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## The digitalisation of internationalisation activities: is social media the next international entrepreneurial opportunity recognition tool for Born Globals?

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**Digitalization of internationalization activities: Is social media the next international entrepreneurial opportunity recognition tool for born globals?**

## **ABSTRACT**

Research articles on entrepreneurial opportunity are an emergent force in internationalization research, and digitalization also attracts significant attention. This chapter presents a business case integrating perspectives on entrepreneurial opportunity recognition and digitalization in the internationalization of a Finnish-born global company operating in the cleantech sector. The case provides a general overview of the company and its use of social media in international activities. I pose thought-provoking questions associated with the reference materials and suggest solutions that challenge the reader to think outside the box. This case is suitable for students in universities and other institutions for higher education and, a secondary audience, researchers in the field of international business and international entrepreneurship. It contributes to the call for more studies on the impact of digital technology on internationalization in the international business field.

**Keywords:** entrepreneurial opportunity, social media, born global, internationalization

## INTRODUCTION

Digitalization is the use of digital technology in the activities of firms (Autio, Mudambi, & Yoo, 2021). Among internationalizing firms, such activities include communication, the development of new business models, distribution, and business relationship management. Autio et al. (2021) divide digital technologies into two forms: digital communication and digital technologies in situ. Digital communication technologies include internet-enabled technologies that enable cross-border operations, for example, social media. Digital in situ technologies include technologies used in production processes, such as additive manufacturing, artificial intelligence, robotics, and big-data analytics (Autio et al., 2021). According to Manyika et al. (2016), 50 percent of global trade in services is already digitized, approximately 12 percent of the global goods trade is conducted via international e-commerce, and cross-border Skype calls constitute 46 percent of the total of traditional international calls. Across 18 countries analysed by eBay, 88 to 100 percent of the small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) using its platform are exporters (Manyika et al., 2016). Digital platforms such as eBay, Amazon, Facebook, and Alibaba have provided opportunities for small firms to become born globals. A born global is a firm that makes an early leap into international markets shortly after its foundation through export or any other entry mode to derive a significant competitive advantage from the use of resources and the sale of output in multiple countries. That advantage is operationalized as foreign sales comprising at least 25% of total sales within three years of foundation (Knight and Cavusgil, 2004; Oviatt and McDougall, 1997; Knight and Liesch, 2016; Oviatt and McDougall, 1994). More so, the accessibility of the internet has made the usage of digital platforms such as social media appealing to born globals (Jean, Kim and Cavusgil, 2020). Social media is a group of mobile and web applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and allow users, such as individuals and communities, to create, share, collaborate, discuss, and modify user-generated content (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) categorize social media in terms of social presence/media richness and self-presentation/self-disclosure (see Table 1). Social media/media richness determines the level of ambiguities and uncertainties of information channeled through a particular medium (Jagongo and Kinyua, 2013; Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). Social self-presentation/self-disclosure encompasses the unconscious and conscious

actions a user takes to create an image consistent with their personality (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). Kietzmann et al. (2011) have also introduced the honeycomb framework of social media to categorize its use into seven functional building blocks, which include 1) Identity, 2) Presence, 3) Sharing, 4) Relationships, 5) Conversations, 6) Reputation, and 6) Groups (see Figure 1).

**Table 1.** Classification of Social Media

	<b>Social presence/Media richness</b>		
	<b>Low</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>High</b>
<b>High (Self-presentation/ Self-disclosure)</b>	Blogs	Social networking sites (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, LinkedIn, Skype, Pinterest, Instagram)	Virtual social worlds (e.g., Second Life)
<b>Low (Self-presentation/ Self-disclosure)</b>	Collaborative projects (e.g., Wikipedia)	Content communities (e.g., YouTube)	Virtual game worlds (e.g., World of Warcraft)

(Adapted from Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010)

*INSERT FIGURE 1 AROUND HERE*

Considering how appealing digital technologies are to born globals, the central question is: Is social media the next international entrepreneurial opportunity recognition tool for born globals? The emergence of entrepreneurial opportunity represents a central concept in entrepreneurship research (Short et al., 2010). The next section examines the concepts of born globals and entrepreneurial opportunity.

