
Editorial

Hannu Kärkkäinen*

Department of Business Information Management and Logistics,
Tampere University of Technology,
P.O. Box 541, 33101 Tampere, Finland
E-mail: hannu.karkkainen@tut.fi

*Corresponding author

Eelko Huizingh

Department of Innovation Management and Strategy,
Faculty of Economics and Business,
University of Groningen,
P.O. Box 800, 9700 AV Groningen, The Netherlands
E-mail: k.r.e.huizingh@rug.nl

Steffen Conn

The International Society for Professional Innovation Management
(ISPIM), P.O. Box 18, Worsley, Manchester, M28 1XP, UK
E-mail: conn@ispim.org

Biographical notes: Hannu Kärkkäinen is a Professor of Knowledge Management at the Department of Business Information Management and Logistics at Tampere University of Technology in Finland, and an Adjunct Professor of Knowledge Management at Lappeenranta University of Technology, Finland. His current research interests include knowledge management and decision-making in innovation, organisational learning, the early-phase management of R&D, customer needs assessment in business-to-business organisations, and the cooperation and value networks in product innovation. Social media is currently one of his focal research interests, as it brings new important possibilities and benefits to the above more generic research interests. He has published a number of refereed international journal articles in journals such as *International Journal of Technology Management*, *R&D Management* and *International Journal of Production Economics*, as well as books and other publications on the above research topics.

Eelko Huizingh is an Associate Professor of Innovation Management at the Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Groningen, The Netherlands. He is the Director of Scientific Affairs of The International Society for Professional Innovation Management (ISPIM). His research focuses on the intersection of innovation, marketing, and information technology. He has (co)authored over 300 articles, which have appeared in *Technovation*, *Marketing Science*, *Marketing Letters*, *European Journal of Innovation Management*, *International Journal of Innovation Management*, *International Journal of Technology Management*, *International Journal Entrepreneurship and Innovation Management*, *Decision Support Systems*, *Information and Management*, *Organisational Behaviour* and *Human Decision Processes*. Recently, Sage published his book *Applied Statistics with SPSS*.

Steffen Conn is the Operations Director of The International Society for Professional Innovation Management (ISPIM). Although primarily concerned with running ISPIM, he has edited issues or published articles in *International Journal of Production Economics*, *Technovation*, *International Journal of Innovation Management*, *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Innovation Management* and *International Journal of Technology Management*.

1 Introduction

We have seen the advent of several novel communication and collaboration media during the last decade. Web 2.0 and social media are among the most compelling and promising of such new media types, especially from the standpoints of both innovation management and knowledge management. Their fast adoption and widespread public interest is associated with the growing popularity of originally non-commercial public social media applications such as Facebook, wikis and blogs, as well as micro-blogging services such as Twitter. There is also a downside in this strong association: in practice, managers often link social media strongly to especially Facebook and Twitter, thereby overlooking that these applications form only a minor part of the social media genre in business.

Web 2.0 encompasses technologies that enable users to communicate, create content and share it with each other via communities, social networks and virtual worlds. They also make it easier to have real life experiences in virtual worlds and to organise content on the internet with content aggregators (Lehtimäki et al., 2003). Such tools and technologies emphasise the power of users to select, filter, publish and edit information, as well as to participate in the creation of content in social media (Tredinnick, 2006). Social media can be defined as “a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content” (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). Furthering this, social media are often referred to as applications that are either fully based on user-created content, or in which user-created content or user activity have a significant role in increasing the value of the application. A large number of different types of social media applications can be identified, such as collaborative productions (e.g., Wikipedia), social content communities (e.g., YouTube, Flickr, Digg), blogs (e.g., company newsrooms), micro-blogs (e.g., Twitter), intermediaries (e.g., InnoCentive), mash-ups, social networking sites (e.g., Linked-in, Plaxo, Facebook), prediction markets, and virtual social worlds (e.g., Second Life).

Recent literature in innovation management, Henry Chesbrough in the front-row, has recognised a new increasingly important innovation paradigm. This paradigm, ‘open innovation’, emphasises the importance of the improved and extended use of knowledge and information across organisations. Open innovation stresses that innovations should be based on both knowledge within the company and knowledge residing outside the company borders. Valuable innovation-related knowledge is increasingly widely distributed among different actors, organisations (e.g., companies, customers, suppliers, universities, etc.) and communities. Collaborative web tools and approaches, including social media, enable and increase the use of distributed knowledge both within and

outside company borders, as well as support the transition towards more open innovation processes.

