

## Social Media in the Corporate Business World

Review of: Social Media: Risk and Governance: Managing Enterprise Risk

By: Phil Mennie

Kogan Page Limited Publishing,

ISBN: 978-0749474577, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition, 2015

Price: \$40.32, Pages: 220 pages

Reviewed by Sayyedah Parastoo Vakili

Journal of High Technology Law

Suffolk University Law School

Keywords: Social Media, Privacy, Business Corporations, Security, Technology.

---

*“Social media is naturally uncontrollable – people can, within reason, publish whatever they like. Because of this, organizations need to implement good governance to ensure that the risks of social media are managed without putting a stranglehold on it.”<sup>1</sup>*

Since social media has been constantly evolving and impacting millions of people across the globe, organizations have utilized the benefits of social media to gain a competitive advantage, communicate with people, and stay a head of change for the future direction of their business. In *Social Media: Risk and Governance*, author Phil Mennie explores the idea of that although it is vital for business companies to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the social media, they must be aware of the risk associated with the social media and should implement policies, procedures, and controls necessary to manage these risks.<sup>2</sup> In his book, Mennie is recommending that organizations should consider tactics and strategies in dictating what governance they need in order to manage social media risks. He suggests that good

---

<sup>1</sup> See PHIL MENNIE, SOCIAL MEDIA RISK AND GOVERNANCE 8 (Kogan Page Limited, 1st ed. 2015).

<sup>2</sup> See Mennie, *supra* note 1, at 12.

governance will not only allow organizations to understand the approaches of harnessing the “uncontrollable” social media, but they will also achieve their fundamental business objectives.<sup>3</sup>

The book could not have been written by a more qualified individual. Mr. Mennie’s expertise stems from his experience using web technology to better manage financial and operational data. Mr. Mennie is extremely experienced in implementing web-based data governance strategies across a broad range of industries such as banking and finance, public sector, and health and manufacturing. Furthermore, he has also led the development of a secure web-based payment system and a large scale customer-facing web application to capture trade data. Currently, Mr. Mennie is a Social Media Governance service lead at PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) in United Kingdom, where he gained deep insights into risks, challenges, and effective frameworks for various internal and external social media strategies.

In 2015 he had an interview with Forbes regarding the risk involved with social media and how firms can protect themselves from such risks. Mr. Mennie has constantly written and spoken at a various social media and technology conferences in United Kingdom and Europe. His goal is to help and educate clients (especially companies/firms) execute their strategies with respect to social media change. In addition to being actively involved in discussions about social media issues, he has published many blogs on the PWC’s website with respect to social media governance and managing social media risk.

Mennie’s book begins by introducing the reader to key topics of how the revolution of digital technology is influencing and fundamentally changing the way people do business. Organizations who respond to digital disruptors, such as the social media, should embrace it by taking advantage of its opportunities and safeguard the success of their businesses. Mennie

---

<sup>3</sup> See Mennie, *supra* note 1, at 8 & 83.

stresses that although the social media is beneficial to organizations and offers great business opportunities, but it is crucial to maintain good governance by implementing policies, procedures, and controls necessary to manage the risk of social media.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, he distinguishes the difference between traditional social media as being a public platform that any individual can sign up to and use, whereas an enterprise social network is a platform a company utilizes for internal collaborations and as a source for global networking.<sup>5</sup> The tone Mennie uses is very informative and forces the reader to take this information as a warning to companies who implement a certain social media strategy, to be aware of its risks and gives advice on good social media governance and risk management tools.

After the introduction, in chapter two Mennie outlines the risks associated with social media by helping the readers understand different methods of assessing and measuring risk, explores various social media risk categories, and provides a well-defined strategy that will assist in organization's decision making. Further, Mennie mentions several real world examples of good and bad risk management systems that were implemented for the purpose of diving into the digital technology.<sup>6</sup> The most valuable piece of information within this chapter is Mennie's concept of "Social Media Risk Maturity Model"<sup>7</sup>, which serves as a road map for corporations to assess the maturity level of their organization with respect to social media risk management and governance.<sup>8</sup> Mennie suggests this Model not only to allow corporates assess their level of maturity of social media risk management and governance, but will also help corporations in

---

<sup>4</sup> See Mennie, *supra* note 1, at 8-9.

<sup>5</sup> See Mennie, *supra* note 1, at 5-7.

<sup>6</sup> See Mennie, *supra* note 1, at 24-25.

<sup>7</sup> See Mennie, *supra* note 1, at 21.

<sup>8</sup> See Mennie, *supra* note 1, at 21-23.

their decision making process of which social media to implement in order to reach their operating goals.

