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Legal Issues Presented by Social Networking

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Social networking is a truly remarkable vehicle for advancing communications. Whether participating in LinkedIn, Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, or another of the latest networking tools, participants can quickly reach out to a host of individuals and effectively initiate mass communications within their social networks. Intentionally, social networks are designed to grow exponentially to an unlimited number of users in a short amount of time.

Information that is posted, perhaps innocently, within a social network can be spread quickly to others connected to the network – much like a virus. In turn, the recipients of such information can further transmit communications to others outside the networks. Similarly, information that is posted on blogs, microblogs, and elsewhere on the Internet is susceptible to being retransmitted in ways unimaginable by prior generations in the workforce.

Today's communication vehicles, including social networking and blogging, raise a number of risks for companies. This article identifies and discusses several of the more important legal issues presented by employee activities through these vehicles.