



Flash Survey Series

5 questions about using social media data



An interview with Deloitte Advisory Leadership

Insights and information gleaned from social media data can be used for a broad range of business decisions and investigations. Closing a deal. Selecting a jury. Deciding whether to impeach an opposing fact witness. Identifying suspects in a fraud scheme. Detecting insider threats.

A recent Deloitte Advisory survey explored how executives view social data and how they're using it to support legal, personnel, and business investigations and decision making.

Social media data is clearly used widely by companies of all sizes. How have you seen this evolve?



Social media data has become a core business and legal intelligence tool in a stunningly short time. Today, social media data analytics can yield invaluable insights to support pre-transaction due diligence, third-party due diligence, fraud and insider threat investigations, asset searching and tracing, and litigation intelligence.

More than four out of five survey respondents (82%) use social data, almost all in conjunction with traditional information sources. The minority of executives who said their company did not use social data cited legal and privacy concerns (48%) and concerns about information reliability (38%). None of the executives at companies not using social data said it was very likely they would begin doing so in the next 12 months.

Seventy-seven percent of surveyed executives considered information from traditional sources to be very valuable, compared to 51% for social media. Do you expect this gap between the two is likely to close?



The self-reported nature of social media data makes it a growing and valuable source of insight into people's viewpoints, backgrounds and networks. Today "traditional investigative research" includes social media investigation, and more than half of surveyed executives (55%) expect its use in their company to grow in the next 12 months.

What do you think are the reasons why roughly seven out of 10 surveyed executives (69%) indicate their company does not use a software application to analyze social media information?



Social media data can already be obtained in the public realm surprisingly easily and quickly. At the same time, social media analysis tools remain expensive. And, because they are still fairly new, companies may not yet grasp the capabilities of these tools and the vastness of the information potentially available through using them. Among companies that do use software applications, keyword/term analysis (68%) and topic analysis (58%) were the most common capabilities of their applications.

1. The Deloitte Advisory Pulse Survey on Social Media Research in Investigations was completed by 123 respondents from July 21 to August 24, 2015.

Note: The survey questions about the specific uses of social media information in investigations were only asked of the 82% of executives at companies that currently use social media in this area

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In what types of investigations are businesses using social media and will that use grow?

Respondents said their companies use social media information most often in investigations supporting litigation (65%) and in research of company employees/new hires (64%) and third parties (55%). With rich, readily available data in the public realm, use of social media in due diligence and investigations should continue to rise as analytical tools and applications proliferate. Demonstrated evidence that these tools can be used while complying with privacy laws and regulations will be critical to this growth.



What are the leading social media sites for investigative purposes, and are they likely to remain dominant?

Unsurprisingly, LinkedIn and Facebook are the favored social media sites for investigative purposes, both used by 90% of surveyed companies employing social media. LinkedIn is highly valued (51%), somewhat more than Facebook (43%), likely because of its focus on professional histories and networks. While more than half of respondents (55%) indicated their company uses Twitter, only 25% considered it highly valuable.

Our key Flash Survey takeaway:

Businesses overwhelmingly employ social media information in investigations, using it in a variety of situations. Rapid growth in social data volume and use is likely to continue, especially as new analytical solutions and platforms emerge. Effective deployment of these increasingly powerful tools will challenge software developers to keep up with the growing demand for privacy and security that users, as well as government authorities, are demanding of social sites.



Learn more

For more information or additional survey findings, please visit www.deloitte.com/us/social-media-investigations

