication over journal publication. This has led to conferences that are of high quality, but often extraordinarily selective. Some advocate reversing this, and ACM has reiterated its advocacy of journals as “the gold standard” for research publication. The outcome is uncertain, but it has clearly led to a proliferation of experiments merging elements of journals and conferences (Grudin et al., 2013) and greater emphasis on open access (Boisvert and Davidson, 2013).

Growing interest combined with low acceptance rates in major conference such as CSCW (Computer Supported Cooperative Work), ECSCW (European CSCW), and CHI (Computer Human Interaction, formally the Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems), has engendered specialized conferences to accommodate more research. These include CollaborateCom, Collaboration Technology and Systems, CollabTech, and Communities and Technologies. Other relevant specialized conferences are GROUP, Ubicomp (Ubiquitous Computing), WikiSym, ICWSM (AAAI International Conference on Weblogs and Social Media), and Cyberworlds. Other conferences have relevant tracks or sessions, including World Wide Web, HICSS, and INTERACT.

The existing and new conferences have seen rapid growth overall. The total number of papers published in the CSCW conference alone doubled between 1986 and 2010, with acceptance rates stable or decreasing (see Convertino et al., 2006). In 2010 the previously biennial CSCW conference became annual, in 2012 it instituted a revision cycle, and contributions have doubled again. Searching the phrase “social media” across journals, transactions, and proceedings in the ACM Digital Library (<http://dl.acm.org>), we find one publication prior to 2000, seven published through 2005, 1784 through 2010, and 6 thousands through the end of 2012 (with 4.2 thousand publications in 2011 and 2012 only).

NEED FOR THIS JOURNAL

With so many relevant conferences, the research literature on social media is widely dispersed. This makes it difficult to stay abreast of important advances in understanding social media technology and its use. In addition, authors publishing in ACM or IEEE conferences are discouraged from progressing their work to journal publication by concerns about redundancy that did not exist before conference proceedings were archived. This is a challenge and an opportunity for JSMO.

The struggle of organization-oriented research, in contrast to more general social media research, to find a venue is also an opportunity for this journal. Although Human-Computer Interaction and Computer Supported Cooperative Work explore communication and collaboration in ways that balance humans and technology, their social media research agendas are dominated by a consumer focus in the U.S. and, to a great extent, in Asia. Europe has exhibited a stronger organizational focus, but historically less interest in technologies that emerged first in the U.S., in this case social media. Again, we see an opportunity.

Some social media work finds its way into popular blog sites such as znet.com and TheNextWeb.com. The presence of high-traffic blogs certainly reflects an interested audience. Yet such publications lack the rigor of scientific reporting and the emphasis on the behavioral component of adopting social media that is contained in JSMO’s mission.

With the growing body of literature focused on social media for organizations appearing in scattered venues and directed at different audiences, *it is difficult to map the advances and gaps*. As a research topic, social media for organizations is represented in conference papers and blogs – proof that scholarly work and an audience for it exists, and that conversations are taking place among practitioners. In service of this new niche, JSMO could become an authoritative and useful publication channel.

DIFFERENTIATION: COMPARISON WITH EXISTING PUBLICATIONS

The existing journals for research on collaboration and communication include Springer’s Journal of Computer Supported Cooperative Work (JCSCW), launched in 1992, and Wiley’s Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication (JCMC), launched in 1995. Launched before Web2.0 technologies appeared, these journals have a much broader scope than JSMO. They do not specialize in social media technologies or in systems for organizations. JCSCW arose as a response to the growing interest in technical systems that support people working cooperatively. HCI researchers and practitioners are its primary audience. JCMC focuses on social science research into computer-mediated communication

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technologies in general (from internet to wireless tools). Its primary audience are researchers focused on communication, mass media, and communication tools.