## **THE BORN GLOBAL**

Calof and Beamish (1995) defined the internationalization of a firm as “the process of adapting firms’ operations (strategy, structure, resources, etc.) to international environments” (p. 116). Scholars have adopted a plethora of theoretical perspectives to explain the internationalization process of firms. Among the best-established are 1) the traditional process perspective and 2) the international entrepreneurship perspective (Costa,

Soares and de Sousa, 2017). First, the traditional process perspective, also known as the stage model of internationalization, holds that firms should internationalize in a manner resembling ripples spreading on water. It is rooted in the behavioural approach to firms (Andersen, 1993; Kocak and Abimbola, 2009; Madsen and Servais, 1997). Upon this came forth the Uppsala model (Johanson and Vahlne, 1977, Johanson and Vahlne, 2009; Johanson and Wiedersheim-Paul, 1975), the Helsinki model (Korhonen, 1999; Welch and Luostarinen, 1993; Luostarinen, 1979), and the innovation model of internationalization (Bilkey and Tesar, 1977, Cavusgil, 1980). Empirical managerial studies have confirmed the importance of the traditional process perspective in internationalization research (Chetty, 1999; Welch and Luostarinen, 1988). Nevertheless, the approach does attract criticism. Critics state that the process stages are episodic rather than holistic (Fletcher, 2008). The reason is that it fails to explain entrepreneurial firms that make the early international leap into foreign markets (McDougall, Shane and Oviatt, 1994; Oviatt and McDougall, 1997; Autio et al., 2000; Fletcher, 2008) and ignores the role played by the entrepreneur or founding members (McDougall et al., 1994).

Criticism of the traditional process perspective of internationalization has spawned the international entrepreneurship perspective, which explains internationalization as the process of opportunity recognition beyond a firm's domestic market (Knight and Liesch, 2016). It also views internationalization as early and rapid. Firms have been labelled in different ways from the international entrepreneurship perspective, but the terms most used are international new ventures (INVs) (Oviatt and McDougall, 1994) and born globals (BGs) (Rennie, 1993; Knight and Cavusgil, 1996). The INV term first appeared in McDougall's 1989 paper that compared domestic firms with INVs (Andersson, Evers & Kuivalainen, 2014), while the born-global term was first adopted by McKinsey & Company when reporting on early internationalization among Australian manufacturing firms that had expanded rapidly into global markets without having an established domestic base (McKinsey & Co., 1993; Rennie, 1993). Cavusgil (1994) highlighted the results of this study in the first scholarly article about BGs published in *Marketing News Journal*. Scholars describe similarities between INVs and BGs (Cavusgil and Knight, 2015; Crick, 2009) but also their differences. Research reports that both INVs and BGs are young firms, but BGs have a more global focus than INVs, which have a more regional focus. Born globals "view the world as their marketplace from the outset and see the domestic market as a support for their international business" (McKinsey & Co., 1993, p.9). They embark

on foreign direct investment in important markets with a global vision and strategy from inception (Crick, 2009). Other scholars have used the terms born global and INV interchangeably, but in this chapter, we use the *born-global* term alone for theoretical parsimony and consistency.

