

▼ Introduction to Value Webs in the Service Economy Minitrack

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In its fifth year the minitrack on Value Webs again attracted several diverse and interesting submissions. Value Webs consist of networks of partners who collaborate within different stages of interlinked value chains enabled by ICT. They form a basis for establishing a new interdisciplinary research field. Diffusion of Internet, web services as well as deployment of mobile and pervasive technologies result in both industry wide and organizational transformations with far reaching micro- and macro economic effects. These transformations are triggered by pervasive ICT infrastructures, and new products and services that enable sustained product- and process-innovations. Examples of such innovations include Zero Latency Business, Mass Customisation, Enterprise Application Integration, Collaborative Supply Chain Management, Mobile Commerce, and Customer Integration in product development and distribution. Each one of them echoes deep changes that the Internet and Mobile Technologies are creating in that Internet and Mobile Technologies affect now all facets of production, distribution and usage of information goods and significantly transform development-, production- and distribution of physical goods.

The impact of Internet is seen in a new wave of corporate strategies which recognizes novel competitive challenges associated with the existing value chains that are becoming dissolved or being totally reassembled. Competition shifts from inter-company level to competition over strategic partners and architectural control. This we call competition within and between Value Webs—the challenge of forging new value chain arrangements. Value Webs consist of networks of partners and competitors, which collaborate across and within various stages of value chain. The interactions within Webs are enabled and constrained by new ICT capability where value extraction draws significantly upon architectural responsibility and control.

The minitrack discusses the use and impacts of emerging technologies in interlinked value chains especially in the service economy and how they support inter-business and inter-personal processes and relationships from technological, social and economical perspectives.

The first paper, “e3service: An ontological Approach for Deriving Multi-supplier IT-Service

Bundles from Consumer Needs” by Sybren de Kinderen and Jaap Gordijn, argues that IT services need to be seen as services that satisfy a consumer need. Typically, to satisfy a consumer need, a bundle of elementary services is required. In such a bundle, each elementary service can be offered by a different supplier. A key problem is then how to actually find service-bundles that satisfy consumer needs as close as possible. Because IT-service bundles can be automatically provisioned online immediately after ordering, finding a service bundle satisfying a need should preferably also happen automatically. The authors propose an ontology, that enables automated reasoning support for matching consumer needs with available IT services in the market. The e3service ontology is explained by a case study in the telecom industry.

The second paper, “The 8C Framework as a Reference Model for Collaborative Value Webs in the Context of Web 2.0” by T. Andrew Yang, Vishal Dhalwani, and Dan Kim, presents a framework for understanding the various design elements of a collaborative Value Web in the context of Web 2.0. After explaining the characteristics of Web 2.0, the authors present the 8C Framework by incorporating a collaboration element into the previously existing 7C Framework. Sample representative Web-based services are then analyzed with the 8C model.

The third paper, “The Role and Emerging Landscape of Data Pools in the Retail and Consumer Goods Industries” by Jan Werner Schemm and Christine Legner, focuses on the importance of product data alignment between retailers and their suppliers in the implementation of Efficient Consumer Response (ECR). This paper explores the multilateral exchange of product data in the retail supply chain using the Global Data Synchronization Network (GDSN). Based on a survey it analyzes the role of data pools as well as the evolving landscape of B2B intermediaries in this area. It concludes that the Global Data Synchronization Network will lead to an increasing specialization of data pools in either mega pools or local specialists.

We are confident that future more research attention is needed in understanding the antecedents, the structural features, design parameters and the outcomes of value webs in the service economy.