

Minitrack Value Webs in the Digital Economy

In its first year the minitrack on Value Webs has attracted various submissions. Its intention to address Value Webs as networks of partners who collaborate within different stages of interlinked value chains enabled by ICT is the first step towards a new interdisciplinary research field. The minitrack discusses the use and impacts of emerging technologies in interlinked value chains to support inter-business and inter-personal processes and relationships from technological, social and economical perspectives.

The first paper "Determinants of the Future Level of Use of Electronic Marketplaces Among Canadian Firms" by Pierre Hayda intends to measure the influence of various factors on firms' future level of use of electronic marketplaces. The data collected from 1,200 senior managers in Canadian firms shows that the complexity tied to the use of electronic commerce is negatively associated with the future level of use of electronic marketplaces. Additionally the data from the survey demonstrate that the relative influence of the various factors on the future level of use of electronic marketplaces differs according to the firms' size.

The second paper "Managing supply networks: Symptom recognition and diagnostic analysis with web services" by Jochen K. Speyerer and Andrew J. Zeller describes the prototypical implementation of a disruption management and controlling system for Value Webs.

The third paper "Customers as part of value webs: Towards a framework for webbed customer innovation tools" by Ralf Reichwald, Sascha Seifert, Dominik Walcher and Frank Piller addresses customer integration into innovation processes taking place within a value web. This process of "webbed customer innovation" is discussed as a beneficial method to overcome some of the flaws and challenges of new product and technology development. Thereafter a framework for webbed customer innovation tools is presented.

The fourth paper "Mobile Phone Users between Customization and Innovation" by Frank Piller, Christoph Ihl, Johann Füller and Christof Stotko introduces a 'toolkit for open innovation' as a value web in between consumers and users. The toolkit is an internet based application allowing users to create a customized game on their desktop computer and to transfer it to handheld device. The paper shows that the notion of a value web surpasses that of networked supply chains. Issues such as innovation webs point towards other reason for the existences of value webs than pure fulfilment of customer demand. In addition there are characteristics of the value webs as such, that need careful research and attention to their design.

The organization of a new minitrack offers challenges, both in content and administration. Many thanks go to Jan Marco Leimeister for covering both aspects in a

wonderful and efficient manner. I am confident that in the future even more attention will be given to these characteristics of value web in the digital economy.

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