Editorial

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Biographical notes: Stefan Hrastinski is an Assistant Professor in Media Technology in the Department of Media Technology at KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden. He is also affiliated with The Swedish IT-User Centre and the Department of Informatics and Media at Uppsala University. His main research interests are online learning, collaboration and innovation in organisational and educational settings.

Mats Edenius is a Professor in Information Systems in the Department of Informatics and Media at Uppsala University, Sweden. His main research interests lie within the areas of information technology, knowledge and management. Further, his research is also linked with usability issues, ICT and open innovation processes. His research covers both private and public sector.

Niklas Z. Kviselius has a Master and PhD from Stockholm School of Economics with specialisation in International Business and Marketing. He currently does research on open innovation, aspects of trust in internationalisation, and innovation and roll-out strategies in the ICT-industry. Much of his research has been focused on business relationships with the Japanese market.

The open innovation paradigm suggests that organisations increasingly need to team up with other organisations and customers in developing and refining ideas, services and products. Research has mainly focused on managerial, strategic and legal dimensions of open innovation, and how open innovation practices can stimulate the development of novel technologies. Despite that it is widely acknowledged that technologies are often of importance in open innovation processes, little research has studied how various technologies enable and support open innovation. Collectively, the papers of this special issue show that great potential lies in the use of collaboration systems to enable and support open innovation practices.

In January 2010, we arranged a minitrack on 'Collaboration systems for open innovation' at the 43rd Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences. The intensive discussion and the great interest contributed to a successful event. We welcomed papers that explored how collaboration systems can enable and support open innovation in inter-organisational and intra-organisational settings, and in user and consumer networks. In this special issue, three extended high-quality papers from the mini-track are included.

The three papers of this special issue represent different perspectives on how IT and collaborative systems can support open innovation. The first paper: 'Does collaboration among participants lead to better ideas in IT-based idea competitions? An empirical investigation', by Blohm, Bretschneider, Leimeister and Krcmar, is a field study about how wiki technology can be used to support collaboration in idea campaigns. Typically, idea management systems let users contribute with ideas, and rate and discuss the ideas of others. Blohm et al. describe the use of wikis for idea management, where idea management is taken a step further: users are able to edit participants' idea. The paper shows that most of the ideas of highest quality were edited collaboratively. They also discuss the role of incentives in idea campaigns and argue that few, attractive prices might stimulate competition rather than collaboration. An alternative could be to provide functionality for collaboration and hand out prizes to teams rather than single participants in order to stimulate collaboration. They also point out that participants are also intrinsically motivated and can be supported by building community and fostering social interaction.

The second paper: 'Open innovation and control: a case from Volvo', by Kuschel, Remneland and Kuschel, builds on the longitudinal perspective of ten years of interaction between two major industry sectors – automotive and telecom. The connection between the design of IT and the resulting openness raises interesting questions. More specifically, Kuschel et al. explore the role of IT in open innovation processes by reflecting on a longitudinal empirical study of open innovation. They show that the choice of IT infrastructure has a strong impact on the outcome of open innovation.

In the third paper: 'The power of platforms for software development in open innovation networks', Ghazawneh explores the role of product platforms for software development in open innovation networks. The paper thoroughly discusses the concept of product platform and provides practical examples of how the use of platforms can enhance open innovative practices. Ghazawneh extends the more general discussion of Kuschel et al. by showing how product platforms support open innovation in a Web 2.0 context, by discussing iPhone, Facebook and Twitter's product platforms.

Research on open innovation commonly mentions that information technologies are a key ingredient of open innovation. However, few have attempted to unveil how different information technologies, such as collaboration systems, can support open innovation.

Jointly, the papers of this special issue advances our understanding by giving examples of how collaboration systems support and hinder open innovation among major industries, in idea campaigns and in Web 2.0 contexts. Many exciting research opportunities lie ahead as part of exploring how IT and collaboration systems can support open innovation.

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