Introduction to HICCS-49 Social Networking and Communities Minitrack

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The Social Networking & Communities minitrack focuses on questions of community building and management as mediated by social media and networking platforms. By ‘communities’, we include communities of practice, epistemic communities, communities of inquiry; as well as fully virtual communities, and social media use that supports or complements geographically based community. We called for research, theory, practice, or policy papers that address social networks and communities supported and/or complemented by social media for work, learning, socializing, economic and/or political processes, and/or that address theory, design, practices, use or evaluation of such social media use.

The minitrack has been ongoing since 2003 under various titles. This year, the minitrack comprises nine papers selected from 25 submissions, covering a wide range of topics related to the interrelationship between social media and communities in all aspects of our online and offline lives.

The first set of three papers focuses on the organizational context:

- *Community Management on Social Networking Sites: Why and How Stakeholders Use Corporate Facebook Pages* by Christopher H. Ruehl and Diana Ingenhoff, which applies a combined perspective of uses-and-gratifications and social cognitive theory to investigate users’ incentives to consume and interact with Swiss corporations on Facebook.

- *How Do Online Social Networks Support Decision Making? A Pluralistic Research Agenda* by Valeri Sadovykh and David Sundaram investigates the potential utilization of online social communities and networks as a support tool for the decision-making process.

- *Consumer Acceptance and Use of Instagram* by Joel Järvinen, Roope Ohtonen and Heikki Karjaluo using the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology 2 to study the factors affecting the acceptance and use of Instagram as a social network service.

The second set of three papers focuses on users’ dynamics in context of online communities:

- *Relational and Masspersonal Maintenance: Romantic Partners’ Use of Social Network Websites* by Stephanie Tom Tong and David K. Westerman examines how the “masspersonal” features of social networks affect relational maintenance between romantic couples.

- *Play Together, Stay Together? Community Cohesion and Stability in an MMO* by Nathaniel Poor and Marko Skoric uses a large-scale dataset to study player bonds across time and across guilds in multiplayer online games.

- *Understanding the Factors Affecting Users’ Like Intentions in Social Network Services: A Multi-Dimensional Value Perspective* by Yongqiang Sun, Dina Liu, Xiao-Liang Shen, Xi Zhang and Nan Wang investigates the factors influencing users’ like behaviors.

The final set of three papers focuses on political aspects and impact of online communities:

- *Disaster Data Assemblages: Five Perspectives on Social Media and Communities in Response and Recovery* by Alex Lambert considers new ways to think about social and mobile media in recovery that elide both the language of data, and the focus on ‘communities of practice’.

- *A Systematic Literature Review of Twitter Research from a Socio-Political Revolution Perspective* by Ricardo Buettner and Katharina Buettner review Twitter-related literature to identify empirical and design-oriented research needs.

- *Dissidents versus Allegiants on Facebook: An Examination of Facebook Page Networks Related to Channel 4 War Crime Videos on Sri Lanka* by Chamil Rathnayake and Daniel D. Suthers takes a network analysis perspective to understand communities of dissidents and allegiants formed on Facebook in relation to Sri Lanka’s ethnic conflict.