Social media enable novel ways of interacting and collaborating in innovation processes, as well as for creating new information and knowledge for innovations. These opportunities have not been studied extensively yet, because of the novelty of social media concepts and approaches, and due to a lack of understanding of the possibilities of social media and inherent communities for innovation purposes. Furthermore, it is unknown how different industries and firms comprehend the potential benefits of using social media in enhancing innovation and customer involvement. Also, we lack understanding how social media in practice improve innovation processes and how its use and effectiveness varies in different business contexts

This special issue of *IJEIM*, 'Social media and communities in innovation', aims to bring answers to some of the questions raised by the dawn of social media in the innovation context.

2 Papers in the special issue

This special issue is based on various presentations and discussions at events organised by the International Society for Professional Innovation Management (ISPIM).¹ The review process started with eleven selected best paper submissions from authors in several countries: Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Switzerland, and Taiwan. After a thorough review process with a number of reviewers with expertise in the special issue topics, five papers were accepted for publication in this special issue. The accepted papers represent a relatively wide variety of topics within the field of social media and community use in innovation, from crowdsourcing process research to architectural innovation by web-enabled communities and knowledge management 2.0. They also represent a wide variety of methodological approaches, including both empirical and literature/theory-based research, which all help to build a foundation to further social media-related studies.

'Openness of innovating: the new roles of customers and users in business-to-business context', by Nordlund, Lempiälä and Holopainen, studies the yet rather poorly understood and surprisingly little studied context of the business-to-business sector, and the specific challenges of open innovation and communities from the viewpoint of customers and users, focusing on their new roles, and particularly the 'user as the innovator' approach. They raise the issue that the business-to-business sector differs significantly from business-to-consumer world, and the differences have many important pointed-out implications for user community building and community-related innovation, as well as social media in business-to-business use.

'Exploring users motivation in innovation communities', by Ståhlbröst and Bergvall-Kåreborn, focuses on the motivation to participate in innovation communities, helping to understand the very central and often critical issue of communities and social media applications: why would someone give away or contribute professional knowledge to a community whose members the contributor has never met in real life?

'The crowdsourcing process: an intermediary mediated idea generation approach in the early phase of innovation', by Muhdi, Daiber, Friesike and Boutellier is centred around the question of making the task of crowdsourcing a more systematic approach,

utilising the experiences of twelve real-world cases from different Swiss companies in various industries. The study results in a novel crowdsourcing process and several specific guidelines for companies engaging in intermediary-mediated crowdsourcing projects for idea generation.

'The evolution of modularity and architectural innovation: web-enabled collective development of a tangible artefact', by Carignani, Andriani and De Toni, addresses the interesting question whether a web-based community of peers could autonomously engage in the task of architectural innovation and develop tangible products. They present a framework that builds upon the idea of product modularisation enabling community collaboration, as well as some other mechanisms enabling collective innovation. The power of the framework is demonstrated in a case setting of a high-performance human powered watercraft development community.

Finally, 'Potentials of knowledge management 2.0 and implications for corporate governance', by Schneckenberg, aims to provide better understanding of how governance models influence the use of Web 2.0 tools for knowledge sharing. The author states that the potential of Web 2.0 technologies to foster collaboration depends on the creation of liberal work cultures and the establishment of corporate governance structures. These have to be taken into consideration when managers aim to foster the use of collaborative Web 2.0 technologies for knowledge sharing in corporate networks.

3 Conclusions

We believe that these five papers make a valuable contribution to the current understanding of social media in the context of new product development and innovation. We hope that these contributions also help to develop new openings and novel research to improve our understanding of the role of social media and communities in such business contexts. By systematically reporting and accumulating case studies and theoretical insights in this still novel field, we expect a further increase in the practical applications of social media for innovation purposes. As the tools and concepts are currently still in the infant stage, new applications and insights may ultimately lead to future social media applications that we cannot even properly imagine at this point of time.

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Notes

- 1 The International Society for Professional Innovation Management (ISPIM) is a worldwide network of innovation management professionals from research, industry and intermediary organisations. ISPIM's goals are to create a worldwide network of excellence in the field of innovation management, to enhance collaboration between its members and to be at the forefront of research on innovation. ISPIM achieves this via its international conferences and regional events, journal publications, collaborative research projects and other member services.