RESEARCH WHITE PAPER May 2012

The Future of Meetings

The Future of Social Media for Meetings

The Future of Meetings study is published in partnership with The Hospitality Sales and Marketing Association International (HSMAI) Foundation.

The Future of Meetings – Overview

In 2002, Yahoo! Mail was five years old; iPhones hadn't been created; and Facebook and Twitter were non-existent. Ten years later, more people access the internet via mobile phones than computers; social media is a way of life; and the average consumer has more than one email address. The world is changing more quickly than anyone could have possibly imagined, with the technology explosion as the driving force behind change.

As the meetings sector makes plans for the next two to five years, all of the stakeholders are working hard to figure out what the future holds and how to best prepare. Having a clear picture of what to expect is a particular challenge for the sector due to the diversity of its members and the existence of constant change in the marketplace.

Those involved in planning or executing meetings come from a host of diverse industries, each with different imperatives. The needs of meeting planners and designers, venue managers, speakers, exhibitors and suppliers are very different. The expanding scope of meeting types (e.g., conferences, trade shows, educational sessions, motivational gatherings, conventions and gala business events), even makes an issue of defining what constitutes a "meeting."

To address these issues, Maritz Research has undertaken an extensive project to examine the future outlook for the meetings sector through a combination of primary and secondary research. The goal of The Future of Meetings research series is to integrate these individual pieces of information into a cohesive story. A lot of information has already been published in this area. Our purpose is to synthesize this information and share the collective findings in four succinct white papers.

Description of the Research Process

Primary research was conducted through an online, qualitative survey of 1,612 meetings sector stakeholders. This study, the most comprehensive of its kind, examined four primary areas: technology, meeting design, suppliers and venues, and social media. The online study surveyed 1,612 stakeholders who worked in the meetings and events sector. Forty-six percent (46%) of the respondents currently work as meeting planners, with another 43 percent currently employed as suppliers to the meetings industry. The remainder represented a diverse group including speakers, attendees, and procurement agents.

Unlike most surveys, this process asked the survey participants to generate their own thoughts and ideas about the future in response to a series of open-ended questions. The average length of the survey was more than 20 minutes, but some reported spending several hours to complete the survey. The fact that so many took the time to express their thoughts in such detail demonstrates the high amount of engagement in the topic.

Additionally, numerous in-depth interviews, both formal and informal, were conducted with sector experts and commentators. Maritz also conducted an extensive literature review to reconcile key findings from other credible resources to complement the primary research.

How to listen to a thousand people at once

The survey questions allowed stakeholders to share their predictions for the future of meetings in their own words, and to talk about the things they considered most important. Through use of text analysis software, the study "listened" to all of the feedback from the 1612 participants, and used this feedback to create a classification structure (taxonomy). This automated text analysis allowed systematic analysis of stakeholder comments and identified key themes and insights contained in the comments. The analysis also identified relationships between topics and discerned the sentiment of the comments. The text analysis software, based on extensive knowledge and experience with natural language processing, was supported by Maritz' extensive understanding of the meetings sector. In the very simplest terms, this analysis consolidated similar responses together using common keywords and phrases to provide a snapshot of the group's collective conversation and allowed distillation of the story of what these stakeholders predict for the future of meetings in the primary areas of inquiry.

In addition to this large scale, qualitative study of meeting sector stakeholders, Maritz also conducted an extensive review of published academic reports, articles, interviews and other research studies on the future of meetings. Over 50 hours of video, webinar and audio presentations and interviews were reviewed.

Top level results

The text analysis yielded ten phrases that represented the respondents' most popular themes. In order of frequency of mention, these themes are:

- Integrating technology (22 percent)
- Designing the meeting experience (17 percent)
- Cost and value (17 percent)
- Value of face-to-face meetings (9 percent)
- Meeting designer's job evolving (8 percent)
- Pre and post use of social media (7 percent)
- Role of technology and social media (7 percent)
- Meeting venues need technology (7 percent)
- Sustainability (3 percent)
- Generations (2 percent)

The white papers begin exploring these themes as an initial point of investigation and elaboration, although there are quite a number of other interesting comments that emerged apart from these ten.

The Future of Meetings White Papers

The information that emerged from these research efforts was combined to form an overall story about the future of meetings. The findings are divided into four white papers, one for each of the prominent themes of the survey. In some cases, there was overlap. For example, technology was a theme that was an undercurrent that went across all four papers. This serves as an introduction for all four papers. The paper presented here is ***The Future of Social Media for Meetings***.

The survey questions allowed stakeholders to share their predictions for the future of meetings in their own words, and to talk about the things they considered most important.

Introduction – For Better or Worse

The use of social media for meetings is a natural combination. The purpose of meetings and social networking alike is to bring people together for a shared purpose.

Social media is viewed as a powerful and potentially game-changing communication method for meetings, which represents a double-edged sword for meeting planners that cannot be ignored. While it offers an inexpensive and effective way to reach a large audience, planning and resources are needed to use it successfully and meeting planners will need to come to terms with its uncontrollable nature.