## **ENTREPRENEURIAL THEORY ON OPPORTUNITY RECOGNITION**

Holm et al. (2015, p. 339) define entrepreneurial opportunity as a ‘desirable but uncertain situation present in foreign markets, which allows firms to benefit from engaging in new cross-border business activities that provide economic value for the firm’. It can also be described as an opportunity to engage in entrepreneurial activities, such as introducing services, organizing activities and networking to produce economic value (McMullen et al., 2007). Scholars offer different opinions on the conceptualization of entrepreneurial opportunity (Schumpeter, 1934; Kirzner, 1973; Shane and Venkatarama, 2000; Ardichvili et al., 2003; Mainela et al., 2014). The most common conceptualizations are associated with the discovery and creation of entrepreneurial opportunities (Shane and Venkatarama, 2000, Ardichvili et al., 2003) in the international market. The discovery perspective assumes that entrepreneurial opportunity exists within the environment, waiting to be discovered and exploited (Kirzner, 1973). In contrast, the creation perspective assumes that entrepreneurial opportunity is created. Thus, the firm or entrepreneur influences the development of entrepreneurial opportunities (Mainela et al., 2014; Schumpeter, 1934). These two opposing positions are frequently mentioned in entrepreneurial opportunity research (Johanson and Vahlne, 2009). Below, I present an overview of a case focusing on how social media can serve as an entrepreneurial opportunity in born-global firms using a single case from the Finnish cleantech sector.

## **CASE STUDY**

### **<Context>**

A context refers to “...situational opportunities and constraints that affect the occurrence and meaning of organizational behaviour as well as functional relationships between variables.” (Johns, 2006; p. 386). The context for this case is the cleantech sector of Finland, which is a small-sized open economy with a tradition of firm internationalization; a

majority of its SMEs operate in foreign markets (Luostarinen, 1994; Knight and Liesch, 2016). According to Statistics Finland's database, Finnish enterprises had business activity in 5,430 affiliates located in 139 countries in 2018, with most investments concentrated in the European Union area compared with the previous years (Official Statistics Finland, 2020). Second, Finland has embraced the concept of a digital economy. According to Digibarometer<sup>1</sup> survey results (see Figure 2), Finland ranked second in the degree of digitalization for two consecutive years (i.e., 2020 and 2021).

*INSERT FIGURE 2 AROUND HERE*

Finland is also a leading country in finding solutions for climate change and sustainability issues in the cleantech sector (Cleantech Finland, 2022). The Finnish cleantech sector is an important sector that fosters innovation ecosystems in energy and sustainable manufacturing, connecting startups, large enterprises, research organizations, and the public sector (Business Finland, 2022). The cleantech sector encapsulates firms that produce products and services that are unharmed to the environment (Souza et al., 2019). The country offers a unique platform for companies to develop and commercialize energy and manufacturing technologies based on clean solutions. The Finnish cleantech companies' unique contribution to sustainability has been recognized globally. According to a 2019 survey by the Information Technology & Innovation Foundation, Finland is the second-most significant contributor to clean-energy innovations relative to GDP (Cunliff and Hart, 2019). *Fourdeg*, *Solar Water Solutions*, *Altum Technologies*, and *Solved* are among the major cleantech firms that have attracted global recognition (O'Sullivan, 2020). Among these firms, I base my case on Altum Technologies.

### **<Firm: Altum Technologies and Social Media>**

Two partners were importing cleantech based on ultrasound into Finland. They were trying to solve industrial issues with those applications and found that customers wanted applications with more sustainable attributes. The partners were not satisfied with the sustainability credentials of what was on the market. The partners contacted a professor at

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<sup>1</sup> Digibarometer is a study which evaluates how well countries utilize digitalization and how they compare to one another in that respect.

