

The Future of Work and Social Media: The Reconfiguration of an Intersection

Christoffer Bagger (cbagger@hum.ku.dk)

For the New Future of Work Conference (Aug 3-5 2020)

Introduction

The nature of work at large is undergoing massive shifts (Standing, 2011), often facilitated by new digital technologies (Precarity Lab, 2019) while also being a great source of meaning in the lives of many people (Gregg, 2013). Therefore, it is vital to understand what role digital communication plays in shaping, maintaining, and directing the domain of work in the lives of individuals. Discussions of social media and work specifically have veered off into vastly different directions. Are social media always a type of unpaid exploitation (e.g. Andrejvic, 2011), are they only a distraction in the realm of “actual work” (e.g. North, 2010), or are they a venue of professional expressions (e.g. Johnson, 2017)? Giving a universal answer to these questions is impossible, as they each rely on very different conceptualisations of “social media” and even of “work”, and particularly of how these two subjects intersect. Understanding this may prove vital to how we perceive the coming future of work, where digital media – including ones not immediately related to work – may prove to play new and interesting roles.

This article will map eight different conceptualisations of the intersection of “social media” and “work” as they implicitly appear in the existing research. These conceptualizations are informally inspired by 16 months of theoretical and empirical inquiries into the role of social media in working life. In the following these conceptualizations will be exemplified by references to existing peer-reviewed research, thus relying on what is commonly on what may be termed “certified knowledge” (Fernandez-Alles & Ramos-

Rodríguez, 2009). As I proceed through these different conceptualisations, I will emphasize what difference they make from the perspective of an *individual*, as opposed to groups, organisations or societies at large. This focus on the individuals' perspective is not in order to situate individual agency as the definitive factor, but rather to convey a sense of how social media in and around working life may be perceived "from the bottom up". I propose these conceptualisations as a useful tool for untangling both different individual experiences of how a given person may experience the intersection between their own social media use and their work, as well as a delineation of adjacent research interests around social media and work. Following my walkthrough of the conceptualisations, I will briefly discuss how they contrast, and particularly how the final conceptualisation of Social Media *under* Work provides new perspectives on the existing research. Following this, I will end on suggesting further avenues for research on the intersection of social media and working life.

Background

In large parts of the world, digital media have become foundational as an infrastructure for personal and professional life, and for many institutions as well. One effect of this is that individuals have a constant task of choosing the appropriate media for any given situation in their everyday life (Helles, 2013) and are often left with the task of deciding how available they should make themselves in different contexts, especially considering with mobile devices that allow almost constant availability (Middleton, 2007; Helles, 2013; Mazmanian et al., 2013). In a sense, a large part of the ordinary work of the highly digitized countries takes place across a host of media, and involves a large degree of -

among other things - online identity management (Fast and Jansson, 2019), boundary management (Mazmanian et al., 2013) practical coordination (Lomborg, 2014) and sociability (Papacharassi & Mendelson, 2010; Schroeder, 2016).

All of this has led to discussions of how different domains of life - e.g. work and personal life - relate to each other in the present media landscape. These discussions have taken place on the level of devices (e.g. Mazmanian et al., 2013; Wajcman et al 2009), or of the mobile internet more broadly (e.g. Coget, 2011; Wajcman et al., 2010). In the following, I will take the discussion to the level of “social media”. I do this for four major reasons. Firstly, because social media represent a middle ground between the materiality of specific technologies and devices (e.g. smartphones) and the ephemerality of communication *as such*. Secondly, as a genre of communication crossing into different domains of life, they are usually perceived of as being “personal” and migrating into the realm of work, rather than the other way around, as can be argued in the case of, for instance, e-mail. Thirdly, the specific genre affordances of social media lead to a large amount of *identity work* being performed by individuals on these platforms. The nature of this identity work may vary highly depending on how an individual may perceive the intersection between a given social medium and working life, which leads me to my fourth and final reason for my choice of focus: Social media are simply a very contested category both in research and in the lived lives of people – which bleeds into how the epistemological construction of their relation to work may be constructed - as will become apparent in the following.

Social Media: A delineation

As has been pointed out, the term “social media” is strictly speaking akin to “nonsense” (Lomborg, 2014), since it implies that other types of media are definitionally lacking in a social dimension. This is of course an assertion that flies in the face of both media history and sociology like a slap from an unruly child (see e.g. Briggs & Burke, 2009). Rather, the more colloquial (but still academically acceptable) use of the term “social media” is as an umbrella term for a number of web-based applications and services with a high emphasis on user-generated content (Bechmann & Lomborg, 2013; boyd, 2015; van Dijck, 2013). While social media sites have antecedents in services such as Internet Relay Chat and BBS’s, it has been recently assumed to be a feature of the “named internet” (Hogan, 2013), at least as far as social *networking* sites go. This “named” feature will become central to the discussion of professional and personal identity management, which is a central theme of several of the conceptualizations I present below.

My cited examples will mostly concern themselves with Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and LinkedIn. I attribute this largely to the longevity of these particular platforms, which in turn has facilitated a large amount of research output about them across a variety of fields. However, the following conceptualization - though reliant on these examples for explanatory power - will be *platform agnostic*. This is recognition that while some platforms may conform somewhat clearly to being more related to the “professional”, the “personal” or a hybrid of these (Archer-Brown et al., 2018), more often platforms may be caught in a tug of war between being intended for different uses by different groupings of both their developers and users (e.g. Burgess & Baym, 2020; Brügger, 2014). As such, the dynamics I describe will be theoretically independent from specific platforms, though the final conceptualization will discuss how social media platforms *designed* for organizations complicate this.

