

STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN

ISO/TC 290 Online Reputation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With the transfer of conventional media to digital media, the rapid rise of user generated content and mobile connectivity, the management of Online Reputation is becoming essential for the strategic decision process of organization (companies, territories...) and their governance.

The present scope emphasizes online reputation for the benefit of the customer relationship more than the value of a brand; the objective is not the evaluation of the brand but the improvement of the transparency – through development of methods and best practices – to better handle online reputation. This can be achieved through the definition of codes of conduct and monitoring of comments and / or remarks targeted to bring confidence to content that can be channeled through internet users.

The focus of ISO/TC 290 is to identify and address standardization needs and gaps related to Online Reputation, primarily for organizations and to meet market expectations including that of consumers.

The scope of ISO/TC290 is:

Standardization of methods, tools, processes, measures and best practices related to online reputation of organizations or individuals providing services or products, derived from user-generated content available on the internet.

Excluded:

- *privacy and data protection frameworks or security information standardization already covered by ISO/IEC JTC 1/SC 27;*
- *management system standards already covered by ISO/TC 176/SC 3;*
- *fraud countermeasures and controls already covered by ISO/TC 292/WG 4;*
- *brand evaluation already covered by ISO/TC 289;*
- *customer contact centres already covered by ISO/PC 273;*
- *market, opinion and social research already covered by ISO/TC 225.*



Note: User-generated content - any form of content such as blogs, wikis, discussion forums, posts, chats, tweets, podcasting, pins, digital images, video, audio files, advertisements and other forms of media that was created by users of an online system or service, often made available via social media website

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 ISO technical committees and business planning

The extension of formal business planning to ISO Technical Committees (ISO/TCs) is an important measure which forms part of a major review of business. The aim is to align the ISO work programme with expressed market's environment needs and trends and to allow ISO/TCs to prioritize among different projects, to identify the benefits expected from the availability of International Standards, and to ensure adequate resources for projects throughout their development.

1.2 International standardization and the role of ISO

The foremost aim of international standardization is to facilitate the exchange of goods and services through the elimination of technical barriers to trade.

Three bodies are responsible for the planning, development and adoption of International Standards: [ISO](#) (International Organization for Standardization) is responsible for all sectors excluding Electrotechnical, which is the responsibility of [IEC](#) (International Electrotechnical Committee), and most of the Telecommunications Technologies, which are largely the responsibility of [ITU](#) (International Telecommunication Union).

ISO is a legal association, the members of which are the National Standards Bodies (NSBs) of some 164 countries (organizations representing social and economic interests at the international level), supported by a Central Secretariat based in Geneva, Switzerland.

The principal deliverable of ISO is the [International Standard](#).

An International Standard embodies the essential principles of global openness and transparency, consensus and technical coherence. These are safeguarded through its development in an ISO Technical Committee (ISO/TC), representative of all interested parties, supported by a public comment phase (the ISO Technical Enquiry). ISO and its [Technical Committees](#) are also able to offer the ISO Technical Specification (ISO/TS), the ISO Public Available Specification (ISO/PAS) and the ISO Technical Report (ISO/TR) as solutions to market needs. These ISO products represent lower levels of consensus and have therefore not the same status as an International Standard.

ISO offers also the International Workshop Agreement (IWA) as a deliverable which aims to bridge the gap between the activities of consortia and the formal process of standardization represented by ISO and its national members. An important distinction is that the IWA is developed by ISO workshops and fora, comprising only participants with direct interest, and so it is not accorded the status of an International Standard.

2. BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT OF THE ISO/TC

2.1 Description of the Business Environment

Due to the increase of new internet technologies, the use of mobile devices and the improvement of quality of networks, the expansion of the exchange of information on the internet has been exponential. User experience and sharing of opinions became keys to the digitalization of communication. With the transfer of conventional media to digital media, the management of Online Reputation is becoming essential for the strategic decision process of organizations (companies, territories...) and their governance.

Reputation is defined as beliefs or opinions that are generally held about someone or something (Oxford English Dictionary). Among all aspects of Reputation, only Online Reputation is addressed by ISO/TC290 and can indeed be described as the image of a brand, a company, an individual, a product, a service on Internet and social media. This is the result of various opinions and comments circulated by individuals on social media via the internet.

Reputation management is the practice of monitoring the reputation of an organisation or brand, addressing contents which are damaging to it or promoting it, and using consumer commentary to get feedback or early warning signals to reputation problems. Online Reputation can be measured and tools are required.

Online reputation management requires a global approach that should be associated with quality management and quality customer relationship. It is mainly composed of:

- monitoring of reviews and opinions expressed on the brand, company, individuals...
- Content analysis (semantic and videos)
- Preventive support towards the customer: proactive approach, interactions with the customer, collaborative approach

Nowadays, the impact of online reputation on business, consumers and individuals is also highly linked with trust in social media. For organisations, handling online reputation becomes a full-time job, requiring monitoring and protection of their image. The use of best practice and Online Reputation tools helps organisations to anticipate negative reviews circulated on social Medias. This is part of the digital marketing strategy of organisations.