the University of Helsinki, an expert in ultrasound technology and came up with ultrasound technology for use in industrial facilities in 2015. The firm's offerings use ultrasound to clean industrial equipment in the energy, heating, and power-generating; pulp and paper; food and beverage; oil and gas; and chemical and water sectors. Instead of using mechanical tools or hazardous chemicals to remove ingrained dirt (known as *fouling*) in industrial processes and heat exchangers, Altum Technologies adopts ultrasound technology. As the CEO reported: "*With our system, all you need is our externally attached power ultrasound device...It emits high-power ultrasonic waves into the machinery, which break up fouling without any production stoppages*". The firm began effective foreign operations in 2016 and won the best energy startup award in 2016 and the Slush 100 award<sup>2</sup> in 2017. The firm's headquarters are in Helsinki, Finland, and it now employs 14 professionals with diverse skills in R&D, industrial and mechanical engineering, artificial intelligence, electronics, and marketing. It collaborates with foreign firms, teams of people, and small organizations from Japan, the USA, the Netherlands, Chile, and Norway. The collaborations have broadened the firm's aim to see the bigger picture of its solutions. The firm has co-developed new technologies with partners to solve new issues related to ultrasound technology. In January 2022, Altum Technologies began a collaboration with Nippon Steel Engineering Co., Ltd. to launch a new smart cleaning service permitting process manufacturers to clean and prevent fouling from industrial equipment and piping using software-guided ultrasonic technology. Altum's social media platforms (LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter) reported the collaboration will make Altum's Smart Cleaning Service available throughout Japan across different industries like energy, petrochemicals, paper manufacturing, food, and beverage companies. Altum Technologies is the first company in the world to use ultrasound technology to clean fouling from industrial equipment without stopping production. So far, it has provided its services in Thailand, Japan, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Spain, Sweden, and the USA. Currently, it is negotiating with countries like Canada, Thailand, and Brazil to establish operations. In August 2018, the firm announced its first expansion in the form of a permanent office in Las Vegas, in the United States.

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<sup>2</sup> Slush 100 Award (Prize given to a startup for emerging as the first among 100 startups in terms of novelty of business idea in a pitching competition). Slush is a student-driven, not-for-profit movement originally founded to change attitudes toward entrepreneurship.

The bulk of Altum's sales were to Finnish enterprises when it began operations, but three years after inception, around 80% of its sales revenue was from overseas sales. The marketing manager reported, *"We are expanding globally, not focusing on Finland"*.

#### *<Digitalization in Altum Technologies>*

Altum Technologies has embraced the use of digital technologies in its internationalization activities. As the marketing manager stated: *"For the business side, we use HubSpot to identify leads, deals in progress and extrapolate the future, Google analytics, and social media platforms. We use Skype for external communication, Slack for internal communication, join-me to share presentations, mobile phones, and emails"*. The company routinely uses 56 technologies to support its website, including *Viewport Meta, iPhone / Mobile Compatible, and SSL by Default* (Crunchbase, 2022). Its website's global traffic rank is 5,148,195 among websites globally and attracts 1,912 monthly visitors from countries such as Slovenia (71% site traffic), the United Arab Emirates (24% site traffic), and Latvia (5%) (Crunchbase, 2022). The firm has a social media team of two who create, publish, and update all the firm's social media output, one of whom is the marketing director. The social media team collaborates with the management team but retains the overarching responsibility for social media matters. The firm established a presence on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, and LinkedIn in 2017. According to the firm's social media strategy, it handles each social media channel differently in terms of content sharing. As reported by the marketing manager: *"...So the same thing applies with LinkedIn. Like if it's very related to the industry, something industry use, like where our firm is mentioned, then we tried to emphasize, from the professional perspective, to kind of like share the update that we are actually acting professionally as well. For example, on Instagram, we don't always put their related content. Like we don't share the same content always on all platforms. We try different approaches. And for example, Instagram it's more related to our office activities, our employee branding"*. The firm has a blog, which is updated at least once a month. It uses LinkedIn for employee branding and networking. It uses Twitter mostly to comment on industry-related matters related to the firm's blog sites and images shared on Instagram. It also uses the YouTube channel to share videos of its operations and specific events, such as Slush 100 and the Nordic Cleantech Open Finals. According to the firm's social media strategic plan, LinkedIn is the number one priority, followed by Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and finally, YouTube.