Work: A Delineation

“Work” might be an even trickier term to nail down than “social media”. Raymond Williams (1976) points out that “work” is the English language’s “most general word for doing something” (334). Inspired by sociologists of work (Watson 2012, 6-7) and recent discussions in a transmedial landscape, I conceive of *the activity of work* as “the carrying out of tasks that produce values (of economic, cultural or social kind) that allow people to make a living within their specific context” (Fast & Jansson, 2019, 9). However, work is also a *context in itself* insofar as one can not only *do work*, but also be *at work*. “Work” can thus be conceived of as a distinct domain of life, whether this is termed as a distinction between “work” and “life” (e.g. Fleck et al., 2015), “work” and “home” (e.g. Peeters et al., 2005), “work” and “family” (e.g., Clark, 2000) or “work” and “leisure” (e.g. Thompson, 2019). For the purposes of this article, I will therefore approach “work” as a *domain of activities*. This means that *work* can refer to both specific tasks, as well as the context within these tasks occurs.

This distinction between domains has also been discussed within the context of a digital mediascape in general. Terms such as “boundary work” or “border work” (e.g. Nippert-Eng, 1996; Clark, 2000) denote activities whose primary purposes is the delineation of different domains of life. Usually this means keeping work delineated from other areas of life. In practice, this will mean very different things to very different people.

I choose term “work” over the term “labor” for two major reasons. Firstly, while I find “labor” to be an adequate description of the *activity* of work, I find it to be an inadequate description of a *domain of life*. Secondly, I do not conceptually perceive of the “work” related

to social media use as “labor” per se, as this is a distinct domain of inquiry in itself (see e.g. Fuchs & Seignani, 2013). This will be the subject of the final distinction of this article. The main point of this article is that the conflation of “social media usage” (Understood as the sum total of any activities performed on social media) and “work” (understood as exploitation of unpaid labor by platform providers) runs the risk of overshadowing the myriad uses of social media in relation to work. This in turn also runs the risk of overlooking vital directions for future research.

Eight conceptualizations of social media and work

Below, I present eight conceptualizations, which may underlie both individual perceptions of the intersection social media and work, as well as academic discussions of the same. These are named and structured after how they implicitly conceive of social media as they relate to work:

- 1** - Surrounding: Social Media *around* work
- 2**- Intrusion: Social Media *at* work
- 3** - Radiation: Social media *about* Work
- 4** - Resource: Social Media *for* work
- 5** - Task: Social Media *as* work
- 6** - Legacy: Social media *after* Work
- 7** - Labor: Social media *are always already* work.
- 8** - Infrastructure: Social Media *under* work

These conceptualizations are *not* paradigms which have consecutively replaced one another. As I will demonstrate, all eight conceptualizations may be found within the recent literature. These eight categories are also not mutually exclusive from the perspective of the individual. An individual's use of a social media can traverse the eight categories, both in that different social media may be conceptualized as belonging to different categories, or even that a single social medium may in some way serve a function in all categories.

In extension of this, the conceptualizations are presented here as descriptions of different epistemological understandings of the intersection of social media and working life. These epistemological categorizations may in turn inform the social uses of this intersection by individuals and organizations. The categories are *not* presented here as normative categories with a moral hierarchy between them. I unpack each of the eight conceptualizations below.

1 - Surrounding: Social Media *around* work

The first conceptualization of how Social Media intersects with work is - strictly speaking that the two *don't* intersect. Social media are seen as a personal (as opposed to professional) activity within this conceptualization. In terms of identity work, a person may have a presence one or several social media platforms, but this is neither used for work purposes, or in any way explicitly linked to their professional identity or their workplace. In terms of boundary work, this separation may be strictly enforced by a person, or it may be merely incidental.

In principle, this separation may be possible, but empirically any such separation is highly fragile, and even if one tries to keep social media disconnected from work, work - so to speak - can be hard to disconnect from social media. One very obvious manifestation of this is in the use of “cybervetting” (Berkeleaar & Buzzanelli, 2015; Berger & Zickar, 2016; Gruzdt et al., 2020) procedures in recruitment processes. Here, recruitment personnel may scan and vet a potential candidate’s online presence - including presence on social media - in order to evaluate their fit for a given position. Already a decade ago, discussions in business research emphasized the need for professionals to manage their online identities (Labrecque et al., 2011). This will also become relevant in the fourth conceptualization, social media *about* work.

In this sense, social media is not only *around* work, but it is also *prior* to work. This is both in the sense that any social media presence is potentially scrutinized before a person may gain any specific job (see e.g. Davison et al., 2011), but also that social media presence may be scrutinized before a person gains *any job at all* (see e.g. Melton et al., 2018). Empirically, this is of course not necessarily the case, and it is certainly not the case across all types of jobs. However, it is the foundation of this conceptualization. Social media - and any presence an individual may have on these exists both *around* work - in the sense that they can be thought of as something which *surrounds* work and does not immediately influence that sphere, and thought of as *prior* to work, in the very literal sense that from a life course perspective, a person entering the job market at the current point in history will likely have a history of social media use behind them. Just as social media presence may influence hiring decisions, they may influence termination decisions as well (Crane, 2011; Davison et al., 2011; O’Connor & Schmidt, 2015; Parker et al., 2019). The rationale behind this is often something along the lines of hiring the “whole person” (e.g. Powell, 1998).

