



Web 2.0 in the Workplace Today

January 2010

Report 1 in a series of 3

Overview

As web communications and collaboration have matured and become more and more integral to many people's lives so companies are now increasingly using such technologies to connect more effectively internally and externally with customers, suppliers and partners. In 2010, two-thirds (65%) of companies encourage or allow the use of web collaboration and social media at work, and over half (52%) think web collaboration is critical for the future success of their company.

As the traditional 9-5 way of working continues to fade, companies have to adjust to the new world order that Web 2.0 brings to the workplace, harnessing the benefits whilst being mindful of the potential threats. Whilst a staggering 62% of employees think that they should be entitled to social networking at work it is somewhat alarming that more than half (51%) of businesses believe that employees are oblivious to security concerns.

This report explores the good, the bad and the ugly of Web 2.0 from the perspective of managers and employees and highlights ways in which companies can better harness the benefits of Web 2.0 without losing control over people and content.

Employers enthusiastically embracing potential of Web 2.0

Employers are increasingly aware of the benefits of social media in the workplace, and the majority are now embracing the use of such tools. More than half (52%) of managers think web collaboration is critical for the

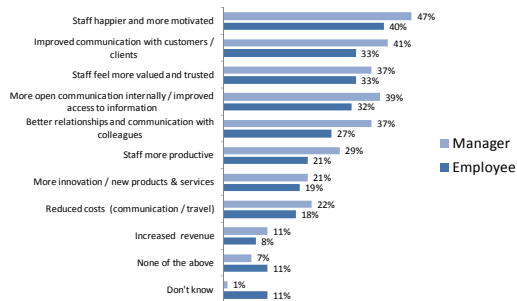


Figure 1 Benefits of Web 2.0 tools

future success of the company. Web 2.0 is seen as feeding into numerous aspects of business success, including increasing brand awareness (91%), generating new business (89%) and even improving employee productivity (88%). The most significant evidence of a shift in social networking mindset at a corporate level is the fact that 28% of office workers are now *expected* to maintain a social media presence for work.

While many companies are quick to highlight the benefits of social media in terms of

external client relations, employers also recognise the benefits Web 2.0 tools can have for improving employee relations (*fig. 1*). 47% of managers believe staff being 'happier and more motivated' as a result of using these tools in the workplace could have a beneficial impact on their business and 37% believe that employees feeling 'more valued and trusted' could have a similar impact.

Employers are increasingly harnessing the positives of Web 2.0, recognising the benefits to corporate image, client relations and staff morale, but they need to be careful not to let enthusiasm blind them to the risks inherent in the presence of Web 2.0 in the workplace.



Brave new world

Two-thirds (65%, *fig. 2*) of companies claim that the use of Web 2.0 is encouraged or allowed within their organisation, although interestingly only 39% of office workers consider that their companies promote or support the use of Web 2.0 to the same extent. Whilst companies appear to be taking a somewhat liberal approach to web collaboration and social networking, there is an evident disconnect between employer and employee perceptions of moderate or acceptable use and some confusion around what levels of company control are being exercised and communicated.

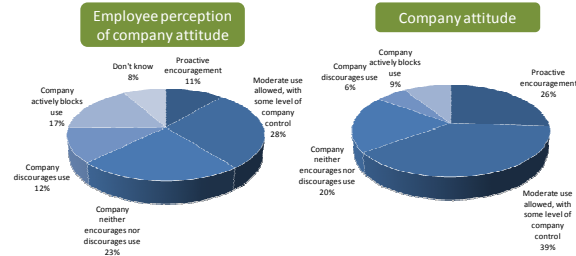


Figure 2 Attitude to web collaboration / social media

There are signs that employers' eagerness to be seen to be adopting an open or progressive attitude towards social media could, in fact, be

obscurating their view of some of the potential risks. 65% of managers believe that use of web collaboration and social media tools at work makes employees more productive (*fig. 3*), but only 43% of office workers say the same, suggesting that employer trust may be somewhat misplaced and that social *notworking* is still an issue in some corners of industry. The productivity pendulum seems to sway in both directions, however, with 66% of office workers saying that they make up the time they spend doing personal email and social networking at work by working later or through lunch.