### <Drivers of Social Media Usage>

First, the decision on social media usage was based on brand awareness. As reported by the marketing: *“I would say, of course, brand awareness and recognition because, nowadays, the majority of marketing activities happen online and that way it’s so much easy to reach to a different audience, whether it is industry related or event related, no matter the case. It’s just so easy to reach with a keyword with hashtags and also by being present there. So that’s one thing”*. In the firm’s early years, it had an online presence but no social media strategy per se. The situation changed after winning the Slush 100 award in 2017, following which the firm invested resources to create a social media strategy. The marketing manager explained: *“We were, of course, present on social media before the event [Slush 100], but after that, when we received so much recognition, from media companies, from potential customers and from other stakeholders that were super interested in our solution. So, it dawned on us to maintain the image and develop reachability. And being on social media, it is one of the steps that help us be reachable”*. Second, the decision on social media usage was based on a desire to network. As reported by the marketing: *“we decided to use social media for connectivity and also to reach out to the audience, and a variety of segments...Most firms...especially industrial firms, no matter the industry, no matter their solution, but those that we see as a potential partner and potential customer are very much active on social media...”*.

### <Social Media: the next entrepreneurial opportunity recognition tool?>

Since the intensification of social media usage, Altum Technologies has attracted massive attention, as reflected in the number of online followers and the success it has amassed (see Table 2). Social media has enabled the firm to build a closer connection with potential customers, search for information on competitors, and to broaden its knowledge. As reported by the marketing manager: *“Using Twitter has extended our ability to reach companies from industries that have problems we can solve with our technology...With Twitter, it is so much easier to find our competitors with a single hashtag. So, as you are already aware, our solution is unique, so there are not yet really other providers of similar technology solutions. When I add a certain hashtag that describes our solution or the type of problem we’re working with, I find many companies that are not doing the same as we do. Not providing the same offer, but at least like working in the same context. It was so*

*much easier to reach out and just search, and it really took me less than an hour to figure that out instead of really doing a Google search, which would be completely not even close to the time efficient".* The firm's main goal is to keep investing in social media to reach out to potential foreign clients and to improve its brand awareness in target markets. Last year, it participated in a business and innovation development project called BID4E-project to acquire information on developing a high-level social media strategy.

**Table 2.** Social Media Profile of Altum Technologies (as of 2022)

<b>Firm</b>	<b>LinkedIn</b>	<b>Twitter</b>	<b>Instagram</b>	<b>Facebook</b>	<b>YouTube</b>
<b>Alpha</b>	912 followers	219 followers	149 followers	97 followers	15 subscribers
		215 following	262 following		4 videos
		414 tweets	137 posts		
<b>Target</b>	Clients, industrial experts	Clients, industrial experts, fans	Employee, clients	Clients, fans	Clients, fans
<b>Successful entrepreneurial activities</b>	Networking, sharing of industrial news, building brand awareness and recognition	building brand awareness and recognition, sharing industrial news	Employee branding	build brand awareness and recognition	build brand awareness and recognition via videos

Is it wise for Altum Technologies to put more resources and attention into social media? Will Altum Technologies not fall into a virtuality trap? Can Altum Technologies achieve the same success in recognizing opportunities in the foreign market as B2B companies like

Maersk Line<sup>3</sup>? With the upsurge of social media fake news where firms' competitors hire people and use non-human algorithms such as social bots and cyborgs to generate malicious content to smear the image of firms, what are the potential challenges that can hamper the survival of Altum Technologies in the foreign market? How can Altum Technologies address these challenges?

### <Learning outcomes>

Scholars became interested in early internationalization (i.e., in our case, via BGs) in the early 1990s. The topic is now prominent in international entrepreneurship and international business research (Knight et al., 2004; Knight et al., 2016). Both the born-global phenomenon and the adoption of digital technology have recently attracted research interest in the international entrepreneurship and international business fields (Jean, Kim and Cavusgil, 2020). This has prompted scholars to call for more research on digitalization's impact on internationalization (Coviello, Kano & Liesch, 2017; Katsikeas, Leonidou & Zeriti, 2020). By using this case study, the readers should have gained an understanding of the importance of social media in the international activities of BGs.