In summary, this conceptualization emphasizes how social media become a factor which affects an individual's relation to their work (including whether they keep - or even get - a job) before they as individuals even enter the workplace or the workforce, and before we as researchers have even gotten around to discussing work at all. In the following conceptualizations, work and social media are seen as – if not more integrated, then at least more entwined.

2 - Intrusion: Social media *at* work

In this conceptualization, social media are seen as primarily a personal pursuit, and any use of these in the context of work is regarded with suspicion and must justify itself. One early study (North, 2010) delves into the perceived acceptability of checking personal social media services during work time. Here the conclusion is that such activities are provisionally acceptable. In this conceptualization, as in the first one, social media activities are generally not conceived of as being meaningfully associated with work tasks. Both in the sense that they are not essential to the completion of work tasks, but also that they hardly relate to work or professional identity at all. Any activity on here will be seen *a priori* as something which an employee does as a private individual, and something which in an immediate sense detracts from their professional efforts. Any positive outcomes of social network and social media usage are thus framed as appearing very indirectly, if at all. Social media use in worktime may thus be tolerated, but not actively encouraged.

Fundamentally, this conceptualization presents a question of whether or not social media are a distraction (cf. Wu et al., 2018). In the most negative light, social media - along with many other ostensibly “nonproductive” categories of digital activities can be adversely

bunched together under the umbrella terms of “social loafing” or “cyberloafing” (Andreassen et al., 2014; Liberman et al., 2011) in this thread of discussion. Keywords such as “excessive use” or “hedonic use” (e.g. Cao & Yu, 2019; Delalíc et al., 2019) of social media may also appear – underlining the idea of this being perceived as a personal activity intruding into the realm of work. In extremis, scholars will even go so far as to offhandedly suggest that the overall proliferation of social media services can be owed to people spending time on them during work hours (e.g. Graeber, 2019). Discourses of “social media addiction” (e.g. Priyadarshini et al., 2020; Zivnuska et al., 2019) are also likely to appear, as are discussions of “technostress” due to personal social media use in a work context (Brooks & Califf, 2017). Usually, the recommendation is that social media policies be implemented, understood and enforced (e.g. Johnston, 2014). Organizations thus commit themselves to a high degree of boundary policing, often by outsourcing this to their employees.

The idea that social media use during work time is primarily a “personal” as opposed to “professional” endeavor is not entirely without empirical merit. One study by Pew Research for instance, underlines how this is indeed a primary motivation for employee’s social media use during working hours (Olmstead et al., 2016). However, this explanation is not exhaustive for the uses of social media during worktime – as will become apparent in the following conceptualizations. For instance: If a study or a discussion proceeds from an assumption of social media as potential databases of knowledge for individual workers – and just an opportunity for them to “loaf” or manage their personal identities and networks - the discussion takes place within the next conceptualization.

3 - Resource: Social media *for* work

In this conceptualization, we have discussions of how social media are used for professional purposes, without it being a core task of the individual user. The conceptualization of Social Media as a work task or an essential part of work will be treated in the next category. From the perspective of the individual, any social media use here is voluntary, and done with the aim of aiding or improving one's work tasks. Here, the assumption that social media can have a positive effect on professional efforts, is made explicit. In this conceptualization, I place any use of social media - here still being conceived of as a category of communication which deals with a "private" or "personal" individual for professional purposes *that are not an explicit work task*. An example would be looking for - or providing - professional advice on platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. Here, social media may afford an opportunity for the individual for feeling "ahead of the game" (Lupton & Michael, 2020).

The research in this area is extensive within the business and information sciences. Within business literature, the potential for monitoring social media for business and customer insights was discussed extensively at least a decade ago (e.g. Kietzmann et al., 2011). Incidentally, this is not too dissimilar to how academics have largely treated social media as a data source, which has currently become far harder to access (see Bruns, 2019 for an overview). To be clear: This area of activities fits within this category insofar as it represents an avenue for an individual to gain data insights and knowledge.

Aside from being sites of monitoring and capturing of information, social media are also sites of voluntary knowledge sharing (e.g. van Zoonen et al., 2016). Here studies have established that the predictors of the use of social technologies for knowledge sharing may be contingent on an employee's gender, position, size of the organization (Yan et al., 2014) as well as the expected benefits of such use (Paroutis & Saleh, 2009). Some studies link social

media use during work hours positively to work performance, but underlines how both “hedonic” and “utilitarian” motivations are intertwined in the use (Leftheriotis & Giannakos, 2014). The use of personal social media for work purposes can be strongly associated with both a sense of autonomy as well as work pressure, with one study documenting that employees seem more burdened by this accessibility than enjoying it (van Zoonen & Rice, 2017). Some studies frame social media rather unambiguously as a stress factor in a work context (Bucher et al., 2013).

In general, I perceive this conceptualization to be result of the very diffuse roles social media can serve for people in work situations where a lot of individual flexibility is afforded. This can in turn result in both innovative solutions, a high rate of frustration and burnout – and many more things in between. In the next two conceptualizations – social media use will serve ostensibly more specific purposes.

4 - Radiating: Social Media *about* Work

In this category, we find conceptualizations of Social media as a tool for broadcasting one’s own professional identity. In the first conceptualization (Social media *around* work) was concerned with how social media fit in *before* one was in the job market or if one *did not* explicitly connect their social media presence to their professional lives. Here the purpose is in some sense the opposite. In effect, this is *intentionally* sharing *from the domain of work and into a broader sphere*. This is not “work” in the sense of recruitment and surveying coming to one’s personal sphere, rather this is individuals bringing their “work” into other domains. This may be just “broadcasting” one’s professional identity - perhaps in anticipation

of the activities discussed in the first category (social media *around* work). Another example could be socializing with work colleagues in venues not controlled by the organization (see e.g. Gregg 2013), or even the organization of labor unions via social media (Lazar et al., 2020). These activities are *about* work – but they are not in and of themselves the work.