The book continues to educate the readers in the context of good governance and risk management, but shifts its focus in chapter 3 to proposing strategical approaches with appropriate governance for corporations to achieve their goals.<sup>9</sup> With corporations trying to implement a social media program, this chapter reminds the audience that it is important to be aware of potential issues, such as security concerns, and have a plan in place to address such issues. Mennie wants the readers of his book to understand by investing a lot of time and effort in designing good governance and solid control measures from the outset will help corporations succeed and achieve their business goals in the long term.<sup>10</sup>

To further stress on the necessity of choosing the appropriate technology provider that meets the corporations' needs and goals, Mennie draws the readers attention to the issues of data privacy and protection.<sup>11</sup> In this chapter, Mennie continues to educate companies to be aware of the risks of handling personal data and the importance of local laws or legal requirements with respect to compliance. He concludes by briefly distinguishing the difference between policy controls and technical controls that corporations can implement to access their social media accounts and protect data within an enterprise social network. Since ignorance is not a valid justification for non-compliance, Mennie warns companies and educates them in familiarizing themselves with data protection and privacy issues and challenges that may arise.

Up to this point, the book has been educating readers (corporations), on various methods of ensuring the protection of technology systems within companies. In chapter five Mennie

---

<sup>9</sup> See Mennie, *supra* note 1, at 35.

<sup>10</sup> See Mennie, *supra* note 1, at 62-63.

<sup>11</sup> See Mennie, *supra* note 1, at 68 & 77.

points out that governance establishes roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders within a company and implements effective policies and procedures with respect to managing and operating the social media.<sup>12</sup> One of the more interesting topics of this chapter is the section designated to monitoring, such as indicators that will track the company's social media program.<sup>13</sup> Social media is a place where people connect across the world and discuss any topic that they are interested in. With this in mind, Mennie suggests that since it would be impossible to monitor every single post or discussion forum, companies should focus on determining who their influential users are, because these individuals have many followers, including other influential people. Mennie's argument is essentially based on the concept of being alerted quickly of any issues or opportunities, and "promptly address[ing] the issue or exploit[ing] the opportunity."<sup>14</sup>

Furthermore, chapter six describes different types of policies that companies could implement to manage social media risk. Mennie specifically emphasizes on the importance of content, language, and the format of the policy, which in turn would make it easily accessible for employees.<sup>15</sup> It then goes on to discuss that in order to enhance and rearticulate the objectives of the organization's social media program, companies should conduct mandatory trainings for their employees. The topics of training and awareness within this chapter create a smooth transition into chapter seven, which describes crisis management and methods should companies utilize in managing unexpected incidents. This chapter, examines how crisis develop<sup>16</sup>, how to assess

---

<sup>12</sup> See Mennie, *supra* note 1, at 84-87.

<sup>13</sup> See Mennie, *supra* note 1, at 105.

<sup>14</sup> See Mennie, *supra* note 1, at 106.

<sup>15</sup> See Mennie, *supra* note 1, at 125.

<sup>16</sup> See Mennie, *supra* note 1, at 140.

crisis<sup>17</sup>, and what tactics or strategies to implement in order to manage unexpected crisis effectively.<sup>18</sup> In particular, this chapter describes in detail the four stages of crisis lifecycle: preparation, assessment and analysis, response, and prevention.<sup>19</sup> These stages will allow organization to respond to any unexpected crises more effectively and potentially prevent future crises from occurring.

One of the most interesting sections within this book is chapter 8 which focuses on cyber security threatening businesses, governments, and individuals. Mennie points that in 2014 there were 42.8 million security attacks reported, and warns organizations to be aware of cyber threats that have grown considerably. From creating a complex password and two-factor authentication on social network to downloading virus/malware protections, Mennie does a fantastic job in educating and informing companies on how to safeguard themselves against the security risks that lie in social media.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, in chapter nine, Mennie discusses how the laws and regulations impact the social media, and what practical steps organizations should take to comply with such legal requirements.

The last chapter in Mennie's book cover the future of social media and how it may effect the businesses. Mennie believes that with digital technology constantly evolving, there is a "wealth of opportunities" for businesses. However, he stresses that with reliance on technology and its opportunities, there is still a risk that businesses should be aware of such as "los[ing] competitive advantage and be relegated to the past" if they do not keep their businesses up to date.

---

<sup>17</sup> See Mennie, *supra* note 1, at 146.

<sup>18</sup> See Mennie, *supra* note 1, at 149.

<sup>19</sup> See Mennie, *supra* note 1, at 146.

<sup>20</sup> See Mennie, *supra* note 1, at 166-70.

Overall, Mennie's book is very informative and interesting read. This book will not only assist individuals who are new to the world of social media, but will greatly benefit corporations with respect to accomplishing their business goals and objectives through means of digital technology. Mennie does an excellent job of writing his book in a language that welcomes a wide range of people in all ages as well as the professionals within the corporate sector. Although very informative and well structured, there are two limitations: first, it may not provide a new fresh perspective about the benefits and risks of the social media; second, it does not provide a through legal analysis of how laws and regulations of different jurisdiction may affect a business company. Since many other authors have written about social media, this book may lack a new theory.

Perhaps by writing this book, Mennie's message was aimed at the large corporations and providing a new theory may not have been Mennie's goal per se. Mennie sought to write a book that could educate business companies in the benefits of utilizing the social media, but also wanted to warn them about social media risks by recommending a good social media governance strategy to manage and control such risks. It would be reasonable to say that Mennie has achieved his goal by writing this book and it will greatly benefit any reader who decides to buy it.