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Research Article

PROSPECTS OF SELF REGULATION ON SOCIAL NETWORKS

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Safoeva Sadokat Musoevna

Candidate Of Legal Sciences, Judge Of The Judicial Collegium For Civil Cases Of The Tashkent City Court, Uzbekistan

ABSTRACT

This article discusses the prospects of self-regulation in social networks. The introduction of social media improved the quality of our life. However, it has also led to concerns about privacy, cyberbullying, hate speech, and fake news. Governments and regulators have attempted to address these issues through legislation and policies, but these measures can be limited in their effectiveness. Self-regulation by social media companies and users themselves could provide a more flexible and responsive approach to addressing these challenges. This article examines the potential benefits and limitations of self-regulation in social networks, as well as the role of different stakeholders in promoting responsible use of social media platforms. It argues that self-regulation can play an important role in promoting online safety and fostering a healthy digital environment, but it requires ongoing monitoring and evaluation to ensure its effectiveness.

KEYWORDS

Self-regulation, online behavior, online safety, digital environment.

INTRODUCTION

Social networks have transformed the way individuals interact with each other, providing a platform for people to share their thoughts, opinions, and experiences with a global audience. However, this freedom of expression has also led to the proliferation of fake news, hate speech, cyberbullying, and other

forms of harmful content that can have serious consequences for individuals and society as a whole. In response to these challenges, there is growing interest in the prospects of self-regulation in social networks. Self-regulation involves setting guidelines and standards for acceptable behavior on social media

platforms and empowering users to report any violations. This approach seeks to balance the need for free expression with the need to protect users from harmful content by encouraging responsible behavior among all stakeholders. This article will explore the potential benefits and challenges associated with self-regulation in social networks and assess its prospects for promoting a safer online environment.

METHODOLOGY

In this article, we will conduct an extensive review of relevant literature to identify existing research on self-regulation on social networks, including academic articles, reports, and policy documents. Also, based on our analysis findings, we will develop recommendations for policymakers, regulators, industry experts, and users regarding how best to implement effective self-regulation measures on social networks.

RESULTS

Self-regulation on social networks has emerged as an important issue in recent years. The present study aimed to investigate the prospects of self-regulation on social media, focusing on its potential benefits and challenges. The results indicate that self-regulation can have positive effects on social networks, including promoting better online behavior, reducing cyberbullying, and enhancing privacy protection. However, several challenges were identified, such as the difficulty of enforcing self-regulatory measures and the potential for conflicts between different stakeholders.

DISCUSSION

Social media is growing in popularity at a huge rate, maybe, its prevalence has peaked so far. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and other social media platforms

have transformed how we communicate, share information, and get in touch with people around the world. However, with their increasing impact comes the responsibility to regulate the content that is shared on these websites. Self-regulation on social networks refers to the efforts made by individuals, organizations or communities to monitor and control their own online behavior on these platforms. The prospects of self-regulation on social networks are numerous, some of which will be analyzed later in this paper.

Self-regulation on social networks has several benefits. Firstly it allows companies to set their own standards for acceptable content rather than relying on government regulations which can be slow-moving and rigid. Secondly, it gives users a sense of control over what they see on their feeds by allowing them to report inappropriate content.

However, there are also challenges associated with self-regulation. One of the main challenges is ensuring that companies adhere to ethical standards consistently without compromising their business models or revenue streams. Another challenge is ensuring that reporting mechanisms are effective in identifying inappropriate content without infringing upon users' privacy rights.

For many individuals, there can be several reasons why it is important to self-regulate on social media. These may range from avoiding law-breaking acts to maintaining a good reputation. Here are the reasons why it is important for individuals to self-regulate on social media:

Protecting one's privacy. By self-regulating our actions and information sharing on social media, we can protect our personal information and prevent it from being misused or exploited. Self-regulation has been the primary approach for protecting user privacy on

social media platforms. However, it has not always been effective, as some companies have prioritized their interests over users' privacy rights. Government regulation could be a solution to ensure privacy protection. Some countries have already implemented laws such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in Europe or the California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA) in the United States to regulate how companies collect and use their users' data. Implementing regulations may force social media companies to comply with strict standards that protect user privacy rights. This would make it easier for users to feel safe and secure while using online platforms.

Maintaining a positive image. Maintaining a positive image on social media is essential as it can affect how others perceive us. People may judge us based on our online presence and behavior. Therefore, individuals often self-regulate their behavior to maintain a positive image and avoid negative consequences such as losing followers or job opportunities.

Avoiding online harassment. Self-regulation on social media can also help prevent online harassment, bullying, and trolling. By being mindful of what they post and share online, people can reduce the chances of attracting unwanted attention or comments.

Building trust. Self-regulating on social media can help us build trust with our followers or audience by demonstrating that we are responsible and accountable for our actions online.

Avoiding legal issues: Self-regulating on social media is important for avoiding legal issues such as defamation or copyright infringement. By being aware of the laws surrounding social media use and exercising caution when posting content, individuals can avoid costly legal battles down the line.

Also, for companies and big businesses, maintaining self-regulation on social networks is crucial. The reasons may be the followings:

Protecting the company's reputation. By self-regulating, companies can monitor the content posted on their social media accounts and ensure that it aligns with their brand image and values. This helps in maintaining a consistent brand image, which is crucial for building a strong reputation. Also, social media allows customers to share their feedback and experiences with a company publicly. By self-regulating, companies can monitor this feedback and address any negative comments or complaints promptly. This shows that the company cares about its customers and is committed to providing excellent service. Like ordinary people, self-regulation on social media helps companies build trust with their audience by showing transparency and authenticity, which will be elaborated later in this article.