In terms of identity work, a large predictor of whether or not one associates with one's place of work on digital platforms seems largely dependent on one's organizational identification (Fieseler et al 2015; Archer-Brown et al 2019), that is – the degree to which one feels a sense of identification with the organization in question. It is also a question of the degree to which individuals *integrate* (as oppose to *segment*) the domain of work from other areas of life (Batenburg & Bartels, 2017).

This “radiating” of the domain of work into other domains of life can be varying degrees of intentional, in this way it mirrors the second category of social media as an intrusion into the domain of work. However, I argue that studies and practices in which social media are *an explicit work task* belong in the next category. What distinguishes this category is that social media are neither an explicit work task nor something which provide an explicit advantage in performing work tasks.

This conceptualization is the result of the internet in general (and social media in particular) becoming a space where real-name interactions are far more common than ever before, with pseudonymous and anonymous fora being regarded as less valid, and thus leaving people with less opportunity to segment different parts of their life online (see e.g. Hogan, 2013; van der Nagel, 2017). Obviously, this perceived unity of the self is one which benefits not only social media platforms, which as Van Dijck (2013) puts it, have a vested interest in positioning “the online self as a standardized tradeable product.” (201). This will be discussed in more detail in the seventh conceptualization – social media *is always already*

work. For now, it is merely important to keep in mind how this perspective is compatible with the interests of recruiters and HR managers interested in keeping tabs on prospective and current employees. Perhaps the sentiment behind this shift was expressed most clearly by Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg :

“You have one identity . . . The days of you having a different image for your work friends or co-workers and for the other people you know are probably coming to an end pretty quickly. Having two identities for yourself is an example of a lack of integrity” (quoted in Kirkpatrick, 2010, 199)

Thus, it leaves little room for the molding and segmentation of identity online. Aside from undervaluing secrecy as a common (personal and corporate) practice (Birchall, 2016; Costas & Grey, 2009), it leads individuals into a paradigm of visibility management, where individuals must constantly strategically disclose certain information about themselves (Flyverbom, 2019).

This “radiating” can be framed as the domains of work bleeding into other domains of life. However, as examples like the unionization case have demonstrated, this need not be a universally negative phenomenon. What both this conceptualization and the previous one (Social media *for* work) have in common however is a usage of social media in the domain of work as something happening ostensibly at the initiative of the individual – or at least without a specific requirement from, for instance, their workplace. To discuss this practice of social media as a *required* activity, I move on to the next conceptualization.

5 - Task: Social Media as Work

If an individual's job is directly to deal with the production or management of social media content, then we are within this conceptualization. Here, social media are a *work task*. Usually, social media will be a channel of communications to a large (often external - but occasionally internal) audience. Concretely, a person may be formally tasked with producing or monitoring content on social media platforms. It may be their sole work task, or it may be one in a broad portfolio of tasks. This content production may be explicitly stated as a goal *in and of itself*, or it may be required for other purposes.

Any content production *on behalf* of a workplace will fall into this category, regardless of whether the explicit sender is an individual person (e.g. Gilpin, 2011) or an account speaking on behalf of an organization, speaking on behalf of another person (e.g. a political actor or an executive) or even a fictional character (e.g. Kinney & Ireland, 2015). If it is an explicit or essential task, it is performed by at least one actual individual, and it belongs within this framework.

While a person may latently use social media for the purpose of self-promotion in the first and fourth conceptualization (Social media *around* and *about* work, respectively), in this category we find discussions of people who are applied terms such as “influencer” or “content creator”. Here, the *work* for these individuals consist of producing content for social media platforms which they can either monetize directly or indirectly. Here, some fuzziness will appear around whether or not a person conceives of their content production for social media as a central or essential work task, and to what extent they perceive this content production as to their own benefit or to the benefit of their organisation. Extensive empirical research has already revealed that much of the effort that goes into becoming a professional content producer is “aspirational work” (Duffy, 2017) or “visibility labour” (Abidin, 2016).

Aside from content production, there is also the task of *content management* as performed by human persons. One fundamental way in which this differs from content production is in its relatively invisible (to other users) nature. A bulk of this curation is performed by workers with very low, if any visibility (Gray & Suri, 2019; Roberts, 2019), and it is therefore hard to imagine this conceptualization of use as congruent with more casual use of social media platforms. This work can be on both a paid basis (e.g. Roberts, 2019), or on a volunteer basis (Matias, 2019).

Undoubtedly, tacitly or explicitly being required to perform tasks with social media are a central part of many current jobs, and very likely in a number of ways that have not yet been extensively covered by the research. This may prompt us to ask – as I discuss in the seventh conceptualization, whether social media should *always* be considered as work. Before this, I will discuss to what extent social media may play a role in the lives of individuals who are outside the realm of work.

