

Communities in the Digital Economy Concepts, Models and Platforms

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Community building and community development, i.e., community management are a key success factor in the digital economy. They differentiate business models in the digital economy from traditional ones.

These communities may be constituted as Internet shops, portal sites, groupware systems, electronic auctions, billboards, enterprises or organizations. Product-centered communities as well as communities of interest are relevant for electronic marketing, as for example the reader communities at Amazon.com, The Well, or Dreamworks. Another example are communities that form value chains, such as single product manufacturing consortia or flexible consumer-driven organization of global supply chains. Further examples are topic and technology oriented communities such as Open-EDI trading communities, Open Trading on the Internet (OTP), or EDI/XML, in addition to the community-oriented programming of Linux. Communities of practice or learning communities are pivotal for knowledge management.

As the mentioned examples show, online communities differ in their orientation. The features, that all types of communities share are common interests, practices, languages and ontologies with common semantics as well as normative issues. The platform plays a special role for those communities. Thus, the relation, interplay or symbiosis between communities and platforms is of particular interest.

This minitrack comprises a series of papers that address communities, their platforms and community-related business models as critical success factors in the digital economy. It covers a variety of novel concepts, models and platforms for communities. This minitrack deals with:

- Community-related business models, best practices and lessons learned.
- Case studies and topologies of Online Communities.
- Conceptual frameworks, formal and semi-formal models of communities, the behavior of agents and the platforms.

- Design principles for interaction and community platforms: Coordination, trust, normative values, design patterns and methods, implementations, architectures and components.

The first session of this minitrack comprises three papers on communities in general. Katarina Stanoevska and Beat F. Schmid present a typology of communities and community supporting platforms. Yao Hua Tan and Cristiano Castelfranchi discuss with trust and deception two of the most crucial issues in Electronic Commerce. The third paper of the first session, written by Bernd Simon, Susanne Guth and Gustaf Neumann presents a general framework for Learning Media.

The second session comprises three case studies of communities in the digital economy. Dorine Andrews and Jennifer Preece present an analysis of communities that are resistant to Online Interaction. The second paper by Alexander Hars and Shaosong Ou is an empirical study on the motivation for participation in communities arising around open source projects. Ulrike Lechner and Beat Schmid analyze in a series of case studies the relation of business models and system architectures in communities.

The third session presents two papers that deal with application specific issues in communities. Steven O. Kimbrough, DJ. Wu and Fang Zhong present a simulation framework for software agents in supply chain management. The second paper of this section authored by Sue Newell and Jacky Swan deals with communities in innovation and knowledge management.

The paper of Dorine Andrews and Jennifer Preece entitled "A Conceptual Framework for Communities Resistant to Online Interaction" was nominated for the best paper award of this minitrack.