No ISO or IEC documents exist specifically in this field of activity and a global approach on this thematic is required in order to embed standardized solutions dealing with online reputation. This is considered as a major issue for companies and individuals. Different levels of development and various skills on the subject require a global approach. The making of global standards applied locally will lead towards better practices in the field.

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The following stakeholders are directly impacted and concerned by standards related to online reputation:

- Marketing, Public Relations and Community Managers
- Quality managers
- Customer Relationship Managers (CRM)
- Service, software and internet providers, online reputation companies, and website managers, providers of social media and e-communities platforms
- Certification and evaluation/assessment bodies
- Academics and researchers in the areas of online reputation development and/or support processes
- Public Authorities, legal advisor
- Non-governmental organisations:
- Associations of consumers' interest

- Mass media (stakeholder groups that use Internet as a channel for expressing their opinions and for gathering the opinions of others)
- Online reviews administrators
- Information aggregators
- Online reputation management organizations
- Technical service industry (data supplier, rating, scoring, insurance, etc.)
- Regulator of the relevant industries

The adoption of ISO standards will encourage best practice and self-regulation approach in the market. Consumer will be well protected and industry player will have some guiding principles in managing their daily business. ISO can actually avoid over regulation by the relevant authorities.

Some relevant international, national standards or voluntary initiatives can be identified:

- French standard Z 74-501 Online Consumer Reviews – Principles and requirements for collection, moderation and delivery processes for online consumer reviews
- COPOLCO activities (user/consumer's interest in international standardization)
- Denmark's Ombudsman
- Australian Communications Consumer Action Network Conference
- UK's consumer market authority
- Consumer review freedom act of 2015
- FTC Guidelines from the USA on endorsement of testimonials
- Japanese Guidelines on word of mouth marketing
- Australia's Commission on Competition and Consumers

3. BENEFITS EXPECTED FROM THE WORK OF THE ISO/TC

Standardisation in this field aims at developing high quality global standards in order to shape and improve usages on internet and social media. The objective is the standardisation of methods, tools, key performance indicators and best practices based upon data that can be captured through social media related to online reputation of organizations or individuals providing services or products.

The making of international standards in the field is expected to enhance the transparency and confidence in social media for all stakeholders involved. There is a need for global standards that can address online consumer reviews. For customer oriented feedback based on users experiences, standards in this field will help in establishing principles and requirements while collecting online consumer reviews based on the consumer experience; fair and reliable transactions/relations between several stakeholders (such as customers, consumers, communities of customers suppliers, ...) aiming at simplifying the relationship; the objective is to develop an interaction model which can be useful for both parties.

It will help the customer to feel involved in the process of evaluating products and/or services through the integration of their opinion in the research of added value of products and/or services. It will also help the organization to adapt its marketing policy for the improvement or maintenance of its relationship with customers.

For organisations and individuals providing services and products, standards in this field will help achieve the establishment of codes of practice to be used, including appropriate strategy of communication and of data leak prevention; the training of personnel in risks generated by the use of internet and social media (applicable to organizations and individuals); the development of best practice of customer relationships in the use of customer related management (CRM) tools; codes of ethics to avoid denigration drives; the prevention and protection against blackmailing based on reputation and risks resulting from competitors' behaviour affecting organisational online reputation

Such standards can also help authorities establish best practice and guidance on online reputation.

Best practice in digital marketing could improve the business model of organisations. Consumer reviews, as part as organisation reputation, constitute indeed today a major element in consumers' research and purchase decision process. Negative search results can affect sales and the company's bottom line.

Building trust in social media contributes today to open markets.

Standardisation appears to be appropriate to develop best practice for international organisations and individuals to monitor their reputation. Standards are not mandatory but constitute an open framework ideal for adoption of management standards in the field of online reputation. ISO standards are also expected to facilitate the harmonization of national and regional standards. With respect to open competition, this goal may be achieved through adoption of common rules and development of appropriate tools and processes.

Standardisation on Online Reputation will provide global organisations and individuals with online tools to harmonise their practices in building trust on the web and social media. It will make best practice in this field available to any country, organization, company or individual. In addition to national initiatives on online reputation a global approach is also required.