6 - Legacy: Social media *after* Work

This conceptualization exists mostly by virtue of inference, rather than by virtue of a large body of existing research. In the first conceptualization we briefly asked what implications no use of social media might have for the intersection of social media and work - here we might open with the question of what *being outside the realm of work* has for this intersection. Let us therefore take as a point of departure a group of the general population who are well-researched and who's members can often relatively uncontroversial stand outside the labour market: (Retired) older adults. Older adults are of course an extremely

heterogenous group - but they have the advantage of being studied extensively across a number of disciplines. Plenty of research has been done considering the benefits of having older adults be digitally connected in general and using social media networks more specifically (see e.g. Leist, 2013; Nef et al., 2013; Xie et al., 2012). However, these studies are usually biased towards inquiring into leisure activities and their beneficial health effects. As far as I have been able to discern, no studies exist specifically considering what role social media may play in older adults connecting to their areas of (former) professional identities - or even former colleagues - into retirement. This is in spite of the fact that connectivity to a professional area of expertise is a commonly accepted predictor of retirement happiness (Atchley 1999). This also extends to a general lack of consideration of older adults as “producers” of media in more than a trivial sense (see Givskov & Deuze, 2016). At best, there is a discussion of older adults actively resisting the use of social media (e.g. Syvertsen, 2017).

How, are we then to make sense of what is “left behind” in the domain of work? And how are we to understand practices of people wishing to “stay connected” to their areas of work via social media? These are questions which are pertinent to older adults outside of the job market, but they also gain a more universal pertinence when we come next return to one of the first points touched upon in this article: That social media are *always* work, and that any activity on these platforms leaves traces which benefit others.

7 - Labour: Social media *are always already* Work

The final perspective to be considered here, is that of any social media activity as being always, definitionally *work*. This brings us full circle to the original discussions of this

article. The operational logic behind this assumption is that, since all social media platforms rely largely or exclusively on user-generated content and/or user-generated moderation, these are forms of labour which creates the value of the platform. The value is thus in accessing the people and the content on the platform (e.g. Brügger, 2014). This leads to a framing of such “mundane” communicative acts as sharing, liking and reacting to posts as a type of labour (Picone et al 2019), or merely the act of having and curating a profile – performing identity work - as labour (e.g. Lim, 2020). In this framing they are not merely labour required by an employer of an employee (this is covered in social media *as* work) but labour done for the benefit of a platform provider. This user-generated content can then be thought of as “free labour” (e.g. Hesmondhalgh, 2010; Terranova, 2000). The discussion of social network media as exploitative also appears very early in this research (e.g. Andrejvic, 2011; Fuchs & Sevignani, 2013). The argument is not so much that social media platforms provide nothing in terms of algorithms or moderation that make them attractive to users (for argument against this see e.g. Bucher, 2012; Gillespie, 2010), but that the value provided by the users themselves goes uncompensated – or has even more drastic negative consequences.

Some scholars stop just short of categorizing the act of contributing to these platforms as actual labour (e.g. Srnicek, 2017), while other go much further in condemning these practices (e.g. Precarity Lab, 2019; Zuboff, 2019). Interestingly for our purposes, these discussions - even the most critical ones - have thus far largely avoided touching upon the nature of organization-specific social media for these purposes. I will return to this in the next conceptualization

8 - Infrastructure: Social Media *under* work

This final categorization represents not only one of the newest developments in the intersection of social media and work – the usage of social media as a foundation of the communicative operations of an organization, usually in the form of specifically developed social media for internal usage. This conceptualization is interesting for a number of reasons. For the most part, it reverses the usual premise of (at least a specific) social media as something intruding into, or at best supplementing the domain of work. This in reverses the directionality of the questions of boundary and identity work.

In this conceptualization, social media serve as the *infrastructure* of work itself. That is, organizations can formally or informally rely on social media services for their daily operations. Not so much in their externally focused communications tasks (This was covered in previous segments) but in terms of everyday internal communications, knowledge sharing and information management. If this is done through a service designed for this purpose, this may be termed a “Enterprise social media” (Leonardi et al., 2013), “Enterprise social networking site” (Wehner et al., 2017) or an “internal social media” (Madsen, 2016). Occasionally the term “Organizational Social Media” will also be used (e.g. Högberg 2018; Van Osch & Coursaris, 2013).

Here, the perceived benefits of implementing such media is usually that the advantages discussed in the previous conceptualizations will now all be contained within a single platform (Ellison, Gibbs and Weber 2015; Leonardi et al., 2013). These specific media are usually discussed within the realms of business and organizational communications. As such, while the studies are often quite good at considering the organizational implications and effects of the uses of this software, but for the purposes of the present overview, the perspective of the individual *per se* is usually not at the forefront. As the social medium in questions serves as an *infrastructure* in this conceptualization, it makes

some sense about to discuss it as a potentially invisible or ubiquitous service. I will delve into some of the most pertinent questions that arise from this in the discussion section of this article.

Work after Social Media? Discussion and Future directions

Crucially, I believe the appearance of the final categorization – that of social media as an infrastructure for work – forces us to recontextualize the previously outlined conceptions. If the new future of work is to consider what role social media will play, it must consider to some extent both the *infrastructural* (and structuring) role, as well as the more visible functions it plays in the lives of working individuals. I will encourage future research to consider how social media as an *infrastructure* of work is compatible (or isn't) with ideas of social media as *labour*. Are new considerations of social media as being both a tool of exploitation *per se* now compounded more by the potential for them to be a tool of exploitation and datafication *by employers*? Even the most critical or thorough takedowns of social media giants such as Facebook tend to overlook the company's efforts into creating enterprise software (e.g. McNamee, 2019; Zuboff 2019). This opens up questions of how both specifically produced enterprise social media may appropriate all the other intersections. How do both the tech companies developing these platforms and their individual users perceive and manage their *legacies* on these platforms? What existing and new types of *tasks* may emerge in the closed or semi-closed systems of enterprise social media? How are individuals expected to talk *about* their work on these new platforms? Is the use of social media *for* work no longer optional, and no longer an individual opportunity to improve one's

tasks - but rather a requirement which puts the onus on the individual to stay informed? What are the implications of social media no longer exclusively being viewed as a potential angle for *intrusion*? Are ESMs merely “a mechanism to keep cyberslacking at bay” (Niveditha & Sheik Manzoor 2020) and does this represent an appropriation of a potential venue for performing small boundary transitions within the domain of work?

