

What CIOs Need to Know About the Surging External Social Software Tidal Wave

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Focused on senior executives trying to figure out what to do about "social software," this note provides pointers to selected pieces of important research on business impact, externally-oriented applications, industry-specific implications, operational best practices, toolkits and case studies, markets, vendors and technologies.

Key Findings

- People interact with each other based on factors other than transactional rules that can be quantified in quantitative formulas. Social patterns govern a substantial part of most people's behavior.
- Social patterns can be observed in phenomena as diverse as the evolution of global markets to finding the right people to pull into a task force to address a critical problem before the end of the week.
- Social software is applicable inside the enterprise and outside, augmenting decision making, innovation and change management, for example, as well as influencing who buys which product in the broader marketplace.

Recommendations

- Think beyond traditional transactional and structured process support when approaching social software.
- Evaluate the broader business implications of improving social interactions.
- Our case studies and toolkits should be treated as prerequisite reading before making technology and vendor decisions.

ANALYSIS

Gartner analysts have published hundreds of pieces of research on social software over the last 24 months. Here is a subset that should be treated as prerequisite reading for IT (and some line of business) executives.

Background

There are two in-depth background notes from 2007 that put the social side of computing in perspective:

"Social Sciences Will Become More Important Than IT to IT Departments"

"Testing the Value of Social Relationship Support in the Enterprise"

Special Report on Business Impact — "The Business Impact of Social Computing, 2008"

This Gartner Special Report is a "must read." The top-level document by Sarner, Drakos and Prentice summarizes research on the impact of social computing on the following areas (there are also drill-down research notes on each of the listed subjects):

- IT functions (the CIO, IT operations, governance, identity management, data exposure, HR data and licensing and IP ownership) — seven separate notes.
- Departments and technical domains (marketing, corporate learning, sales, CRM processes, corporate learning and enterprise feedback management) — six separate notes.
- Vertical industries (government, higher education, media companies, the TV industry, life insurance, pension and annuity providers and manufacturing) — eight separate notes.

After reading the top-level document, CIO's should turn to "The Business Impact of Social Computing on the CIO" and other Business Impact pieces included in the Special Report.

Externally-Oriented Applications

"Using the Web to Improve the Customer Experience"

"Social Media Delivers Marketing Intelligence"

"Charting the Social Media Marketing Landscape"

"The Business Impact of Social Computing on Web Selling"

"Marketing Widgets and the New Discipline of Social Media Optimization"

"The Effects of Social Software on Your Employer Brand"

"Alumni Community Management Isn't Just for Universities and Consulting Firms"

"Tutorial: Real-World Examples of the Business Value of Social Software"

"The Emerging Market of Mobile Social Networks Offers New Business Opportunities"

Additional Industry-Focused Research

"Social Lending Will Challenge Bank Customer Relationships"

"New Retail Banking Vendors Bring Social Computing to the Savings Account"

Operational Best Practices

"Q&A: Symposium Frequently Asked Questions on Driving Social Software Use"

"The First 100 Days for Social Software and Collaboration Leaders"

"Consumer Drivers for Social Software Are Similar to Enterprise Requirements"

"Moving Social Software Deployments Beyond Experimentation Project Overview 2009"

"Three Potential Pitfalls of Corporate Social Networking"

"Mitigate Risk But Don't Smother Wiki and Social Software Deployments"

"Seven Ways to Succeed With Wikis and Social Software"

"Five Major Challenges Organizations Face Regarding Social Software"

"Seven Key Characteristics of a Good Purpose for Social Software"

"Five Case Study Examples of Social Network Analysis"

"Corporate Use of Social Networks Requires Multilayered Security Control"

"Best Practices in Information Security Awareness Training"

Toolkits and Case Studies

"Toolkit: Planning for Social Software Applications Using a Purpose Road Map"

"Toolkit: Establishing Policy for Social Software Applications"

"Toolkit: Planning for Social Software Applications Using a Purpose Road Map"

"Case Study: How Cisco Embraced Crowdsourcing With Its I-Prize Initiative"

"Case Study: Using Social Bookmarks to Improve Collaboration"

"Toolkit Case Study: DSF Uses Blogs to Exploit the Skills of its Distributed Workforce"

"Toolkit Case Study: Altitude's User-Centered Wiki Becomes a Mission-Critical Tool"

"Case Study: Dow's Formula for Social Software"

Markets, Vendors and Sourcing

"Magic Quadrant for Social Software"

"Dataquest Insight: Expect Significant Restructurings in the Enterprise Social Software Marketplace"

"The Enterprise Social Software Market Continues to Expand"

"Social Software Licensing and Pricing Trends"

"Open Source in Social Computing, 2008"

"SaaS in Team Collaboration and Social Software, 2008"

Technologies

"Hype Cycle for Social Software, 2008"

RECOMMENDED READING

"Roundup of Social Software Research, 1H08"

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