

The role of Social Network Service (SNS) in protecting citizens' personal information – Yong Wan Ju

Introduction

This position paper aims to introduce potential threats for Social Network Service (SNS) such as Twitter and Facebook, and possible countermeasures by the Internet intermediaries. SNS means the Internet based service that is focused on building and reflecting social relations among people who share interests and activities. With the expansion of Mobile Internet, SNS has seen a rapid growth in its use to the extent of surpassing the number of e-mail users. The distinctive features of SNS are as follows: First, the basic premise of SNS are information release and reliability as it brings social networks from the real world to the cyber space. Second, SNS is causing a paradigm shift in the political activities and businesses world. Third, demand on Mobile SNS is in the stiff increase as smart phones are being widely used. Lastly, an open-platform for SNS offers more convenience and network scalability.

Threats to SNS

There are potential threats mainly in two perspectives: 1. Privacy -- Personal information on SNS can be used for defamation or intimidation as counterfeited or falsified personal information is easily accessible. When SNS has a location based information, criminals can make illicit use of it after hijacking personal account or information, with highly intelligent technology of Spear-phishing. Furthermore, company's profile or specific person's information is exposed to defamation or slandering. 2. Security - a knock-on effect on virus and spam-mail for in SNS is relatively high because the nature of SNS requires mutual trust. Following the penetration of the smart phones in the market, personal informations are subjected to leakage and hacking from Mobile SNS.

Statements on How to Minimize Threats

For the potential threats mentioned above, three countermeasures are suggested. 1. SNS users should recognize the dangers of misuse from excessive personal information release and put the countermeasures into practice. Preventive basic measures should be taken by updating Anti-virus programs and SNS related education and guidelines should be promoted. If security is violated, SNS users should report to the concerned organization and make the most out of damage control measures offered by SNS providers. 2. SNS providers should offer technical measures to prevent information leakage and misuse because they collect and accumulate a great deal of personal information. Technical measures of monitoring and filtering system against hacking, spamming and defamation should be provided. Also, efforts for strengthening the self-regulated privacy protection are necessary by getting agreement from users. 3. the government should carefully consider a legal initiative as a last resort: provide a minimum safety system within the limits, without hindering the SNS industry. For example, the government can modify laws and regulations to protect personal information, for instance, having personal information destroyed by the law, when a membership is canceled. Education and Awareness on SNS users' risks should be developed.