Conclusion

This article has enumerated eight ways in which the intersection of social media and has been constructed in the research literature - with an emphasis on how this distinction makes a difference viewed from the perspective of the individual. Strictly speaking, as long as both “social media” and “work” exist within the life of an individual - the ways in which these are mutually constituted will continue to be globally relevant. As an extension of this I suggested that future research should be sensitive to the potentially very multifaceted nature of the domain of “work”, and consider the role that social media play in both supporting and shaping this domain.

Mainly, I argue that this can be found in potential inquiries into how social media as an *infrastructure* for work recontextualizes the other constructions of the intersection of social media and work both theoretically, and in the lived experiences of individuals.

Perhaps the most central consideration to consider is the role of organisations in which work take place. These will play a vital role in the future social shaping (cf. Burgess & Baym 2020) of how specific solutions are shaped for use - and what implications this has for the intersection of social media and work.

The other half of this equation is the shifting nature of work. With a greater emphasis on temporary or part-time employments, or employment that otherwise deviates from the norm of full-time employment (e.g Standing, 2011), individual usage of different social media platforms for different purposes is likely to become an even more complex system of practices. I encourage future research to bear this in mind, and look forward to the exciting new developments that may appear.

References

- Abidin, C. (2016). Visibility labour: Engaging with Influencers' fashion brands and# OOTD advertorial campaigns on Instagram. *Media International Australia*, 161(1), 86–100.
- Andreassen, C. S., Torsheim, T., & Pallesen, S. (2014). Predictors of use of social network sites at work-a specific type of cyberloafing. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 19(4), 906–921.
- Andrejevic, M. (2011). Social network exploitation. In Z. papacharissi (Ed.), *A networked self: Identity, Community and Culture on Social Network Sites* (pp. 90–110). Routledge.
- Archer-Brown, C., & Kietzmann, J. (2018). Strategic knowledge management and enterprise social media. *Journal of Knowledge Management*.
- Atchley, R. C. (2001). *Continuity and adaptation in aging: creating positive experiences*. Johns Hopkins University Press.

- Batenburg, A., & Bartels, J. (2017). Keeping up online appearances: How self-disclosure on Facebook affects perceived respect and likability in the professional context. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 74, 265–276.
- Bechmann, A., & Lomborg, S. (2013). Mapping actor roles in social media: Different perspectives on value creation in theories of user participation. *New Media & Society*, 15(5), 765–781.
- Berger, J. L., & Zickar, M. J. (2016). Theoretical propositions about cybervetting: A common antecedents model. In *Social media in employee selection and recruitment* (pp. 43–57). Springer.
- Berkelaar, B. L., & Buzzanell, P. M. (2015). Online employment screening and digital career capital: Exploring employers' use of online information for personnel selection. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 29(1), 84–113.
- Birchall, C. (2016). Digital Age| Managing Secrecy. *International Journal of Communication*, 10, 12.
- Boyd, D. (2015). Social media: A phenomenon to be analyzed. *Social Media+ Society*, 1(1), 2056305115580148.
- Briggs, A., & Burke, P. (2009). *A Social History of the Media. From Gutenberg to the Internet*.
- Brooks, S., & Califf, C. (2017). Social media-induced technostress: Its impact on the job performance of it professionals and the moderating role of job characteristics. *Computer Networks*, 114, 143–153.
- Brügger, N. (2013). Facebooks historie: Udviklingen af en tom struktur. In *Facebook* (pp. 17–44). Samfundslitteratur.
- Bruns, A. (2019). After the 'APIcalypse': social media platforms and their fight against critical scholarly research. *Information, Communication & Society*, 22(11), 1544–1566.

- Bucher, E., Fieseler, C., & Suphan, A. (2013). The Stress Potential of Social Media in the Workplace. *Information, Communication & Society*, 16(10), 1639–1667.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2012.710245>
- Bucher, T. (2012). Want to be on the top? Algorithmic power and the threat of invisibility on Facebook. *New Media & Society*, 14(7), 1164–1180.
- Burgess, J., & Baym, N. K. (2020). *Twitter: a biography*. New York University Press.
- Cao, X., Vogel, D. R., Guo, X., Liu, H., & Gu, J. (2012). Understanding the influence of social media in the workplace: An integration of media synchronicity and social capital theories. *2012 45th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences*, 3938–3947.
- Clark, S. C. (2000). Work/family border theory: A new theory of work/family balance. *Human Relations*, 53(6), 747–770.
- Coget, J.-F. (2011). Technophobe vs. Techno-enthusiast: Does the Internet Help or Hinder the Balance Between Work and Home Life? *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 25(1), 95–96.
- Costas, J., & Grey, C. (2016). *Secrecy at work: the hidden architecture of organizational life*. Stanford Business Books, an imprint of Stanford University Press.
- Crane, C. (2011). Social Networking v. The employment-at-Will Doctrine: A Potential Defense for Employees Fired for Facebooking, Terminated for Twittering, Booted for Blogging, and Sacked for Social Networking Note. *Washington University Law Review*, 89(3), 639–672.
- Davison, H. K., Maraist, C., & Bing, M. N. (2011). Friend or Foe? The Promise and Pitfalls of Using Social Networking Sites for HR Decisions. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 26(2), 153–159. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10869-011-9215-8>
- Delalić, E., Turulja, L., & Bajgorić, N. (2019). Social Media in the Workplace: To Allow It or Not to Allow It? Available at SSRN 3491966.