Regardless if meeting planners readily embrace the use of social media for their purposes; it is a common part of the day-to-day lives of many attendees. Social media, like many other aspects of 21st century culture, is a "Pandora's box" of possibilities that has already been opened. As such, it is critical to understand both the benefits and problems associated with its existence.

The Discussion

In the survey, key meetings stakeholders discussed the use, and changing role, of social media. One large benefit frequently mentioned is the use of social media as both a communication tool during meetings, and a means to extend the life of meetings afterwards. Observations typically centered on the use of the social networking sites Facebook and LinkedIn, and the micro-blog site Twitter; collectively referred to as the "Big 3." Also receiving multiple mentions were the collaborative 'wikis'; the communication tools offered by Skype; and to a lesser extent, the use of blogs, podcasts and video sharing sites.

Social Media for Meeting Marketing

Creating Buzz

The use of social media for the marketing of meetings will only increase in the future – but stakeholders point out that, while it will remain a part of the overall marketing mix, it will not become the exclusive approach used to reach meeting participants. The sector is predicted to mirror other businesses as it strives to get a handle on how social media fits into this changing marketing mix.

"Cost and value" was one of the top ten themes mentioned by participants in the Maritz Future of Meetings survey. The affordability of social media for marketing and promotion was a key component of this discussion. Some specific quotes included:

> *"Social networks allow for broader reach, widened audience, lower costs of advertising and promotion.*
>
> *"Social networks are one of the best marketing tools in the modern world. They are cheap, easy and reach huge amounts of audience."*

Using social media to create marketing "buzz" was another emergent theme. Key stakeholders spoke of creating "buzz" in terms that suggested a cat-and-mouse approach. They talked about "teasing" and "leaking information" to target audiences. [S1]

One large benefit frequently mentioned is the use of social media as both a communication tool during meetings, and a means to extend the life of meetings afterwards.

Marketing meetings through social media is described as "word-of-mouth" publicity by both the survey respondents and other sector commentators. Promoting by tweeting, pushing Facebook page mentions, and encouraging bloggers to comment on a meeting are considered marketing trends for meetings in the future.

> *"I believe that social networking is the core of our business in today's life. Word of mouth has always been the best marketing out there and today without it I believe you are sunk."*

> *"It used to be word of mouth, now someone can put a comment on a blog, Facebook or Twitter about an upcoming meeting or tell about a meeting they attended and so many more people will read this."*

Cutting through the Clutter
However, it is not enough to just promote. The "buzz" will only go so far. The current use of social media to market meetings tends to focus on the broadcast of information rather than the creation of a dialogue – universally considered to be a "bad approach" by those outside of the meetings sector. [S2]

Actively seeking to be of benefit or use to participants is what is at the heart of social networking. This is what meetings professionals will have to do in the future to successfully market meetings via social media. Brian Bruce, a hospitality technology marketing expert, comments, "As social media becomes more prevalent, it is the responsibility of everyone using it to create remarkable content – I think the biggest problem is that people are just throwing out tweets of just 'things'…" [S3]

The conversation outside the meetings sector also touches upon the increasing volume of content appearing via social media – and how this is creating a challenge for marketing professionals. A recent article on new online marketing models points out that, "evolving habits and the huge amount of content currently available to consumers means cut-through is more difficult than ever to achieve." [S4] Several in the survey research commented:

> *"As social networks grow and the speed of information increases I also see that people have more offered to them and we have to be even more creative to make sure the attendee keeps with our thread."*

> *"The social media is already getting overloaded. It will require new creative techniques to rise above the noise to be noticed…so many ways - building of community around events"*

> *"I see social media as a driving force for our industry. That being said….I do hope people/companies will begin to stop using it to promote themselves and use it more as a way to build communities and share information."*

Before Meetings - Personal Use vs. Meeting Platforms

While meeting organizers and stakeholders will be implementing formal social media programs to an even greater extent in the future, the fact is that participants are already using the tools informally. [S5] Before a meeting, participants are planning personal get-togethers and discussing which sessions to attend. They are prioritizing their attendance, and determining which days to attend, based on others' opinions and their availability for networking. The ability to reach one's extended network with less effort is providing the opportunity to plan a personalized experience at a meeting, while bypassing the official social media-based groups, broadcasts, and discussions in their decision-making process.

We can predict that participants will increasingly make use of social media for their own personal purposes in the future, and the nature of meetings is changing through the "group communication" that is facilitated by social media.

> *"Social networking allows for people to have pre-conversations before the face-to-face interaction takes part."*

> *"Social media can help to set up an introduction prior to a conference, allowing attendees to engage in conversation (through FB or Twitter) prior to ever meeting each other."*

Some commentators suggest that, "Using these kinds of informal channels to communicate about formal events is beginning to blur the once rigid line between business and social events, encouraging attendees to connect on a more personal level than ever before." [S9b] They also point to the changing dynamic between organizers and participants "…the power is no longer with the meeting planner; it's now the audience and the attendees who are in charge." [S6]

During Meetings – Tool or Distraction?

