DANIELS FUND
ETHICS INITIATIVE
College of Business
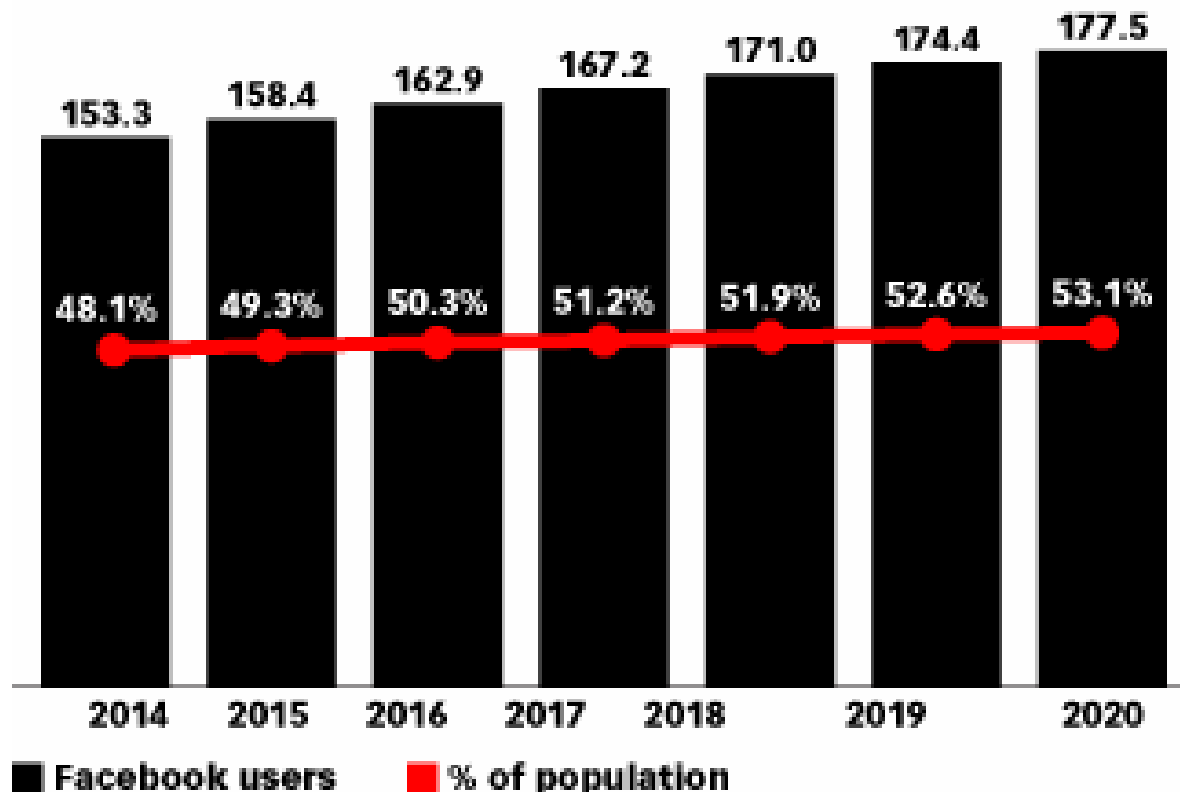**University of Colorado Colorado Springs**

(Exploring) Ethical Issues in Social Media

Illustrations and Examples from Undergraduate Digital and Social Media Marketing Students

Why do SM Ethics Matter?

US Facebook Users and Penetration, 2014-2020
millions and % of population

Year	Facebook users (millions)	% of population
2014	153.3	48.1%
2015	158.4	49.3%
2016	162.9	50.3%
2017	167.2	51.2%
2018	171.0	51.9%
2019	174.4	52.6%
2020	177.5	53.1%

■ Facebook users ■ % of population

Note: internet users of any age who access their Facebook account via any device at least once per month
Source: eMarketer, Feb 2016

204417   www.eMarketer.com

Why do SM Ethics Matter?

US Social Network Users and Penetration, by Platform, 2014-2020

millions, % change and % of population

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Facebook	**153.3**	**158.4**	**162.9**	**167.2**	**171.0**	**174.4**	**177.5**
—% change	3.7%	3.3%	2.9%	2.6%	2.3%	2.0%	1.7%
—% of population	48.1%	49.3%	50.3%	51.2%	51.9%	52.6%	53.1%
Instagram	**64.2**	**77.6**	**89.4**	**98.9**	**106.2**	**111.6**	**116.3**
—% change	59.9%	20.9%	15.1%	10.6%	7.4%	5.0%	4.2%
—% of population	20.1%	24.2%	27.6%	30.3%	32.3%	33.6%	34.8%
Twitter	**48.3**	**52.5**	**56.8**	**60.9**	**64.9**	**67.9**	**70.7**
—% change	11.8%	8.9%	8.0%	7.3%	6.6%	4.7%	4.0%
—% of population	15.1%	16.4%	17.5%	18.6%	19.7%	20.5%	21.1%
Pinterest	**43.9**	**50.1**	**54.6**	**58.5**	**61.7**	**64.4**	**66.6**
—% change	26.0%	14.1%	9.0%	7.0%	5.6%	4.4%	3.3%
—% of population	13.8%	15.6%	16.9%	17.9%	18.8%	19.4%	19.9%
Tumblr	**18.2**	**21.0**	**23.2**	**25.2**	**26.9**	**28.3**	**29.4**
—% change	32.8%	15.4%	10.5%	8.6%	6.5%	5.2%	4.1%
—% of population	5.7%	6.5%	7.2%	7.7%	8.2%	8.5%	8.8%
Total	**173.6**	**180.0**	**185.6**	**190.7**	**195.3**	**199.4**	**202.8**