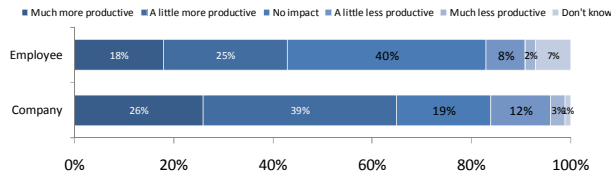


Figure 3 Impact of web-based collaboration and social media tools on productivity

Although 60% of managers say that they trust employees to use the Internet or social networking sites responsibly, there is some evidence that this trust may be a little misguided as a significant proportion of office workers admit to behaviour that might not be quite as welcome within their organisation. 44% say that they are happy to discuss work-related issues on social networking sites, and 25% have sent content via email or social networking sites that they later regretted. Somewhat incongruously, more than half (54%) of office workers would be uncomfortable with people from work seeing their private social networking information suggesting a need for more education amongst in the workplace about the risks associated with social networking sites.

33% of office workers are happy to use their own private social networks to the advantage of the business suggesting a new give-and-take dimension to employment in 2010.

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Web 2.0 and security: new approach needed?

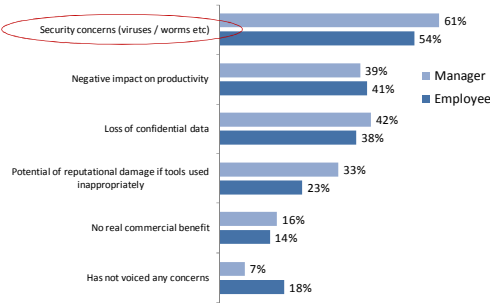


Figure 4 Impact of web-based collaboration and social media tools on productivity

While only 39% of employers state that their company has voiced concerns about social media having a negative impact on productivity (fig. 4), they are much more aware of the security threats posed by the presence of vulnerable applications on their network. Security is the biggest Web 2.0 concern, with 61% of companies having voiced concerns about security as a result of social media.

Even though employers may be over-confident in their employees' behaviour on social networks, most are all too aware that their security-savvy is somewhat lacking.

More than half (51%) of managers think employees are oblivious to security concerns when it comes to IT.

Security breaches are taking place as a result of increased internet usage at work, and not all firms are equipped to deal with the new threats presented by the latest technologies. 47% of companies have had at least one security incident as a result of internet application usage (fig. 5) and only 64% have specific tools in place to secure Web 2.0 exchanges. Current popular approaches to Web 2.0 security issues typically involve "big brother" style monitoring and locking down social networking sites. Such approaches may serve to erode employment relationships and diminish business value to be gained from web collaboration. It is a positive sign, therefore, that 64% of companies recognise that a new approach to security is needed in this era of web collaboration.

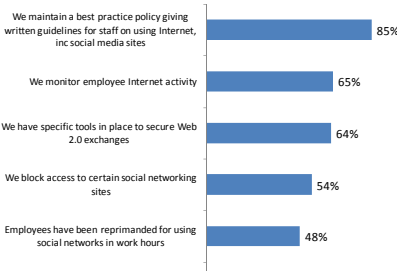


Figure 5 Statements about information security within organisation



Conclusion

While companies are aware of the threats to security posed by use of Web 2.0 tools in the workplace, not enough of them currently have facilities in place to combat them and simultaneously, employees appear to be blissfully ignorant.

It is undoubtedly to the credit of the employers surveyed that their approach to the use of Web 2.0 tools in the workplace is now largely open and enthusiastic. However, this enthusiasm must be tempered with a measured approach that takes into consideration the risks posed by threats to security, productivity and employee relationships. As web collaboration further matures, the companies that fully appreciate and manage the good, the bad and the ugly of Web 2.0 will be in the strongest position to optimise the value such tools can bring.

Methodology

Approximately 250 online interviews with office workers and 150 with managers were conducted in each of the UK, the US, Australia and Germany during January 2010. The survey was conducted by Loudhouse Research, an independent market research consultancy based in the UK, on behalf of Clearswift.