Web 2.0 in Organizations: Controlling Openness?

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WHAT
Are organizations able to harness the value of Web 2.0 while controlling the inherent openness?

WHY
Web 2.0 in organizations:
• High adoption rates but a big threat to organizations
• Social networking tools most valued but most feared too

METHODS
Interviews (N=27)
in-depth semi-structured interviews:
• Industry insiders
• Market analysts
• Academics

Semantic Network Analysis
Thematic and relational analysis of texts using Leximancer, to analyze concept frequencies, co-occurrences and structural relationships.

RESULTS
Contrast between semantic constructs of "openness" and "control"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semantic construct</th>
<th>Concepts</th>
<th>Correlation: organizations</th>
<th>Correlation: people</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Openness</td>
<td>create</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>share</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>0.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>post</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>0.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>control</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>0.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>monitor</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>0.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>policy</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>trust</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significance: Openness was more highly correlated with conceptual themes of people than with themes of organizations, t=6.7860, p=0.0025. Control was more highly correlated with conceptual themes of organizations than with themes of people, t=3.0219, p=0.0233.

DISCUSSION
The results indicate that semantic constructs of openness – which is characteristic of Web 2.0 – is more associated with conceptual themes of people than with themes of organizations. At the same time, themes of organizations are linked with semantic constructs of control more than openness. This suggests that while organizations recognize the value of Web 2.0, they seek to exercise control over the inherent openness of such tools. This organizational tension of balancing openness with control of Web 2.0 technologies can be attributed to the fact that Web 2.0 tools are fundamentally tools to create, share and transmit (potentially sensitive) information beyond corporate networks and its control.