Moreover, readers should now be aware of the useful concepts related to born-global internationalization and social media usage during global expansion. The readers should also be aware of the concurrent challenges associated with social media usage and how they can be mitigated by BGs. Furthermore, this case study cross-fertilizes perspectives from international business, international entrepreneurship, and information systems to enhance the understanding of readers on early internationalization in the digital context, which represents a widespread, ongoing trend. Therefore, it is expected readers should have deepened their understanding of interdisciplinary studies (Cavusgil and Knight, 2015; Etemad, 2017). Finally, the case should nurture readers' skills in resolving issues raised by business cases and improve their creative thinking, innovativeness, collaboration, and communication in teams.

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<sup>3</sup> Maersk Line is a born global B2B company operating in the shipping industry. According to Davina Rapaport, Social Media Manager of the company, Maersk Line has a digital ecosystem which encompasses different social media channels. All the different social media channels in the ecosystem contribute to the Maersk Line's marketing mix to generate leads for new business. The company considers social media as a commercial channel not a communication channel. For example, it organizes online campaigns and webinars via LinkedIn and Twitter around business issues targeted for potential customers in order to generate new business leads.

## <Supplementary information>

- Altum Blogs: <https://altumtechnologies.com/company/news-and-blog/>
- 5 Powerful Business Opportunities on Social Media: <https://www.struto.io/blog/social-media-business-opportunities>
- Social media business opportunities and challenges: <https://www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/content/social-media-business-opportunities-and-challenges>
- Why Social Media will Fundamentally Change Business: <http://sloanreview.mit.edu/article/why-social-media-will-fundamentally-changebusiness/>
- What Can We Learn From Maersk Line's Social Media Presence? <https://www.business2community.com/social-media-articles/can-learn-maersk-lines-social-media-presence-0634290>
- Maersk: The Value of Social Media: <https://cmr.berkeley.edu/2015/10/maersk/>
- Sustainability Is Good Business <https://www.businessfinland.fi/en/do-business-with-finland/invest-in-finland/business-opportunities/cleantech>
- Finland – a leading cleantech country: <https://www.finlandcleantech.fi/>
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- B2B Case Study: Maersk Gets Social Media Right  
<https://www.business2community.com/b2b-marketing/b2b-case-study-maersk-gets-social-media-right-0442328>
- How Social Media Helps Maersk Line Sell More Stuff:  
<https://thebrandgym.com/how-social-media-helps-maersk-line-sell-more-stuff/>

## APPENDIXES

### <Suggestions for literature that can be used for a case discussion>

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### <Teaching notes>

#### <Teaching Objectives>

The case covers international business issues such as 1) the international expansion of a born-global firm and 2) social media usage in the context of a born-global firm. Having studied this case, readers should:

- be aware of useful concepts related to firm internationalization, and entrepreneurial opportunity recognition in the social media context.
- have gained an understanding of the importance of social media in the international activities of BGs.
- understand why and how born-global firms implement social media
- be aware of the current challenges associated with social media usage and how they can be mitigated by BGs.

### *<Target Audience>*

This case is suitable for students at universities and other higher education institutions, and a secondary audience would be researchers in the fields of international business and entrepreneurship. All will be challenged to think strategically about internationalization at the interface of digitalization. The case will suit both bachelor's and master's level students equally well. More importantly, it challenges master's level students, including MBA candidates, to think outside the box. Thus, how to approach and conceptualize problems and solutions in innovative ways. The case has different applications in class, such as teaching knowledge/practices, particularly with regard to the international business field, including subfields like international entrepreneurship and management.