Many held strong opinions that the best way to connect with people is face-to-face. However, audiences at face-to-face meetings are simultaneously using social media.

The use of social media is causing at least some of a meeting's audience to be "elsewhere" during the face-to-face interaction. Opinions on the use of mobile devices at meetings to communicate through social media is divided. There are sector stakeholders who feel this practice is distracting and goes against the purpose of being at a face-to-face meeting, while others feel the technology can be used to increase participant engagement.

Tool

Segment stakeholders report that use of real-time feedback to meeting organizers and speakers via social media is on the rise and will continue to be so in the future.

This increasing use of social media during meetings means that many speakers will have to develop new skills in handling instant and quick-fired questions [S7]. Commentators discuss the increasing need for speakers to be responsive in an instant. "Attendees expect speakers to adapt their message to whatever direction the audience likes, which makes Tweets and texts essential tools for attendees to interact with speakers and contribute to the dialogue." [S8]

While meeting organizers and stakeholders will be implementing formal social media programs to an even greater extent in the future, the fact is that participants are already using the tools informally.

Social media use, now and in the future, is discussed by both within and outside the survey as providing meeting organizers with the ability to respond to concerns during a meeting, improving the participant experience and minimizing post-meeting negative evaluations.

> *"You see meetings already using social media technology, acknowledging everyone is on their blackberry or PDA and best to stay with the trend and use the technology to make meetings more interesting and worth the attendee's time."*

Events and tradeshow technology analyst, Corbin Ball comments, "Savvy meeting planners and venue managers are now monitoring the event tweet stream as the fastest way of being notified of a problem during an event." [S9] One savvy meeting organizer quoted on this point in an article states plainly, "I don't want people to go home and write about how cold they were or that the food was horrible. I want to know those things at the time so I can do something about it." [S10]

This idea was echoed by survey respondents, who add that this use of social media increases the workload of meeting organizers and could lead to the need for additional staffing or outsourcing requirements.

> *"Immediate connections will require planners to think quick on their feet."*

> *"…and already companies are present who will monitor activity so that organizations can quickly respond to any negative issues by trying to rectify or improve what could impact their event."*

Distraction

Despite some benefits, sector stakeholders are not entirely positive about the use of social media during meetings. Both survey respondents and commentators expressed particular concerns with social media being in the face-to-face meeting room.

The use, or misuse, of "Tweetwalls" (e.g., monitors displaying a live Twitter feed in a meeting room) is one such concern. The display of instant comments while a speaker is on the stage can result in inappropriate negative comments taking away from the presentation. As one commentator said, "it can be worse than high school." [S11]

Jim Ruszala, senior director of Maritz Travel points out that "Tweetwalls are rare today in terms of use within presentations. They are often located in break rooms or lounge areas to get people talking, thinking and heading back to what they might be missing."

One solution is the monitoring and editing of the live Twitter feed, albeit a form of "control" that cuts against the open nature of social media usage. As one commentator said, "If you dedicate someone to that role, you can filter what's being displayed and take out negative remarks or comments that shouldn't be there."[S12]

Others feel the use of social media during meetings does not suit everyone's learning style. One person wrote, "With all those interjections and forced interactions with the physical and tweeting audience, they lost me, someone who had come to learn new information and not just to interact. I found the regular back and forth to be a total and utter distraction." [S13] Survey respondents commented on this as well:

> *"I feel there is some push back to Twitter, etc."*

"Twitter can kill a session if someone in the session tweets that it stinks."

"Instant feedback is important, but so are thoughts that take time to ruminate. New trends are exciting and they up the game, but they need to be grounded in solid communication principles."

"I do think there are some concerns we are going to want to look at. One is the chance that my responding means I am not listening so the way information flows may have to be adjusted, and the second is the possibility of abuse by participants. It offers the chance to speak without having to be accountable - not always a good thing."

During Meetings - Remote Attendance

Another trend is increased external participation at social media-enabled meetings. Social media allows for participation in meetings without physically attending it. Streamed video supported by Twitter feeds are described as "just like being there." [S14].

"Had I missed (the meeting) I could have gone to the webpage and watched the k eynote speakers and many of the sessions online. By following on Twitter, you could get a pretty good glimpse at the sessions and attendees overall experience."

While this will increase the overall potential audience for meetings in the future, there are a number of potential downsides to this trend; most notably the potential to decrease the size of the attendance at the actual meeting.

It also presents the danger of a meeting being dominated by those not physically in the room. A recent study noted that some meetings had "eight times more people tweeting about the meeting than were registered to attend." [S15] This neutral fact does have implications that a meeting's tweets can, in the words of one commentator, "be hijacked by people who aren't even attending the event." [S16]

After Meetings – Don't Lose Steam

Post-meeting marketing, or extending the life of a meeting, is not as challenging as competing for attention through pre-meeting marketing efforts. Participants have attended the meeting and will likely want to keep engaged afterwards; additionally those who were unable to attend a meeting will access post-meeting content – if made available.