- Duffy, B. E. (2017). *(Not) getting paid to do what you love: Gender, social media, and aspirational work*. Yale University Press.
- Ellison, N. B., Gibbs, J. L., & Weber, M. S. (2015). The use of enterprise social network sites for knowledge sharing in distributed organizations: The role of organizational affordances. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 59(1), 103–123.
- Fast, K., & Jansson, A. (2019). *Transmedia work: Privilege and precariousness in digital modernity*. Routledge.
- Fernandez-Alles, M., & Ramos-Rodríguez, A. (2009). Intellectual structure of human resources management research: A bibliometric analysis of the journal Human Resource Management, 1985–2005. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 60(1), 161–175.
- Fleck, R., Cox, A. L., & Robison, R. A. (2015). Balancing boundaries: Using multiple devices to manage work-life balance. *Proceedings of the 33rd Annual ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*, 3985–3988.
- Flyverbom, M. (2019). *The Digital Prism*. Cambridge University Press.
- Fuchs, C., & Sevignani, S. (2013). What is digital labour? What is digital work? What's their difference? And why do these questions matter for understanding social media? *TripleC: Communication, Capitalism & Critique. Open Access Journal for a Global Sustainable Information Society*, 11(2), 237–293.
- Gilpin, D. (2011). Working the Twittersphere. *A Networked Self: Identity*.
- Givskov, C., & Deuze, M. (2016). Researching new media and social diversity in later life. *New Media & Society*, 1461444816663949. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444816663949>
- Graeber, D. (2019). *Bullshit Jobs: A Theory*. Simon and Schuster.

- Gray, M. L., & Suri, S. (2019). *Ghost Work: How to Stop Silicon Valley from Building a New Global Underclass*. Eamon Dolan Books.
- Gregg, M. (2013). *Work's intimacy*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Gruzd, A., Jacobson, J., & Dubois, E. (2020). Cybervetting and the Public Life of Social Media Data. *Social Media + Society*, 6(2), 2056305120915618.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305120915618>
- Hesmondhalgh, D. (2010). User-generated content, free labour and the cultural industries. *Ephemera*, 10(3/4), 267–284.
- Hogan, B. (2013). Pseudonyms and the rise of the real-name web. *A Companion to New Media Dynamics*, 290–307.
- Högberg, K. (2018). Organizational social media: a literature review and research Agenda. *Proceedings of the 51st Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences*.
- Johnson, K. (2017). The importance of personal branding in social media: educating students to create and manage their personal brand. *International Journal of Education and Social Science*, 4(1), 21–27.
- Johnston, J. (2015). ‘Loose tweets sink fleets’ and other sage advice: social media governance, policies and guidelines: Developing social media guidelines & policies. *Journal of Public Affairs*, 15(2), 175–187. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pa.1538>
- Kietzmann, J. H., Hermkens, K., McCarthy, I. P., & Silvestre, B. S. (2011). Social media? Get serious! Understanding the functional building blocks of social media. *Business Horizons*, 54(3), 241–251. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2011.01.005>
- Kinney, L., & Ireland, J. (2015). Brand Spokes-Characters as Twitter Marketing Tools. *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 15(2), 135–150. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15252019.2015.1101357>

- Kirkpatrick, D. (2010). *The Facebook Effect: The Inside Story of the Company That is Connecting the World*-. New York, Simon & Schuster.
- Labrecque, L. I., Markos, E., & Milne, G. R. (2011). Online Personal Branding: Processes, Challenges, and Implications. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 25(1), 37–50.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intmar.2010.09.002>
- Lazar, T., Ribak, R., & Davidson, R. (2020). Mobile social media as platforms in workers' unionization. *Information, Communication & Society*, 23(3), 437–453.
- Leftheriotis, I., & Giannakos, M. N. (2014). Using social media for work: Losing your time or improving your work? *Computers in Human Behavior*, 31, 134–142.
- Leist, A. K. (2013). Social media use of older adults: a mini-review. *Gerontology*, 59(4), 378–384.
- Leonardi, P. M., Huysman, M., & Steinfield, C. (2013). Enterprise social media: Definition, history, and prospects for the study of social technologies in organizations. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 19(1), 1–19.
- Liberman, B., Seidman, G., Mckenna, K. Y., & Buffardi, L. E. (2011). Employee job attitudes and organizational characteristics as predictors of cyberloafing. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 27(6), 2192–2199.
- Lupton, D., & Michael, M. (2017). “For Me, the Biggest Benefit Is Being Ahead of the Game”: The Use of Social Media in Health Work. *Social Media+ Society*, 3(2), 2056305117702541.
- Madsen, V. T. (2017). The challenges of introducing internal social media—the coordinators' roles and perceptions. *Journal of Communication Management*, 21(1), 2–16.
- Matias, J. N. (2019). The civic labor of volunteer moderators online. *Social Media+ Society*, 5(2), 2056305119836778.

