Table A.7a Advantages and disadvantages of social media

Advantages of social media	Disadvantages of social media
• Timely and fast; incidents get reported through social media quicker than through traditional media; • Shareable content and easy distribution creating viral effect and buzz; • Provide possibility to organise and reach niche communities (also for marketing purposes); • Quick search possibilities and inter-subjective accumulation of knowledge (wisdom of the crowd); • Serve deeply-felt need of humans for confirmation by linking people to a wide range of networks that confirm their existence (even if the tweet you send, or the blog you keep is only read by one other person); • Increase the possibilities of collaboration in a professional setting: collaborative authoring, (video) conferencing and scheduling meetings; • Individual reputations can be rapidly gained through social media (unknown YouTube singers getting world famous); • Mobilisation function: crowds; • Informal means of communication.	• Content presents subjective (personal) perspective of informants; information is checked by participants, not necessarily by experts; • Results of social media often represent an average; • Spread of 'information can also imply spread of rumours, which reinforces the 'mediacracy' of the bargaining society (➤Challenges); • The personal becomes public; risk to the privacy of people; danger of manipulation increases; • Reliability and authenticity issue: possibility of 'ghostwriting' increases; are you sure you read the product of the stated author? How authentic is crowdsourced information?; • Inappropriately used social media intervene with other forms of communication which makes them less constructive; • Being 'alone together' (Turkle, 2011): social media increase the distance between where we physically and mentally are. The abundance of superficial communication via tweets, email, sms and the like intervenes with more meaningful direct (face-to-face) communication.

Sources: based on www.social-media.nl; Turkle, 2011; CIBER, 2010