We are not aware of journals that specialize in social media for organizations that cover this space. Four examples of specialized journals that have a scope that differs from JSMO are:

- The International Journal of Virtual Communities and Social Networking (IGI Global, undated) appeared in 2009 and publishes quarterly print and electronic issues. It focuses on issues related to virtual communities and social networking in general, but the technologies considered are not targeted at organizations.
- The Social Enterprise Journal, published by Emerald, appeared in 2005 and publishes regularly. It focuses on organizational factors and entrepreneurial activities and is aimed primarily at scholars from management and business sciences. However, it does not focus on social technologies or user interactions with them.
- The International Journal of Social Network Mining is a specialized publication on data mining techniques applied to social networks that appeared in 2012. It covers emerging trends and industry needs associated with using data mining techniques for social networking analysis. However, it does not focus on studying practices, technology designs, and deployments aimed at organizations.
- The Social Network Analysis and Mining journal is another new, specialized publication that focuses on techniques for data mining, modeling and analysis of social networks. It does not focus on studies, designs, and deployments of social media in organizations.

As conferences compete with journals on functions such as archiving while trying to also maintain or grow a community, journals are still considered “the gold standard” for publication (ACM policy; Grudin, 2013). To maintain a “gold standard” role while keeping the benefits of being an asynchronous channel that can help contributions grow, JSMO differentiates itself and is adapted to the new publication scenery. Key distinctions are described next.

KEY DIFFERENTIATORS

As discussed above, journals (both print and electronic) that broadly address social media exist. However, none combines being an electronic journal with open access and no publication fees, rapid publishing, peer-review rigor, moderated discussions around articles, organizations as the setting for social media, and an emphasis on a balance between social and technology aspects.

Open access and no publication fees

Given the targeted nature of the subject matter and shrinking library budgets, acquisition librarians may not take on a new fee-based journal. An open-access journal free to researchers, developers, and users ensures the possibility of reaching the widest audience, which requires only online access to submit and obtain JSMO content.

To keep costs low, JSMO will publish only in electronic format. This is becoming a less serious impediment as online access expands worldwide. By making scientific research free and available to anyone with Internet access, JSMO follows the recommendations of the Budapest Open Access Initiative (2002).

Rapid publishing

Completed papers will be published upon acceptance, without having to wait for all papers in an issue to be finalized. In other words, “partial” issues are available as soon as one article is successfully reviewed and revised. The issue will be closed once all articles planned for it are finished and posted online.

Peer-review rigor

Many research papers come from academia to mainstream technology and collaboration journals. The strength of these submissions is the scientific rigor that is applied, as evaluated by peer-review. A shortcoming is that a laboratory finding is often not generalizable to the “outside world.”

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Industry-based case studies are often shared in technology trade magazines or blogs. Although helpful for providing insights about technology implementations (their successes, their failures), they often lack rigor or the repeatability necessary to discern causal relationships between implementation, practice, and patterns of use.

A successful electronic journal provides a dedicated conduit to authors in the space of social media for organizations. The editorial board, itself a distinguished set of researchers, solicits submissions from established experts as well as those who have determined best practices from industry and promising threads of research from graduate-level contributions. Each of these sources can contribute to the larger understanding of the impacts of social media on organizations provided, of course, that authors progress their work to meet scholarly standards and differentiate JSMO from the blogs.

Moderated discussion by the community

The scientific community and other readers can discuss published contributions via a moderator. This allows any paper that attracts the community's attention to remain "active" as a resource that can be enhanced, extended, or disconfirmed as new knowledge is gained by the community, as happens with Wikipedia articles.

Organizations as settings for social media

Use of social media extends within and across organizational boundaries. It has been noted that technologies that succeed on the Web can fail on an organizations' intranet and vice versa (e.g., Stemark, 2006; Holtzblatt et al., 2010), even when the technologies are similar or the same. The people, processes, and culture may differ. An organizational setting can impose different constraints. The scale is smaller; shared practices, roles, and top-down control structures may already be in place; and the members' motivations, skills, and duties may be shaped by the organization's goals. In the balance between control and autonomy, organizations typically preach the primacy of control, whereas the Web nurtures autonomy. Stemark (2006) suggested that intranet policies are born in a formative context inherited from the industrial age. Web2.0 tools in organizations may not follow the same development path as those used accessed on the Web.

For various reasons, particularly in the U.S., the research literature and many blogs are dominated by organizational uses of Web-based social media. Vendors such as Facebook or Twitter are prominent in the media and as employers and the tools are accessible to students and researchers. Organizational studies are less prominent in the major conferences, and when they appear they often focus on the use of Web-based social media for organizational purposes, such as marketing.