Avoiding legal issues. Self-regulation on social media can help companies avoid legal issues by ensuring that they comply with the relevant laws and regulations governing their industry. This means that companies need to be aware of the content they post on social media platforms, including the wording used in marketing campaigns and advertising materials. Moreover, self-regulation involves monitoring and moderating user-generated content to ensure that it is appropriate and does not violate any laws or regulations. This can help prevent legal issues such as defamation, copyright infringement, or privacy breaches.

Building trust with customers: By self-regulating, companies show that they are responsible and trustworthy, which can help build positive relationships with customers. Self-regulation on social media helps businesses build trust with their audience

by showing transparency and authenticity. By being open about their policies, practices, and products/services, companies can establish themselves as trustworthy and reliable brands.

Maintaining consistency. Self-regulation on social media can be crucial for companies to maintain consistency in their messaging and branding. By establishing clear guidelines for their social media presence and training employees on those guidelines, companies can ensure that their messaging is consistent across all platforms and that their brand is represented in a cohesive manner.

At this moment, a simple question may arise in our mind: if this “self-regulation policy” is so important and it should be carried out, then we should do it, but how? There are some suggestions on how companies and individuals can self-regulate themselves on social networks.

First of all companies, sometimes even individuals, should develop clear social media policies. The first step in applying this method is to identify the goals and objectives of the company. This will help the owners of determine what types of content are appropriate for their social media channels and what type of behavior is expected from employees or members. Next, companies should establish guidelines for posting on social media, including topics that should be avoided and how to handle negative comments or reviews. Creating a tone of voice or messaging framework to ensure all posts are aligned with the company’s brand’s personality and values.

Secondly, it is crucial for all companies to monitor online activity regularly. Regular monitoring of online activity can help companies and individuals identify potential issues early on. They should keep a close eye

on comments, mentions, reviews, and posts that mention their brand or name.

Thirdly, responding promptly and professionally is also one of the ways for companies to self-regulate themselves on social networks. Companies and individuals should respond to comments or messages promptly with a professional tone. They ought to avoid engaging in heated debates or negative interactions online, which may cause taking legal actions by the users of that social media platform.

One more way of self-regulation is respecting privacy. Respecting privacy on social networks is important for both companies and individuals. Companies must comply with various privacy laws and regulations to protect their customers’ personal information. They can also self-regulate by implementing policies that outline how they collect, store, and use customer data on social networks. Individuals can also take steps to protect their privacy on social networks by adjusting their privacy settings and being careful about what information they share online. They should also be aware of the risks associated with sharing sensitive information on social networks, such as identity theft or cyberbullying.

Maintaining transparency is also one of the ways of self-regulation. Honesty and transparency are essential in maintaining trust with followers or customers. Companies and individuals should disclose any conflicts of interest or sponsored content clearly.

Educating employees: Companies should educate their employees about the social media policies to ensure that they understand the guidelines for representing the company online. Businesses can offer training sessions or workshops to educate their employees on the appropriate use of social media in the workplace.

This can include topics such as privacy, confidentiality, and legal considerations.

Overall, self-regulation requires discipline, consistency, integrity and a good understanding of the platform's guidelines as well as legal requirements regarding data protection laws among many other things depending on the country of residence or business operation.

In Uzbekistan, there are not any normative legal acts that regulate self-regulation process by companies and individuals on social media. However, the fundamental norm for these legal relations will be set out in the new Civil Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Such a norm is indicated in the article 167 of the edited version of the code. According to this article, the right of obligation and other rights defined in the law as digital rights and whose content and conditions of implementation are determined in accordance with the information system rules are considered digital rights. Also, realization, disposal of the digital right, including giving it to another person, pledging, setting a ban in another way or restricting the disposal of the digital right can be done only in the information system without recourse to third parties.

According to the part 3 of article 167, the following norm was established:

“The person who has the opportunity to dispose of this right in accordance with the rules of the information system is recognized as the owner of the digital right. Another person may be recognized as the owner of digital rights on the grounds and in cases provided for by law”.

As we all know, the person who can dispose of his digital rights are the owners of these rights. The mentioned rights can be, for example, the phone number information with which people register

themselves on social media platform. The abovementioned provision protects this and such other (digital) rights of people. Because of this, we can safely say that the basic norm for self-regulation of both companies and individuals on social media has been established. However, this may not always bring the best result and further establishment of specific rules on self-regulation on social media may be required.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, self-regulation on social networks is a promising prospect that can bring about several benefits for users and society as a whole. The ability of individuals to monitor their behavior and adhere to ethical standards while using social media can promote a safe, healthy, and responsible online culture. It can also provide an effective solution to the growing concerns of privacy violations, misinformation, cyberbullying, and other negative consequences associated with social networking platforms. However, self-regulation alone may not be sufficient in addressing all the challenges posed by social media. It should be complemented by strong government policies, industry standards, and user education programs to ensure better outcomes for everyone involved. Ultimately, the success of self-regulation on social networks depends on the willingness of users to take responsibility for their actions and hold themselves accountable for their behavior online.

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