- Mazmanian, M., Orlikowski, W. J., & Yates, J. (2013). The autonomy paradox: The implications of mobile email devices for knowledge professionals. *Organization Science*, 24(5), 1337–1357.
- McNamee, R. (2020). *Zucked: waking up to the Facebook catastrophe*. Penguin Books.
- Melton, J., Miller, R., Jensen, B. R., & Shah, V. (2018). Decisions, decisions: Cybervetting through the eyes of students. *Journal of Education for Business*, 93(5), 252–259.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/08832323.2018.1442785>
- Middleton, C. A. (2007). Illusions of balance and control in an always-on environment: A case study of BlackBerry users. *Continuum*, 21(2), 165–178.
- Nef, T., Ganea, R. L., Müri, R. M., & Mosimann, U. P. (2013). Social networking sites and older users—a systematic review. *International Psychogeriatrics*, 25(7), 1041–1053.
- Nippert-Eng, C. (1996). Calendars and keys: The classification of “home” and “work.” *Sociological Forum*, 11, 563–582.
- North, M. (2010). An evaluation of employees’ attitudes toward social networking in the workplace. *Issues in Information Systems*, 11(1), 192–197.
- O’Connor, K. W., & Schmidt, G. B. (2015). “Facebook Fired”: Legal Standards for Social Media–Based Terminations of K-12 Public School Teachers. *SAGE Open*, 5(1), 2158244015575636.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244015575636>
- Olmstead, K., Lampe, C., & Ellison, N. B. (2016). Social media and the workplace. *Pew Research Center*, 2–14.
- Papacharissi, Z., & Mendelson, A. (2010). 12 Toward a new (er) sociability: uses, gratifications and social capital on Facebook. *Media Perspectives for the 21st Century*, 212.

- Parker, J. M., Marasi, S., James, K. W., & Wall, A. (2019). Should employees be “dooced” for a social media post? The role of social media marketing governance. *Journal of Business Research*, 103, 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.05.027>
- Paroutis, S., & Al Saleh, A. (2009). Determinants of knowledge sharing using Web 2.0 technologies. *Journal of Knowledge Management*.
- Peeters, M. C., Montgomery, A. J., Bakker, A. B., & Schaufeli, W. B. (2005). Balancing work and home: How job and home demands are related to burnout. *International Journal of Stress Management*, 12(1), 43.
- Powell, G. N. (1998). Reinforcing and extending today’s organizations: The simultaneous pursuit of person-organization fit and diversity. *Organizational Dynamics*, 26(3), 50–61.
- Precarity Lab. (2019). Digital Precarity Manifesto. *Social Text*, 37(4), 77–93. <https://doi.org/10.1215/01642472-7794402>
- Priyadarshini, C., Dubey, R. K., Kumar, Y. L. N., & Jha, R. R. (2020). Impact of a Social Media Addiction on Employees’ Wellbeing and Work Productivity. *The Qualitative Report*, 25(1), 181–196.
- Roberts, S. T. (2019). *Behind the screen: Content moderation in the shadows of social media*. Yale University Press.
- Schroeder, R. (2016). The globalization of on-screen sociability: Social media and tethered togetherness. *International Journal of Communication*, 10.
- Srnicek, N. (2017). *Platform capitalism*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Standing, G. (2014). *The precariat: the new dangerous class*. Bloomsbury.
- Syvertsen, T. (2017). *Media resistance: dislike, protest, abstention*. Springer.
- Terranova, T. (2000). Free Labor: Producing Culture for the Digital Economy. *Social Text*, 18(2), 33–58.

- Thompson, B. Y. (2019). The digital nomad lifestyle:(remote) work/leisure balance, privilege, and constructed community. *International Journal of the Sociology of Leisure*, 2(1–2), 27–42.
- van der Nagel, E. (2017). Social Media Pseudonymity: Affordances, Practices, Disruptions. *PhD Diss., Swinburne University of Technology*.
- van Dijck, J. (2013). ‘You have one identity’: performing the self on Facebook and LinkedIn. *Media, Culture & Society*, 35(2), 199–215. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443712468605>
- Van Osch, W., & Coursaris, C. K. (2013). Organizational social media: A comprehensive framework and research agenda. *2013 46th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences*, 700–707.
- van Zoonen, W., & Rice, R. E. (2017). Paradoxical implications of personal social media use for work. *New Technology, Work and Employment*, 32(3), 228–246.
- van Zoonen, W., Verhoeven, J. W., & Vliegenthart, R. (2016). Social media’s dark side: Inducing boundary conflicts. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*.
- Wajcman, J., Rose, E., Brown, J. E., & Bittman, M. (2010). Enacting virtual connections between work and home. *Journal of Sociology*, 46(3), 257–275.
- Watson, T. J. (2017). *Sociology, work and organisation*.
- Wehner, B., Ritter, C., & Leist, S. (2017). Enterprise social networks: A literature review and research agenda. *Computer Networks*, 114, 125–142.
- Williams, R. (1985). *Keywords: a vocabulary of culture and society* (Rev. ed). Oxford University Press.
- Wu, A., DiMicco, J. M., & Millen, D. R. (2010). Detecting professional versus personal closeness using an enterprise social network site. *Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*, 1955–1964.

- Xie, B., Huang, M., & Watkins, I. (2012). Technology and retirement life: A systematic review of the literature on older adults and social media. *The Oxford Handbook of Retirement*. Oxford University Press, New York.
- Zivnuska, S., Carlson, J. R., Carlson, D. S., Harris, R. B., & Harris, K. J. (2019). Social media addiction and social media reactions: The implications for job performance. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 159(6), 746–760. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224545.2019.1578725>
- Zuboff, S. (2019). *The age of surveillance capitalism: the fight for the future at the new frontier of power*. Profile Books.