However, post-meeting marketing is not considered to be as widely, or effectively, capitalized on as it should be. One view is that "event organizers simply lose steam" [S17]. This is a missed opportunity since, as one commentator described, "Post-meeting marketing can be as simple as event photos on Flickr and LinkedIn and Twitter feeds pushing people to the photos and testimonials on [the] updated website – available for people to forward to each other." [S18] Survey respondents comment:

"Social networks allow meeting planners to extend the life and value of the event."

"I see a great opportunity to market and promote events through social networks. I also see an opportunity to extend the life of a conference by sharing information among attendees post conference keeping the meeting alive."

Social media allows for participation in meetings without physically attending it. Streamed video supported by Twitter feeds are described as "just like being there."

"Broad-based marketing via social media is good on the front end, but belonging and being one of the group during a meeting or post meeting is of value and can breed loyalty."

The topic of increased workload was another theme. Both respondents, and others outside of the survey research, recognized that social media marketing will increasingly lend itself to hiring outside suppliers, or outsourcing.

Speaking directly about post-meeting marketing, Sam Lippman, president of Integrated Show Management & Marketing said, "If you have a lean operation, you're putting every ounce of your energy into producing an event…If you don't hand (it) over to somebody else who has the energy and the expertise to then do the post-show marketing and communications, things will not get done - in time. And that just doesn't cut it anymore."[S19]

Segment stakeholders agree that post-meeting feedback from participants via social media, whether it is positive or negative, offers engagement/marketing opportunities.
- Positive conversations are viewed as generating "buzz you can't buy" [S20] and "potentially creat[e] a public record of the ripple your event made in the hearts and minds of your fans." [S21]
- When complaints about a meeting appear in social media conversations, emerging media consultant, Ross Marcus explained the opportunity as, "you have the chance to reach out and ask why they didn't like it and how you can fix it for next time... (they) will see you are listening to them, and there's a shift in how they talk to you." [S22]

A crucial point for the future is the danger in treating social media conversations more as broadcasts than dialogues; not actually listening and responding is the largest mistake made in using social media. [S23]

Audience Usage Trends

Who is using social media, whether it is to personalize a meeting experience or attend remotely? Opinions are consistent that social media is most often used by the younger generation (e.g., "Millennials" or "Gen-Yers"). Both survey respondents and commentators comment that use of social media is a requirement to attracting a younger demographic. [S24]

There has been a divide among meetings participants – the older generations not being tolerant of the personal use of mobile devices at meetings and a younger one obsessed with using them. [S25] However, this is said to be changing.

A recent panel discussion with students advised, "…be careful if you are sitting next to a Gen Y attendee during a presentation and are tempted to check your emails or text messages. According to the student panel, personal communication devices should not be used during a meeting as they are considered to be a distraction…unless you are taking notes on the program!" [S26]

Furthermore, at a conference session titled, "Battle of The Generations" one participant stated "I can't stand Twitter – I still Tweet though – everyone expects me to – there is a certain expectation for my generation." At this same session, it should be noted that 74% of the participants answered "No" to the question, "Has technology/social media driven an irreconcilable wedge in the gap between the generations?" [S27]

A recent study points to a trend that those over 50 years of age are increasingly joining social media sites, [S28] "The idea that it's something only for the cool kids or early adopters is fading as every main social site is showing exponential usage growth in every demographic." [S29]

Those using social media for meetings will have to consider their diverse participants. Knowing the audience is important, not necessarily as different generations, but rather as individuals with different communication, learning and interaction styles.

Meeting participants are as unique as the meetings themselves. As such, there is a need to understand their specific needs and objectives and customize social media use accordingly.

"Social networking helps with marketing but also adds another layer of information for people to sift through to find the facts. I think that the success of it depends on the audience".

"Right now in today's age the use of social media and the old ways of phone calls and emails will all have to continue to play a role, the older generation is not all on board with Facebook, tweeting and texting, but they are getting there - simply best to know your audience."

Decline in Content "Creators"
A 2010 Forrester Research study tracking the use of social media found that there is a trend toward fewer users actually creating social media content. The implication for the use of social media for meetings is that there will be fewer collaborators as we move into the future. [S30]

This is supported by a recent study of Twitter use at meetings that showed that 35 percent of participants were responsible for generating 80 percent of the tweets about a meeting. [S46] This does compare to the general population - a study outside of the meetings sector found that 10 percent of users were responsible for 90 percent of tweets. [S31]

Unless trends change, social media for meetings has to be monitored closely to ensure that a small number of individuals are not wielding a disproportionate amount of influence in the collaborative creative process.

In addition to the concern that fewer individuals are contributing to collaborative efforts, the quality of the content is being discussed by sector stakeholders as an issue impacting meetings in the future. The study of Twitter use at meetings revealed that, "the vast majority (91 percent) of tweets were what the survey organizers labelled as "neutral," meaning they were not specifically about the event or were asking for more information." [S32]

The impact of a few individuals starting conversations that widely broadcast positive or negative sentiments is an unavoidable characteristic of social media, but in areas such as meeting content development, it may need to be monitored.