JSMO is open to the entire range of organizational social media usage, including the use of social media for marketing in a for-profit organization, communication within an organization or across organizational boundaries. We see a particular opportunity in some underserved areas, such as social media usage by government agencies for purposes of internal or cross-agency collaboration. Examples of such coverage exist, such as @GovNewMedia or www.govloop.com. After all, government agencies make the most use of technology worldwide; they will benefit from a journal that includes social media research situated in such organizations. We anticipate JSMO providing the broadest coverage of organizational social media found anywhere.

Emphasis on behavioral science in balance with technology science

Many publications focused on collaboration favor technology over behavioral aspects of implementation, such as the extent to which technology supports user-intent. We recognize that organizational factors affect technology adoption as much as the optimization of the technology for the organizational space that it occupies.

Recognizing the need for both, JSMO editors aim for a balanced blend of articles focused on behavior and technology. In this manner, researchers interested in behavioral aspects of social media for organizations are served reliably and predictably by useful content. Also, implementers will find technology articles that lead them to JSMO, where we hope they will become aware of important behavioral findings associated with a successful implementation (or bad practices antithetical to success).

JOURNAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND POLICIES

The web site of this journal is [hosted by the MITRE Corporation](#): MITRE is a private not-for-profit corporation chartered solely to run U.S. Federally Funded Research and Development Centers (FFRDCs) in the public interest. The MITRE Corporation cannot compete for business and does not produce commercial products; its funding is provided by the U.S.

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Congress. Advice to various agencies and branches of the US Government constitutes MITRE's only business. Hosting this journal benefits MITRE because the articles are of interest to its customers.

MITRE pledges to preserve JSMO's content indefinitely. MITRE has a long and stable history starting in 1958, runs the largest collection of FFRDCs in the US with over 7000 employees, and has experience handling electronic archival information. The only requests made by MITRE are that JSMO's quality remain high and that the costs that MITRE is asked to bear be kept to a minimum; hence the decision to forego print copies and expensive manuscript management software (instead, submissions are emailed to a listserv list to which the editorial board members are subscribed). We ask authors to use JSMO's article template and proof the final version as thoroughly as possible, but staff at MITRE will assist with final copy-editing to ensure professional presentation. Authors may include supplementary material such as videos and data files to be uploaded in conjunction with an accepted article.

MITRE does not direct or manage JSMO, despite its donation of web site hosting, information archiving, and copy-editing support. All editorial decisions and policies for JSMO are made by the independent editorial board, which is free to accept or reject articles on their merits as scientific contributions and to amend policies as needed.

The JSMO organizers are pleased by the high caliber of the editorial board, whose members are listed on the website and comprise scholars with hands-on experience and a distinguished body of research pertinent to the journal's focus. Further, the board includes current and prior editors of major Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) journals who have advised JSMO's organizers during the launch phase and are following its progress.

We encourage submissions at any time and will consider possible guest editors' ideas for special issues. We especially welcome articles that originated as conference or workshop papers and are expanded substantially to offer new insights or extensions. Expansions should be at least 25% of the original paper in length; they may constitute expanded reviews of related literature, additional results, and/or more in-depth discussion of implications and possible future directions. With approval of the editors, authors may update an article post-publication to incorporate responses to comments made by the community as part of a moderated discussion.

Authors should use the document template provided on the web site and send manuscripts to jsmo-editors-list@lists.mitre.org. A submission will be assigned to a board member, who will manage the peer-review process and communicate with the authors regarding the manuscript's status. We also welcome those willing to review articles; please send a note to jsmo-editors-list@lists.mitre.org. More guidance for authors and reviewers can be found on the [web site](#).

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The JSMO board will continue to fine-tune the journal's policies and functions. The future vision of managing living scientific publications where authors and readers refine the content of the articles is not fully charted territory, but it makes this new publication project interesting and well differentiated from the status quo.

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

We encourage all readers to contribute research articles; please find the call for participation [here](#). Any thoughts for further publicizing this journal are welcomed by the editors at jsmo-editors-list@lists.mitre.org.

¹ "We recommend CC-BY or an equivalent license as the optimal license for the publication, distribution, use, and reuse of scholarly work," <http://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/openaccess/boai-10-recommendations>

² "An additional way of showing in which form a journal is Open Access is through licensing it with a Creative Commons-license," <http://www.doaj.org/doaj?func=loadTempl&templ=forPublishers&uiLanguage=en>

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