

False identity or misrepresentation in social media

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This topic holds a strong place among ethical issues in e-marketing. Internet-savvy persons are getting more and more informed about false e-marketing or fake e-business advertisements. False identity helps the criminal in preplanned attacks against payment systems like pensions and medical insurance. E-marketing ethics require that in order to carry out effective e-marketing, the e-marketer must base the business on honest grounds. If he is honest in displaying his identity, consumers will automatically come to him because e-consumers always do business with the names they can trust. Similarly, it is unethical to adopt the identity of another successful organization as doing so tends to bring harm to the reputation of the owner of the cloned identity.

Here is an example when the issue was handled ethically. According to PR Log (2009), a Press Release, twenty fake identity factories had been sealed which were being operated by criminals who produced cloned driving licenses and utility bills. The Metropolitan Police was able to track down these factories in an Operation, arrested the criminals, and closed the factories. If such criminals keep on getting caught, then this would be a good lesson for those who think of crossing the ethical boundaries in interacting with social media and in carrying out e-marketing.

Let's discuss an example when this issue was not handled ethically. Johnson (2010) revealed in her article that according to a research conducted by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago, about the accuracy of WHOIS information provided by its registrants, " 23 percent of WHOIS records are fully accurate, 8 percent are patently false, and the remaining 69 percent are somewhere in between, containing some missing or inaccurate information". She stated that there were numerous hindrances

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in maintaining the accuracy of identities, such as information privacy, perplexity in the required information, no requirement for identity proof, and etcetera. Here, the issue was not being handled ethically as there were no rules about the implication of ethical standards and nobody was there to keep a check.

In my opinion, everybody visiting social media or carrying out e-marketing should be aware of the code of ethics presented in various data protection laws and legislation so that nobody dares to adopt someone else's identity in order to deceive the owner of the identity and other innocent people. This is a crime and should be considered seriously both at the individual as well as governmental level.