A 2010 Forrester Research study tracking the use of social media found that there is a trend toward fewer users actually creating social media content. The implication for the use of social media for meetings is that there will be fewer collaborators as we move into the future.

7

Expanding Social Media Landscape

There are diverging views among sector stakeholders regarding the future of the major social media sites (e.g.,., the "Big 3" including Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn) and of social media sites in general. Respondents in the Maritz Future of Meetings survey research expressed uncertainty about the evolution of these sites and which ones will offer the greatest value to the meetings sector in the future.

Social networking sites are currently in a state of flux – with reports of their memberships going up and down, and making regular changes that could impact the membership of those using the sites. [S33] As one sector commentator writes, "It's difficult to ask these tech-savvy planners what the next big trend in social media is for events because, to them, the future is now—and when you're a so-called early adopter, changes come fast and furious." [S34]

Sector commentators report the social media landscape is expanding rapidly. Numerous specialized communities are emerging on a regular basis. In the span of three months, Microsoft, a shareholder in Facebook, purchased Skype; the Google+ social networking site was launched; and Facebook and Skype formed a partnership. [S35]

The emergence of Google+ is being described as "game-changing." The implications of the integration of all Google offers, from search, to voice, to Gmail, to YouTube… "…are huge. Instead of creating a social network "destination" on the Internet, Google can, in-fact, turn the whole of the Internet social."[S36]

Even before the launch of Google+ as a key competitor to Facebook, venture capitalist Mark Suster of GRP Partners predicted that Facebook would not have a monopoly position in the future, adding, "When you're on Facebook you're not on the Internet—you're on the InterNOT." [S37]

More importantly for the future use of social media for meetings is the expanding number of social media platforms designed to host online meetings. For example,,, Google+ offers " +Hangout" – a video chat service for up to ten people. [S38]

The implication for meeting planners is the potential for options overload. In the absence of a single standard group of services, or even simply a "Big 3" anymore, meetings professionals will need to accept that diversity of social media usage will be the norm.

Portable Social Graph

A portable and more sophisticated "social graph" is predicted to emerge from the fragmented social media landscape of the future, which will make dispersion of individuals across various social networking sites even easier and potentially provide meeting planners with access to a wealth of attendee personal information.

"Social graph" is a term that was coined by the CEO of Facebook and is described as "a digital map of your personal identity" [S39] It was initially envisioned as your Facebook profile and has evolved to include different social media profiles (graphs) or the concept of a portable and multi-layered profile.

| 8

The conversation on the portability of the social graph directly takes aim at Facebook's "monopoly" on many individuals' highly developed digital personalities. Making the social graph portable breaks down the barrier to switching to other social networking sites and experts believe that the social graph will be truly portable in the near future. [S40]

The portability of the social graph is mentioned in a recent research study on the future of hotels. In "Hotels 2020 – Beyond Segmentation," the portable and much more refined social graph of the future is reported will provide a seamless customer "identity" that hotels, airlines, travel agents and others will access to personalize a guest's travel and accommodations. [S41]

In the future, meeting participants will derive benefits from this envisioned social graph. On the simplest level, a portable and detailed social graph would operate like an "auto-fill" feature for contact form data already being used on websites. The portable "super social graph" of the future moves beyond just a network of connections and could evolve into a personal information "passport" containing information such as dietary requirements, preferred learning styles, content preferences and meeting attendance histories.

You Gotta Have a Plan – and Resources

Respondents in the survey research, as well as sector commentators and experts, discuss the unavoidable double-edged sword of social media use. It will spread news, good or bad, with equal speed. It is permanent and unavoidable – choosing not to participate or even be aware of conversations does not diminish their impact.

The emerging importance of having a social media strategy, or policies, is an important topic of industry discussion. A recent article [S42], discussing examples of how complaints initiated in social media were poorly handled, used the phrase "negative social footprint" to describe the feared result of a poorly managed social media interaction. The article points to the need for organizations to have a plan for dealing with these types of interactions and advices to "let the public record you leave be gracious and resolution-oriented."

"With Twitter, Facebook and other means of media the message gets out in seconds good or bad."

"Social media can be used to garner more attention and brand recognition. It can also harm them if there is something negative posted."

"I think meetings are more viral through the social network. People are going to be able to share their experience and opinions more openly, regardless if good or bad."

The need for resources for successful social media marketing is a topic that extends beyond the meetings sector. When discussing corporate marketing, the Gartner research firm recently pointed out that, "Many organizations are lured into social initiatives because of the ease of implementation and simplicity of the tools…These schemes often fail to deliver the desired results (and) yield unexpected resource demands…Firms must decide how efforts relate to staff…Training employees, hiring necessary expertise…"[S43]

Respondents in the survey research, as well as sector commentators and experts, discuss the unavoidable double-edged sword of social media use. It will spread news, good or bad, with equal speed.