### *<Suggested Teaching Strategies>*

It was decided that a learning café would offer the best teaching environment to study this case. The learning café environment helps improve creative thinking, innovativeness, collaboration, and team communication. The learning café process typically involves the following:

First, the instructor divides the readers into groups, ideally of at least four people, so that each can contribute. Each group should be seated around a table and be supplied with paper and post-it, and marker pens.

Second, the instructor spends at least five minutes setting the context, explaining learning café etiquette, and introducing the case.

Third, the instructor circulates from group to group to monitor each group's discussions on the case. The instructor engages group members by asking questions during the rounds. The group discussions will probably last for at least 1 hour.

Fourth, when the group discussions are complete, each group nominates presenters who inform the class how they solved the case and share solutions, insights, and observations from the case.

Finally, the instructor takes at least 10 minutes to summarize the various insights and discoveries from the presentations before ending the session.

<*Suggested Answers to Discussion Questions*>

Question: Is it wise for Altum Technologies to devote more resource and attention to social media?

Suggested Response: Yes, investing in social media will provide Altum Technologies with an opportunity to have direct engagement with stakeholders, flexibility in the coordination of international activities, and scaling. Social media can also serve as a support system for sales and marketing subsidiaries in target markets and can therefore reduce the resources required and costs in foreign marketing activities. Finally, the open-access structure of social media facilitates easy connection for the firm to other networks in the foreign market (Refer to McFarland & Ployhart, 2015).

Question: Will Altum Technologies not fall into a virtuality trap?

Suggested Response: Yes, the company could fall into the virtuality trap if it prioritizes social media activities, such as online communication and networking, when searching for online opportunities, online sales channels, and online brand building at the expense of similar activities that can be organized offline (Refer to Yamin and Sinkovics, 2006; Sinkovics, Sinkovics, and Jean, 2013). However, the virtuality trap can be mitigated by complementing online activities with offline activities.

Question: Can Altum Technologies achieve the same success in recognizing opportunities in the foreign market as B2B companies like Maersk Line?

Suggested Response: Yes, it can if the right strategies and structures are implemented. As reported by the Head of Social Media, Maersk Line: *“In our original strategy, we accounted for what we could achieve via social media, including brand awareness, insight into the market and increased employee satisfaction. But our primary goal has always been “to get closer to our customers”.*

Question: With the upsurge of social media fake news where existing competitors of firms hire people and non-human algorithms such as social bots and cyborgs to generate

malicious content to smear the image of firms, what are the potential challenges that can hamper the survival of Altum Technologies in the foreign market?

Suggested Response: Competitors in the foreign market could use social media as a predatory tool to smear the image of the company by associating it with fake news. For example, in the high-technology industry, Apple temporarily lost market share when a fake news story was posted on a blog claiming that the firm was deleting its music collections (This is not exhaustive; readers are encouraged to list similar examples and provide other challenges).

Question: How should Altum Technologies address these challenges as they arise?

Suggested Response: The firm should be strategically flexible when affected by fake social media news. Strategic flexibility might involve addressing such issues in a proactive and timely manner by applying a denial strategy supported by social media posts (Refer to Gupta et al., 2016). This is not exhaustive; readers are encouraged to list other related measures.

