

SOCIAL MEDIA AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP: EXPLORING THE IMPLICATIONS FOR ENTREPRENEURIAL PROCESSES AND OUTCOMES

GUEST EDITORS:

Chris James Carter, University of Nottingham, UK

Hannah Noke, University of Nottingham, UK

Isobel O'Neil, University of Nottingham, UK

BACKGROUND AND FOCUS OF THE SPECIAL ISSUE

Welter and colleagues (2017) lament that entrepreneurship research has too readily focused on “high growth, technology-enabled, venture capital backed businesses”. This narrow focus has limited the ability to account for heterogeneity of entrepreneurial processes and outcomes; hence, effort must now be made to build and test theory in a wide range of entrepreneurship contexts (Welter et al., 2017; Zahra & Wright, 2011). Research has begun to explore entrepreneurial activity in the context of contemporary digital technology and it is suggested that these developments are significantly affecting some entrepreneurial activities (Morse et al. 2007; Nambisan, 2017; Smith et al. 2017; Gustafsson and Khan, 2017). To this end, we seek to collate a set of papers in this special issue focusing on entrepreneurship in the context of one particular technological development: social media. In addition to high profile social media businesses such as Facebook and Instagram, which reflect the stereotype of high growth, technology ventures, there is a plethora of social networking sites, blogs, forums, photo sharing, video sharing, product/service reviews, evaluation communities and social gambling platforms (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Aichner & Jacob, 2015) that enable new opportunities, and potentially threats. We are keen to advance understandings of the importance of social media for *all* entrepreneurial actors, not least for more “everyday” entrepreneurs (Welter et al., 2017), rather than for the minority of high-tech platform entrepreneurs.

Entrepreneurship research has also begun to explore the impact of social media: for example, Fischer et al. (2011) suggest that the use of social media offers new effectual pathways whereby new insights and resources can emerge for entrepreneurial individuals. Another important strand of research has focused on crowd-funding platforms such as Kickstarter and Indiegogo as an alternative means for raising investment capital (Belleflamme et al., 2014; Agrawal et al., 2014; Mollick, 2014). Through the use of social media, therefore, it is evident that some traditional constraints for entrepreneurs, such as financial barriers, may be bypassed as a result of entrepreneurs engaging in alternative venture creation processes. We note, however, that much of the attention in entrepreneurship literature has been on the positive networking and collaboration potential of social media (for example, in considering Web 2.0 cf: Kim, Lee and Lee, 2011), and very little entrepreneurship research has critically appraised the processes and outcomes of social media. Indeed, we also call for papers that consider the possibility that entrepreneurial opportunities nurtured through social media may not be as substantial nor sustainable as hoped. For example, crowdfunded ventures have relatively high failure rate of meeting investor expectations (Agrawal et al, 2014; Mollick, 2014). UK government reports (Taylor, 2017; UK Parliament, 2017) also highlight the issue of precarious work within the gig economy and concerns exist as to the race to the bottom some social media platforms might be creating; therein lies an important policy consideration for those researching social media and entrepreneurship. Indeed, ethical questions arise around the emergent and contentious forms of digital entrepreneurship enabled through social media, such as “dropshipping” (Madrigal, 2018) and “essay mills” (Draper, Ibezim & Newton, 2017). Therefore, we seek submissions

that help to build a clearer understanding of how processes and outcomes of entrepreneurship are changing under the influence of social media and the wider digital economy.

THEMES AND QUESTIONS FOR THE SPECIAL ISSUE

The guest editors will welcome rigorous contributions, including conceptual and theoretical papers, state-of-the-art reviews, empirical research and case studies, which address the pertinent themes in line with the discussion above. Possible topics could include, but would not be limited to:

- **New venture creation process.** For example, how and why does social media change the process of new venture creation?
- **The “dark side” of social media.** For example, what ethical issues arise when using social media to exploit entrepreneurial opportunities?
- **Founder identity.** For example, what are the identity work processes at play for social media based entrepreneurs?
- **Opportunity recognition.** How does social media facilitate, or perhaps constrain, the process of entrepreneurial opportunity recognition?
- **Resources.** Does social media enable entrepreneurial actors to start businesses using minimal resources?
- **Creative remuneration.** Are social media able to provide a sustainable means for creative work to be rewarded and used as a platform to develop entrepreneurs, or is it primarily productive of low-paid, low-security “gig” workers?
- **Entrepreneurial marketing and communications.** How does social media affect entrepreneurial branding, marketing and communications processes?
- **Funding.** For example, what are the consequences, in terms of access to finance, of the surge in crowdfunding platforms? How do new ventures legitimize their ventures in this specific setting?
- **Effect on wider society.** What are the wider implications of social media for instance, how has the rise of social media impacted entrepreneurial intentions and ambitions in society at large?

The deadline for submission of papers is 20 September 2019; the journal submission site will be open for submissions from Friday 23 August 2019. The Special Issue is scheduled to be published in May 2021. Papers must be original and comply with ISBJ submission guidelines. Please refer <http://isb.sagepub.com/> for submission guidelines and a link to the on-line submission system. In the online system please ensure you submit your paper within Manuscript Type: ‘Special Issue: Social Media and Entrepreneurship’

Questions and informal enquiries should be directed to: Dr Hannah Noke
Hannah.noke@nottingham.ac.uk