Stakeholders in the survey research brought up this issue as well:

> *"A whole new set of jobs and businesses. Just look at the number of consultants who now specialize in social media strategies for meetings!"*

> *"I think planners need to start thinking as marketers. Marketing an event via social media takes time and planning."*

> *"Often, the value delivered through technology is related to viral marketing and communication management. Very few planners have this type of background to call upon. They do not have the understanding of the communication goals to determine how to use the tools."*

Content Control Challenges

Content Control Challenges

Tension will be caused by the desire for content control and more tightly managed interactions on the part of formal meeting management, as well as the uncontrollable nature of social media. As one commentator points out, the ease of access and the communications and broadcast power of social media means "there is greater transparency today. It's not what you say it is; it's what other people are saying about you." [S44]

The future use of social media for meetings will involve attempts to form structures around how meetings are discussed. A meetings commentator reported, "There is a fear of lack of control, and you don't have control over social media. It is an open forum, people can say what they want to say, and that makes people nervous." [S45]

> *"The difficulty lies in controlling content. The need for "Official Pages" to be established early on is critical to controlling content and rumours that may surround an event."*

> *"I believe that companies will create codes of conduct when using these media. [It is a] fun but very dangerous tool when used in the wrong way!"*

Attempts to control the use of social media in the future revolve around shaping the official messaging and monitoring and influencing conversations – as is the approach used outside of the meetings sector.

Another way to control the use of social media at meetings is to ban it outright. In extreme cases this approach could be met with social media traffic attacking the decision or at least the outright ignoring of the decision (e.g., Wiki-Leaks). Sector stakeholders in the survey research point out that social media usage for meeting is formally controlled for some industries through government or corporate regulation.

> *"While social media is slightly new and popular, it only takes a meeting so far, and is still a security risk for my industry."*

> *"I am restricted by Federal Government oversight and corporate security from using common technology….Our current technology excludes many social media sites (access from company-owned technology to Twitter, Facebook, etc.)"*

Privacy Challenges

This research found that the rise of privacy as a public issue may pose a challenge to the use of social media by meeting planners in the future. Numerous news outlets are covering stories about governmental agencies across the world that are moving to take legal action to protect citizens' privacy.

An example of this is found with regard to use of the Facebook "connect" button. This has been viewed as a positive development for the meetings sector. As Corbin Ball writes, "Facebook Connect allows you to put a Facebook "button" on your registration web page… The attendee clicks on the button opening his/her personal Facebook page to choose the desired friends. Everyone gets the discount and the meeting host increases meeting attendance using this simple and free Facebook application." [S46]

Mark Suster, a technology expert, comments that "…even if you don't give permission to third-party apps to access your information, much of it is available anyways as long as somebody you're connected to is more promiscuous with third-party apps. Also, all of those "Facebook Connect" buttons on websites are awesome for quickly logging in, but each gives those websites unprecedented access to your personal information." [S47]

This challenge for the use of social media for meetings in the future was also a hot topic among sector stakeholders in the Maritz Future of Meetings survey research:

"Another major issue is privacy. In a highly regulated industry there are many things that cannot be broadcast or recorded, etc…until there are absolute guarantees that information is secure, it is difficult to sometimes utilize these alternative methods for engagement."

"The legal ramifications of our emails, websites, social media sites, tweets, blogs and more are vast. Lack of privacy, defamation, harassment, trade secrets, bullying, antitrust issues, deleted discoverable evidence and more are just a few of the electronic misconduct issues that we should be aware of… Lack of privacy is huge."

Final Thoughts

Some participants will make personal use of social media at meetings regardless of any external requests and they will continue to review, comment on, and personalize their experience at meetings of the future through social media. Others will not.

While the use of social media for meetings will increase in the future and some stakeholders believe it is among the most important advances in meeting engagement to have happened to meeting design, there are barriers and concerns in using social media for meetings.

The future use of social media for meeting is not fixed; it is in the process of being written by the meeting planners who are taking advantage of its potential today.

The Future use of Social Media for Meetings Horizon Watch:

- Increasing challenge in cutting through the social media clutter to market meetings
- Blurring of the line between business and social events and the ability of meeting attendees to connect on a more personal level
- Greater resource demands (e.g., time, money, training) required to develop a social media strategy and monitor and manage social media interactions
- Increased use of social media for meetings will require speakers to develop new skills to be able to handle the instant and rapid-fire feedback of participants, as well as lead to the need for additional staffing and outsourcing
- Increasing remote participation via social media and the potential for decreasing attendance at meetings
- Continuing decline in the number of highly active users of social media who collaborate in creating content, which will lead to greater bias in feedback
- Rapid expansion of the social media landscape beyond the Big 3 to include numerous specialized communities
- Rise of new social media platforms designed to host online meetings
- Rise of switchers between social networking sites, which will be made easier by refinement of a portable "social graph"
- Rise of privacy concerns and best practices restrictions on social media usage

For more information visit Maritz Research at www.maritzresearch.com or call (877) 4 MARITZ.

