

Despite Feeling Vaguely Uneasy: Japanese Youngsters Still To Continue To Use Social Media

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Extended Abstract

In recent days, a large majority of Japanese youngsters use social media such as LINE, Twitter, Instagram and Facebook, providing various kinds of personal data on those sites. Many of them frequently post texts, photos and motion pictures on social media sites and such postings are shared with others at light speed. On the other hand, their personal data collected from social media sites are stored in databases social media companies set up and utilised for operating the business models of them and related third party organisations. Sometimes, those personal data are anonymised and commercially marketed to yet other organisations for the sake of their efficient and effective marketing activities.

However, it is unclear that Japanese social media users recognise how their personal data they provide on social media sites are utilised by social media companies and other related organisations. The author and her colleagues investigated online privacy awareness of Japanese youngsters through questionnaire and interview surveys, and found that (a) their concerns about privacy invasion and/or misuse of personal data are derived mainly from the fear of financial loss and physical damages, (b) they do not understand how and for what purpose personal information they provide online is used by organisations in the public and private sectors, and (c) they tend to underestimate the risks concerning the invasion of privacy, as the results of the surveys ([1] [2] [3]). Given these research outcomes, it is doubtful that young social media users in Japan have an intense interest in how their personal data are utilised by social media companies and other organisations, and that they have enough knowledge of personal data handling by social media companies. In addition, Japanese social media users may not be well aware of business models social media companies deploy, and their knowledge about the business model, if at all, may not have a significant influence over their personal data disclosure on social media sites. Few research have investigated social media users' perception of business models social media companies deploy, and relationships between the perception and personal data disclosure made by the users on social media sites in Japan.

This study attempts to examine the above-mentioned issues based on the outcomes of the questionnaire survey of and follow-up interviews with university students conducted at Meiji and Ehime Universities in November and December 2013, respectively. The results of the survey demonstrate that Japanese social media users have groundless reliance on social media companies for their personal data handling, and they use social media sites regardless of their understanding of the business model social media companies develop and deploy. They seem to prefer online socialisation to privacy protection and to still continue to use social media services even though they feel vaguely uneasy about an invasion of their privacy when using the services.

References

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