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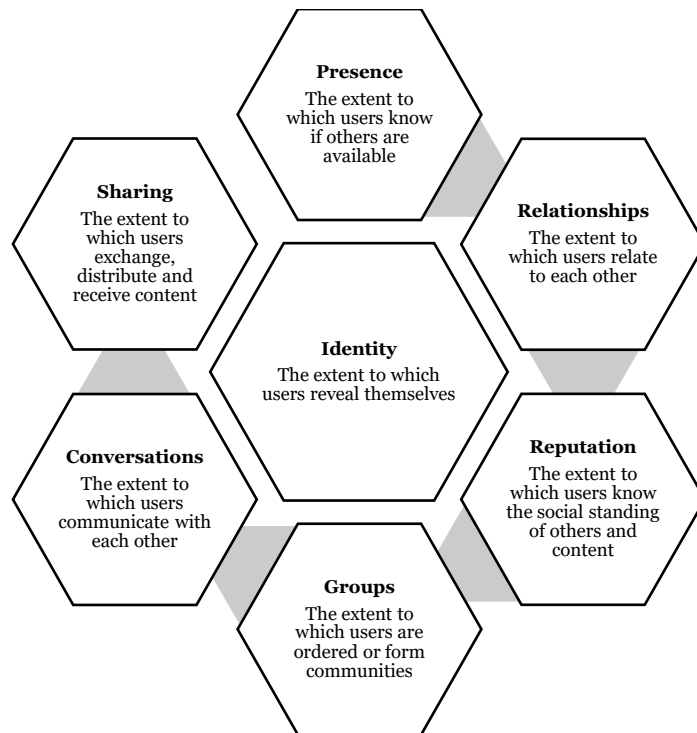


Figure 1. Honeycomb framework of social media (Kietzmann et al., 2011 p. 243)

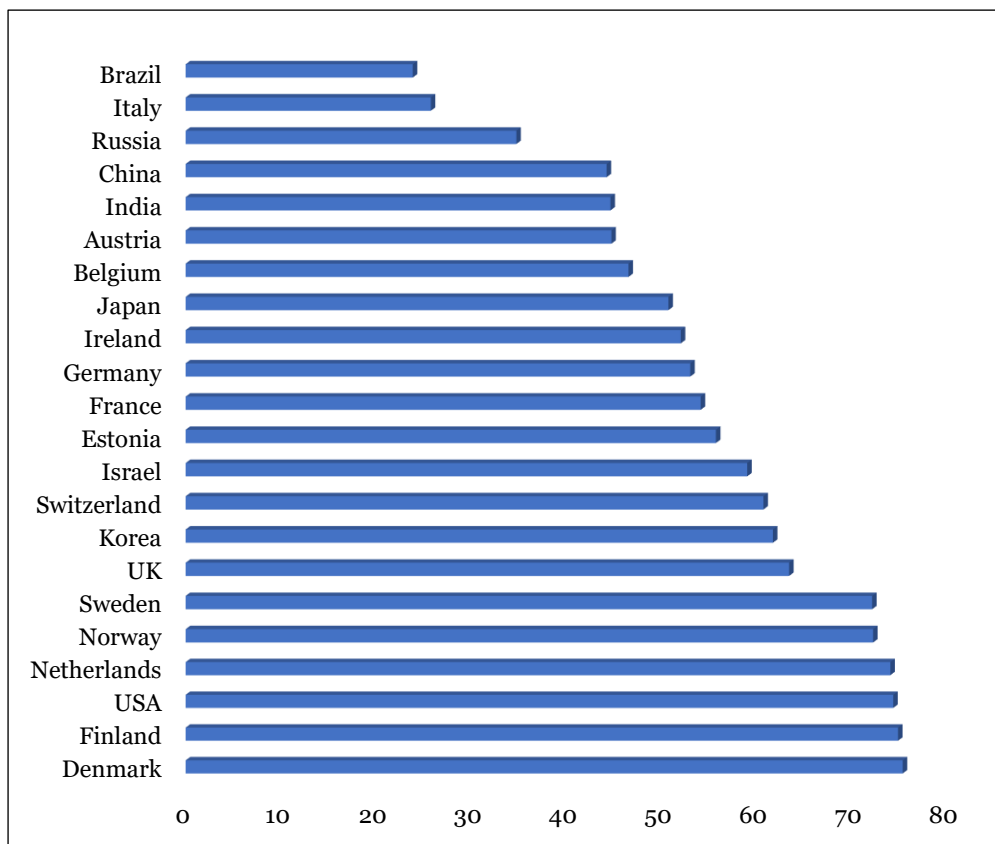


Figure 2. Overall ranking of digitalization utilization among countries