Maritz® RESEARCH

References

S1 "Buzz" and "teasing" are mentioned in "Social Media: What Meeting Planners Need to Know" By Sue Pelletier
Source: http://meetingsnet.com/social-media/socialmedia101108/

& "Buzz" and "leaking information" are mentioned in "Social Media For Meetings And Event Planners" By Monica Wright
Source: http://mn.meetingsmags.com/article/social-media-meetings-and-event-planners

S2 –"Understanding Users of Social Networks" By Sean Silverthorne, Harvard Business School
Source: HTTP://HBSWK.HBS.EDU/ITEM/6156.HTML

The point is best illustrated in this report: "Corporate marketers by and large struggle with how to use social networking sites to reach potential customers… The problem is that execs think of online social networks as social media and treat it as another channel…It doesn't work that way… "A good analogy is to imagine sitting at a table with friends when a stranger pulls up a chair, sits down, and tries to sell you something while you are talking to your friends…A good social strategy essentially uses the same principles that made online social networks attractive in the first place—by solving social failures in the offline world. Firms should begin to do the same and help people fulfill their social needs online…."You should come to the table and say, 'Here is a product that I have designed for you that is going to make you all better friends.' "

S3 - The Business of meetings: Battle of the Generations (audio) Brian Bruce (a participant) quoted. (Source: mpiweb.org)

S4 –"Brand owners seek new online models" WARC
Source: http://www.warc.com/LatestNews/News/EmailNews.news?ID=28479&Origin=WARCNewsEmail

S5 – A number of meetings sector leaders have contributed to a forthcoming book ("The Tweeting Meeting") on the use of social media for meetings, and its future – that will be released in December 2011.

S5 – Corbin Ball, Jan Vermeiren, Jeff Hurt, Ruud Janssen, Jeff Rasco, Frank Martin Hein, Jessica Levin, Susan Brower, Shuli Golovinski, Dennis von Ferenczy, et al. (2011). The Tweeting Meeting. The Meeting Support Institute Publisher.

S6 –Corbin Ball in "The Meeting of the Future" – a roundtable discussion May, 2010
Source: http://www.meetingsfocus.com/Topics/ArticleDetails/tabid/162/ArticleID/13998/Default.aspx?utm_source=MagnetMail&utm_medium=eNewsletters&utm_term=air-n-sun@juno.com&utm_content=Meetings%20Hot%20Topic%2005-25-10&utm_campaign=The%20Meeting%20of%20the%20Future#continue

S7 –"The end of meetings (part 5) and the rise of web 2.0 and social media" by Nicolaas Pereboom
Source: http://www.crossmint.com/web-2.0-branding-2.0/authors/nicolaas

S8 –"Social Media For Meetings And Event Planners" By Monica Wright
Source: http://mn.meetingsmags.com/article/social-media-meetings-and-event-planners

S9 – "The Business Value of Mobile Apps For Meetings" By Corbin Ball
Source: http://www.corbinball.com/art/

S10 –"Social Media for Meetings and Event Planners" By Monica Wright
Source: http://mn.meetingsmags.com/article/social-media-meetings-and-event-planners

The interview goes on to mention an example of the instant communication and response that social media provides to meeting organizers: "Jennifer Kane follows those Tweets, and uses the information she gathers to make her event shine. "I like to run the type of events where if someone Tweets 'My pencil just broke,' I can walk in and put a pencil down and walk out. It's like being a social media guardian angel!" she laughs."

S11 –Jennifer Kane quoted in "How Bad Can 140 Characters Be?" By Monica Wright
Source: http://mn.meetingsmags.com/article/social-media-meetings-and-event-planners

S12 – Ryan Hanson quoted in "How Bad Can 140 Characters Be?" By Monica Wright
Source: http://mn.meetingsmags.com/article/social-media-meetings-and-event-planners

S13 –"Ageism and Association Meetings" By Betsy Bair
Source: http://meetingsnet.com/social-media/social-media-events-0201/

S14 -"Social Media For Meetings And Event Planners" By Monica Wright
Source: http://mn.meetingsmags.com/article/social-media-meetings-and-event-planners

S15 –"Event Twitter Survey Recommends Courting Your Power Tweeters" By Sue Pelletier
Source: http://meetingsnet.com/social-media/0922_twitter_event_survey_tweets/

S16 –"How Bad Can 140 Characters Be?" By Monica Wright
Source: http://mn.meetingsmags.com/article/social-media-meetings-and-event-planners

S17 – "Marketing Your Event After Your Event" By Michelle Russell, Convene, PCMA
Source: http://www.pcma.org/Convene/Issue-Archives/October-2010/Innovative-Meetings.htm

S18 – "Marketing Your Event After Your Event" By Michelle Russell, Convene, PCMA
Source: http://www.pcma.org/Convene/Issue-Archives/October-2010/Innovative-Meetings.htm

S19 - "Marketing Your Event After Your Event" By Michelle Russell, Convene, PCMA
Source: http://www.pcma.org/Convene/Issue-Archives/October-2010/Innovative-Meetings.htm

