Introduction to Crowdsourcing Content Production and Online Knowledge Repositories Minitrack

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As various forms of collaboration are enabled (and constrained) by the affordances available in social media, researchers are investigating a range of issues including: 1) the diverse ways in which people collaborate to create, manage, curate and manipulate online content and how these activities affect digital repositories; 2) how those who manage these repositories are responding to the co-creation of online content 3) the dynamics of crowdsourced online collaborations and online communities of practice; and 4) the ways in which we can best describe the socio-technical interaction networks that facilitate and inhibit mass knowledge production. This minitrack focuses on online interactions for knowledge production on crowdsourced sites.

This year the Crowdsourcing Content Production and Online Knowledge Repositories minitrack in the Digital and social media track includes three papers. All three discuss the challenges associated with content quality. These papers are as follows:

• The first paper is Questioning the Question – Addressing the Answerability of Questions in Community Question-Answering, by Chirag Shah, Vanessa Kitzie, and Erik Choi—all from Rutgers University. The authors investigate question quality among questions posted in Yahoo! Answers to determine the factors that contribute to the goodness of a question. They built an SVM classifier that performed with relatively good classification accuracy for both good and bad questions and enhanced the performance of this classifier by using additional human assessments of questions. The authors report that the performance of the original classifier improved, suggesting that their model presents a novel approach for identifying bad questions, thus having implications for query revision and routing.

• The second paper is User Involvement in Self-Governing Contents in Professional Online Communities, by Tingting Zhang, Angsana A. Techatassanasoontorn, and William Y. C. Wang—all from AUT University, Auckland, New Zealand. The authors argue that increasingly, professionals seek knowledge from online communities to resolve problems that they encounter in the workplace. However, the quality and reliability of online content are still a concern. Previous research suggests that user involvement in sorting out online content is likely to be an effective means to ease some of the concern. Drawing on social exchange theory, self-determined theory, and related literatures, the authors propose a research model to understand the underlying factors that influence professionals’ involvement in sorting out quality content in professional online communities. The key factors in their model include reciprocity, reputation, trust, community commitment, and self-determined motivation.

• The third paper is Value-Adding Intermediaries in Software Crowdsourcing by Hamed Tajedin, from York University, and Dorit Nevo, from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. According to the authors, the information systems (IS) discipline has been fertile ground for research that delineates the role of technology in transforming organizations. Crowdsourcing counts as one such phenomenon, but our empirical understanding of it is nascent at best. This paper presents a preliminary theoretical justification for the emergence of crowdsourcing intermediaries by describing how they add value to this new sourcing arrangement. They report findings of a case study and confirm two sets of value-adding activities taking place in a crowdsourcing platform: those at the market (macro) level and those at the transaction (micro) level.