4. REPRESENTATION AND PARTICIPATION IN THE ISO/TC

4.1 Membership

http://www.iso.org/iso/home/standards_development/list_of_iso_technical_committees/iso_technical_committee_participation.htm?commid=5166853

ISO/TC290 has established liaisons with the following ISO Technical Committees and external organisations:

- ISO/TC 225 market, opinion and social research
- ISO/TC 289 brand evaluation
- ISO/TC 176/SC 3 supporting technologies
- HOTREC
- ANEC
- Consumers International
- ETTSA

Additional membership related to online reputation: any global online reputation association

4.2 Analysis of participation

ISO/TC 290 looks forward to representing all stakeholders in the field of online reputation. Those stakeholders currently include representants from:

- Consumers organizations
- Academics
- Online review management platforms
- Brands and retailers
- Business consortia
- Standards organizations

ISO/TC 290 has identified stakeholders which are still not represented in its members:

- Search aggregators
- Regulators
- Lawyers

The following countries are participating as P-Members (Participating Countries): Austria (ASI), Canada (SCC), China (SAC), Czech Republic (UNMZ), Finland (SFS), France (AFNOR), Germany (DIN), Italy (UNI), Malaysia (DSM), Spain (AENOR), and United Kingdom (BSI)

The following countries are participating as O-Members (Observing Countries): Argentina (IRAM), Belgium (NBN), Egypt (EOS), India (BIS), Iran, Islamic Republic of (ISIRI), Israel (SII), Japan (JISC), Korea, Republic of (KATS), Netherlands (NEN), Norway (SN), Peru (INACAL), Saudi Arabia (SASO), Switzerland (SNV), Thailand (TISI), and Uganda (UNBS)

5. OBJECTIVES OF THE ISO/TC AND STRATEGIES FOR THEIR ACHIEVEMENT

The TC will develop a package of International Standards in the Online Reputation sector for organisations and individuals providing services and products including:

- Definitions and terminology
- Content analysis and measurement (tools, methods, processes, best practices and performance indicators)
- Management of Online Reputation for organizations (orient to different types of reviews, such as employment / job service, online education/ training, etc.)
- Best practices for Online Consumer Reviews (online trading platforms, independent evaluation platforms including social media, mass media, websites, from professionals, blogs, comparators, forums)

- Risk control of Online Reputation for organizations (risk identification, risk analysis, risk shift and control, use insurance service to protect organization and consumer, etc.)

ISO/TC290/WG1 will elaborate a standard on Online Consumer Reviews. Online reputation is a factor in any online community where trust is important. An online review is an evaluation of a publication, a service, a product or a company posted online.

The objectives are:

- To cover a large scope of stakeholders to satisfy all sectors and organization types.
- To cooperate with liaisons with other ISO committees and/or external liaisons
- To use available national, regional or other standards as source documents on which to base International Standards
- To coordinate with relevant technical committees and other standardization initiatives
- To use the various ISO deliverables (International Standards, Technical Specifications, Publicly Available Specifications, Technical Reports, International Workshop Agreements);
- To identify potential mischief /threat and develop guiding principles to minimize threat and impact to the consumers and business sustainability.

ISO/TC 290/WG2 will develop an International Standard on Vocabulary and Terminology, as it was considered essential to reach consensus on the main definitions, which can be used as the common basis to develop further standards and/or requirements.

The objectives are:

- Develop terminology standards in coordination with other ISO/TC290 Working Groups
- Use the various ISO deliverables already available on terminology

Other WGs will be considered in the future following the needs raised by TC members (e.g. social and mass media).

ISO/TC290 will meet regularly in Plenary sessions along with Working Groups meetings. WG meetings will be conducted both by physical meetings and teleconferences.

Other interactive structures within the TC to address specific needs for pre-normative research could be considered following the needs expressed by TC members. ISO Guide 82 on sustainability will be distributed to Working Groups and can be used as a reference to draft standards with enhanced sustainability.

6. FACTORS AFFECTING COMPLETION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ISO/TC WORK PROGRAMME

The success of ISO/TC290 depends on the willingness and availability of the various experts in the field. The legitimacy of experts in the field of Online Reputation is required. Experts should have a strong awareness of business goals, practical experience in Online Reputation and standardisation.

Online Reputation requires a global approach: attention must be kept on a broad representation of stakeholders, including consumers, involved in the standardisation process.

Even though Online Reputation is not highly regulated, ISO/TC290 should pay attention to possible national legal issues and local specificities.

7. STRUCTURE, CURRENT PROJECTS AND PUBLICATIONS OF THE ISO/TC

This section gives an overview of the ISO/TC's structure, scope, projects and publications. All of this information is updated regularly and is available on ISO's website, ISO Online.

The link below is to the TC's page on ISO's website:

http://www.iso.org/iso/home/standards_development/list_of_iso_technical_committees/iso_technical_committee.htm?commid=5166853

Click on the tabs and links on this page to find the following information:

- About (Secretariat, Secretary, Chair, Date of creation, Scope, etc.)
- Contact details
- Structure (Subcommittees and working groups)
- Liaisons
- Meetings
- Tools
- Work programme (published standards and standards under development)

Reference information

[*Glossary of terms and abbreviations used in ISO/TC Business Plans*](#)

[*General information on the principles of ISO's technical work*](#)