

Using the Concept of Topic Maps for Enhancing Information Privacy in Social Networking Applications

Stefan Weiss

Institut für Wirtschaftsinformatik
Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität
Gräfstraße 78
60054 Frankfurt am Main
stefan.weiss@m-lehrstuhl.de

Abstract: The growth of online social networking applications (SNA) and the economic potential that might be generated by their underlining business models is getting broad attention recently. Public discussions about the information privacy for SNA users have been revived as a result of some privacy-invasive activities taking place such as identity theft, stalking, discrimination, distortion of facts, embarrassment, and many others. One of the problems why these threats to information privacy are not merely theoretical in nature is the apparent loss of control over the personal information provided and the lack of transparency over its usage on the Internet. This paper suggests a privacy-enhancing technology (PET) that adapts the semantic technique concept of a topic map for the use with SNAs. Topic maps in such a setting would provide the user with more transparency over the status of his information privacy when using SNAs and would provide means to exercise choices on particular data sets. The paper explains how a topic map concept would be adapted as PET, which privacy principles it would cover, and how it would generally solve some of the issues of information privacy in online social networks.

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