S20 -"Social Media For Meetings And Event Planners" By Monica Wright
Source: http://mn.meetingsmags.com/article/social-media-meetings-and-event-planners

S21 –"Social Media: What Meeting Planners Need to Know" By Sue Pelletier
Source: http://meetingsnet.com/social-media/socialmedia101108/

S22 –"Social Media For Meetings And Event Planners" By Monica Wright
Source: http://mn.meetingsmags.com/article/social-media-meetings-and-event-planners

S23 – (Old S26b is missing)

S24 – "Meetings of Tomorrow: Flexible, adaptable and dynamic" By Bob Parker
Source: http://www.speakingofimpact.ca/?p=486

S25 –"Ageism and Association Meetings" By Betsy Bair
Source: http://meetingsnet.com/social-media/social-media-events-0201/

S26 –"Generation Y Looks to the Future of Meetings"
Source: http://www.conventionplanit.com/e-alerts/e-alert-2011-02-14%2012:09:59.xml?utm_source=planner+newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Planner+e-Alert+2-15-11

S27 – The Business of meetings: Battle of the Generations (audio) (Source: mpiweb.org)

S28 – "Social Capital vs. Social Media" By Steve Dempsey, The Steve Report
Source: http://www.meetingscanada.com/content/social-capital-vs-social-media-21750

S29 –"Social Media: What Meeting Planners Need to Know" By Sue Pelletier
Source: http://meetingsnet.com/social-media/socialmedia101108/

S30 – "Forrester: Social Media Content Creators Down in U.S." By Juan Carlos Perez, IDG News.
Source: http://www.pcworld.com/article/206494/forrester_social_media_content_creators_down_in_us.html

S31 –"Understanding Users of Social Networks" By Sean Silverthorne, Harvard Business School
Source: HTTP://HBSWK.HBS.EDU/ITEM/6156.HTML

S32 –"Event Twitter Survey Recommends Courting Your Power Tweeters" By Sue Pelletier
Source: http://meetingsnet.com/social-media/0922_twitter_event_survey_tweets/

S33 –"David Prosser: Facebook in decline? Business has never been so good" By David Prosser, The Independent
Source: http://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/comment/david-prosser-facebook-in-decline-business-has-never-been-so-good-2303759.html

S34 –"Social Media For Meetings And Event Planners" By Monica Wright
Source: http://mn.meetingsmags.com/article/social-media-meetings-and-event-planners

S35 – "Social media stress the simple in designing new products" By John Timpane
Source: http://articles.philly.com/2011-07-13/news/29769277_1_skype-facebook-google

S36 – "Top Reasons Why Google+ May Leapfrog Facebook" By IB Times Staff Reporter
Source: http://www.ibtimes.com/articles/178315/20110711/google-google-plus-search-engines-google-facebook-circles-sparks-hangouts-social-networking-skype-vi.htm

S37 –"Social Networking: The Future" By Mark Suster
Source: http://techcrunch.com/2010/12/05/social-networking-future/

S38 – "Top Reasons Why Google+ May Leapfrog Facebook" By IB Times Staff Reporter
Source: http://www.ibtimes.com/articles/178315/20110711/google-google-plus-search-engines-google-facebook-circles-sparks-hangouts-social-networking-skype-vi.htm

S39 – "What Your Business Needs to Know About Social Graphs"
Source: http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/what-your-business-needs-to-know-about-social-graphs/

S40 – "Social Networking: The Future" By Mark Suster
Source: http://techcrunch.com/2010/12/05/social-networking-future/

S41 – "Hotels 2020: Beyond Segmentation" Amadeus – page 12
www.amadeus.com/hotelit

S42 – "Social Media" By Michael Pinchera, One+ magazine 11/12/10 – pages 34-35 (Source: mpiweb.org)
S43 –"Social media needs new model" published by WARC
Source: http://www.warc.com/LatestNews/News/EmailNews.news?ID=28468&Origin=WARCNewsEmail

S44 – Corbin Ball in "The Meeting of the Future" – a roundtable discussion May, 2010
Source: http://www.meetingsfocus.com/Topics/ArticleDetails/tabid/162/ArticleID/13998/Default.aspx?utm_source=MagnetMail&utm_
medium=eNewsletters&utm_term=air-n-sun@juno.com&utm_content=Meetings%20Hot%20Topic%2005-25-10&utm_campaign=The%20Meeting%20
of%20the%20Future#continue

S45 –Quote of Kristen in "Meetings Social Media Skepticism Wanes" By Seth Harris
Source: Olean http://www.successfulmeetings.com/Event-Planning/Technology-Solutions/Articles/Meetings-Social-Media-Skepticism-Wanes/

S46 – "Social Media – A New Paradigm for Meetings" By Corbin Ball
Source: http://www.corbinball.com/art/

S47 –"Social Networking: The Future" By Mark Suster
Source: http://techcrunch.com/2010/12/05/social-networking-future/

Suster goes on to add: "I believe that privacy leaks will cause a longer-term backlash against misusing our information but in the short-term not enough people understand the consequences to be alarmed."