Note: internet users of any age who access their Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram and/or Tumblr accounts via any device at least once per month; social networking audiences are not mutually exclusive; there is overlap between groups
Source: eMarketer, Feb 2016

204205   www.eMarketer.com

Incorporating Ethics

- Every week Students were tasked with finding an example of an ethical dilemma in social media
- Filter the dilemma through the 7 principles
- Present the case for class discussion (resolution)
- Survey SM Ethical Codes of Conduct
- Create "custom" SM Ethical Code of Conduct into final class project

Exercise Example

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PRINCIPLES

Integrity
Act with honesty in all situations

Trust
Build trust in all stakeholder relationships

Accountability
Accept responsibility for all decisions

Transparency
Maintain open and truthful communications

Fairness
Engage in fair competition and create equitable
and just relationships

Respect
Honor the rights, freedoms, views, and property of others

Rule of Law
Comply with the spirit and intent of laws and regulations

Viability
Create long-term value for all relevant stakeholders

Student Examples

Vitaminwater Marketing Campaign Goes Horribly Wrong

The Huffington Post | By David Winograd

Posted: 09/20/2013 10:29 am EDT | Updated: 09/22/2013 12:49 pm EDT

6.7k | 1505 | 159 | 31 | 624

Like | Share | Tweet | Linked in | Comment

Coca-Cola apologized on Thursday for a marketing promotion for its Vitaminwater brand in Canada that went terribly wrong. The campaign, targeted at French and English speakers, featured words in both languages printed on bottle caps. Customers could put the caps together to form phrases and send them in for prizes.

The whole thing fell apart this week when a woman in the province of Alberta found the words "You Retard" on the underside of her bottlecap. "Retard" is the French word for "late."

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/09/19/offensive-bottle-cap_n_3955846.html

Dave and Busters

Dave & Buster's
@DaveandBusters

"I hate tacos" said no Juan ever
#TacoTuesday #DaveandBusters

RETWEETS 32   FAVORITES 11

10:01 AM - 18 Nov 2014

Ethical Issues

- Respect
- Trust
- Accountability

USE OF "PUBLIC" PHOTO

❖ Mother posted picture of daughters (ages 9 and 7) to her public Instagram account

❖ BuzzFeed used photo in article "21 Questions You're Afraid to Ask Your Friends with Kids" without mothers knowledge or consent

❖ Article provided access to mother and children's names, location, and place often frequent

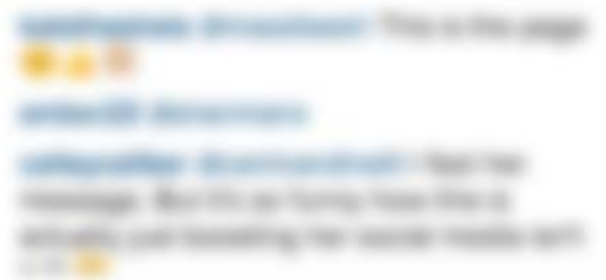**essenaoneill** FOLLOW

26.3k likes   75w

essenaoneill Was paid $400 to post a dress. That's when I had maybe 150k followers, with half a million followers, I know of many online brands (with big budgets) that pay up to $2000 per post. Nothing is wrong with accepting brand deals. I just think it should be known. This photo had no substance, it was not of ethical manufacturing (I was uneducated at the time). SOCIAL MEDIA IS NOT REAL is my point. Be aware what people promote, ask yourself, what's their intention behind the photo?

view all 1,189 comments

Log in to like or comment.

essenaoneill FOLLOW

Social Media Is Not Real Life READ THE RE-EDITED CAPTIONS ⬜ ❗⚠ Click the link below for videos and to a site aimed to MAKE US MORE THAN OUR IMAGES ⬜ ⬜⬇👽⬇🌞⬜⬜ www.letsbegamechangers.com/videos

96 posts   **780k** followers   **10** following

- **"It was never my conscious intention, but I deluded a lot of people... Call it deception, manipulation, lying, not saying the whole truth... I was both addicted to social approval and terrified no one would value me for myself. So I rewrote the captions of these false photos with short shots of reality."**

- *Integrity*: Act with honesty in all situations

- *Trust*: Build trust in all stakeholder relationships (followers)

- *Transparency*: Maintain open and truthful communications

- *Accountability*: Accept responsibility for all decisions

Goals and Outcomes

- Create student sensitivity to potential ethical dilemmas

- Explore SM ethical boundaries and complexities

- Identify resolutions

- Create Social Media Ethical Codes of Conduct

Code of Conduct Examples

Confidentiality:

- When posting about users and events always maintain privacy and confidentiality.

- Ask for customer's permission to use their names prior to posting their pictures on the page.

Code of Conduct Examples

- *Crisis Management:*
    - In cases of unexpected social media issues, including poor customer reactions, timing issues, or any other sensitive breaches in social media:
    - Be sure to follow the structured plan:
        - Do not ignore customers
        - Do not attack or blame customers on the social media site
        - For any backlash on posts, please seek out manager immediately.
            - Managers:
                » Determine if post needs to be deleted
                » Issue, if necessary, an apology statement
                    - Be sincere
                    - Straight to the point
                    - Leave contact information
        - Be available via social media, phone, and email after incident occurs