

**YOLANDA JORDAAN**  
University of Pretoria, South Africa

## **HOW IMPORTANT IS PRIVACY CONCERN AND BEHAVIOUR ON FACEBOOK?**

### **Abstract:**

Social Networking Sites (SNS) encourage users to post and share personal information as part of their online social interactions to build and maintain social relations amongst likeminded people. The uniqueness of these SNS is that it allows individuals to meet strangers, but also enable users to make their own social networks visible. SNS require users to build a personal profile by providing personal information which might put users at risk of a breach in their privacy. The uses and gratifications theory asserts that people use SNSs to fulfil their needs for entertainment, relationships and identity construction, and this overrides their privacy concern. In the Facebook environment where the aim is to find other users, the challenge of dealing with the issue of privacy is an important aspect.

The paper aims to investigate the differences between high and low Facebook intensity groups with regards to the importance they attach to a set of privacy concern and behaviour factors. Data was obtained by collecting 575 surveys via a nonprobability, convenience sampling method. Privacy concern was measured by means of a 7-point, 10-item Likert scale using the Internet users' information privacy concerns scale (IUIPC) of Malhotra, Kim, and Agarwal (2004). Online privacy behaviour was measured by a 7-point, six item Likert scale developed by Buchanan, Paine, Joinson and Reips (2007). A stepwise discriminant analysis was performed to examine a list of 16 items consisting of both privacy concern and behaviour factors for each of the identified groups.

The findings indicate that (a) users' right to control decisions regarding the sharing of private information, and (b) their belief that control is lost through marketing transactions are the two most powerful privacy factors under consideration. For the low Facebook intensity group, the decision making control (the decision to provide companies with personal information) is the most important factor. For the high Facebook intensity group, users' right to control decisions regarding the sharing of private information is the most important factor. These aspects may give Facebook insight into the areas to focus on in particular when considering the continuous evolution of the privacy model for this particular social networking site. This study provides an understanding of users' SNS perceptions related to the levels of importance of privacy concern and behaviour for Facebook users of both high and low Facebook intensity groups.

References available upon request.

### **Keywords:**

privacy concern, privacy behaviour, Facebook intensity, online, discriminant analysis

**JEL Classification:** D18, M31, C83