Virtual Communities

Mini-track Chairs

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Virtual communities based on message boards, chat rooms, user groups and blogs have emerged as high activity domains on the Internet. Virtual communities are designed for a variety of purposes that could range from Communities of Interest, Communities of Relationship, Gaming Communities, and Communities of Transaction to Peer-to-Peer Communities or Mobile Communities and Second Life. The significance of these communities is evident by the impact they have on information generation and transmission, and socialization. For example, today, blogs are quickly becoming a primary source of information in a variety of domains. The dynamic and interactive nature of these forums makes them very attractive for the users. An additional value offered by many of these communities is their ability to support socialization and offer an identity for the participants. While most virtual communities share these characteristics, it is also important to recognize that virtual communities are not homogeneous; they differ significantly based on the domain, purpose and benefits. For example, virtual investing-related communities are focused on offering an important forum for individual investors to discuss stock performance. Open source communities, on the other hand, are virtual communities that offer a platform for participants to collaborate and produce a product of value to the entire community. Within the field of information systems researchers are interested at studying interaction patterns, transaction processes, management aspects, business models, and design aspects of information systems and services for virtual communities. Community members interact via digital media and contribute value in the form of content, reviews, and recommendations. Related issues are trust, network effects, transaction costs and the design of services. Well-organized communities even expand their power across various channels and into the Offline world. Empirical and conceptual work will be welcome for this Mini-Track. Despite the increasing popularity of virtual communities, several questions relating to virtual communities remain largely unexplored.

We call for papers on social as well as business communities. Possible topics include (but are not limited to):

- Social, political and economic impact of Virtual Communities
- Community models, platforms, services, and interactions, multi-channel communities
- Management and organizational behaviour of communities
- Community-related business models
- Transaction-oriented Virtual Communities, Customer collaboration
- Peer-to-Peer or mobile services for Virtual Communities
- Case studies and empirical studies, best practices and lessons learned
- Motivation of participants in virtual communities
- Benefits of participation in and competition among virtual communities
- Information dispersion in virtual communities
- A typology of virtual communities
- Evolution of and innovation in virtual communities
- Gaming Communities and Second Life

This Mini-Track builds on the success of the preceding AMCIS Mini-Track on Virtual Communities. During the last six years we have been gathering a community of researchers who are interested in the field of Virtual communities and related issues. Please visit the Mini-Track website at http://www.virtual-community.org

Mini-track Chair Information:

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