Editorial

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Biographical notes: Piet Kommers is Associate Professor at the University of Twente, The Netherlands. His specialty is social media for communication and organisation. As conference co-chair of the IADIS multi-conference he initiated the conferences of Web-Based Communities and Social Media, E-Society, Mobile Learning and International Higher Education. He is Professor at the UNESCO Institute for Eastern European Studies in Educational Technology and he is Adjunct Professor at Curtin University in Perth, Australia.

Margriet Simmerling is Peer Consultant/Senior Manager for R&D projects in the area of e-society and web-based communities. She participated in the advisory board for the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs and is active as a Reviewer for the European Commission. She designs and moderates e-learning modules and workshops e-learning modules and workshops in the domain of education technology and psychology at the PhD level.

In the first issue of the 9th volume of the *IJWBC* we present articles of 29 authors. Coming from four continents, working in ten different countries: Australia, Japan, Italy, Malaysia, Greece, The Netherlands, Singapore, the UEA, the UK and the USA, it will provide the reader with findings from different perspectives.

At the dawn of the social web (2.0) the main interest was on *how* to create relationships online. Only later the extrapolation of social network analysis caught the attention of sociologists who asked themselves how structural network measures could help in typifying lager patterns in the vast entailment meshes. Several approaches can be discerned from now on:

1 Pure mathematical parameters like descending from graph theory can be applied; structural centrality, betweenness and vulnerability measures have been explored. Its strength is tractability rather than expressiveness. As soon as types of relationships and the 'arity' (number of arguments per relationship) of links get distinguished, the meaning of network parameters gets disambiguated, however searching and

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computing gets np complete due to the combinatorial explosion of higher order relationships. The trade-off between expressiveness and tractability has been discussed in the context of knowledge graphs already two decades before.

2 Based upon real big data like the latent semantic networks based upon a concrete SNS like Facebook or LinkedIn, it is possible nowadays to instigate network enrichment programmes where the pure structural measures become complemented with the social- and communicative patterns as they arise from user interactions. For instance, the frequency of link traversals can be mapped unto the layer of concise representations in for instance sociograms.

3 Data mining that allows network analysts to iterate along various dimensions enable a Bayesian approach. The charm of it is that momentary interests can be allowed, avoiding a 'grand fishing expedition'. Examples are the searches for relevant cliques in criminal organisations, finding prospect customers for direct marketing and for instance to find potentially-adequate learning partnerships of members that are mutually compatible/complementary for collaboration.

First of all, in addition to the methodological alternatives as above, we may ask ourselves how the actual 'sense of community' evolves. It means that special attention should be given to the fact that a community may obey the structural prerequisites of being a dense-, saturated- or solid community, while in fact its members have a totally different feeling about it. For this reason it should be noted that social networks should not merely be apprehended as formal entities; the human members need to be polled if they share such qualification, directly or indirectly.

Secondly, especially in web communities, there is a great aspect of transiency; its membership and relational expression may last for years, but also it may last for few minutes only. Typical for these short-term relations is that they may have a rather high impact though, as the candidate partner can verify its legitimacy in few seconds by looking to a person's social network and its status.

Finally, there will be an avalanche of new-coming 'network connotations' that goes beyond the scale of traditional f2f network parameters like we did in for instance sociograms at the level of primary groups like classroom friendship patterns and the like.

One of the emergent challenges for the next coming years is to find out what impact the network-analytic support systems gave to the development of actual patterns in 'friendship' or 'referential' activities. The key question is if its more strategic motives proliferate the structure of society, different from before. Alternatively it might show that person equipped with strategic social network tools just try to consolidate the intuitive affinity that they had based upon the f2f relationships before.

The quality of blogging has been due to a fast restructuring based on the fact that blogging provided options that were diametrical to the convention of document as a consolidation of earlier agreements. The mere reason to opt for 'frozen' rather than 'living' documents, was a technical one; Once printed on paper and disseminated, it was almost impossible to retract them, unless a reprint was demanded.

Social networking is everywhere. This issue starts with an overview of the current situation. In the article 'Social networking for web-based communities', Tomayess Issa

and Piet Kommers examine the opportunities, challenges and threats of social networking in the organisation, education and healthcare sectors.

Making and reading blogs: Is there a need for any indication about the quality of a blog?

Zuhaira Muhammad Zain, Abdul Azim Abd Ghani, Rusli Abdullah, Rodziah Atan and Razali Yaakob explore a model to measure the quality of blogs. The study ratifies the reliability and validity of 49 criteria. Future research is proposed to reduce the amount of criteria and make the model suitable for practical use.

The next article addresses situations in the healthcare sector and focuses on a specific user group: men with prostate cancer. Remarkable outcome is that this group has a specific way of communication that can be of direct influence on patients and healthcare professionals. Katarzyna A. Campbell, Neil S. Coulson and Heather Buchanan share with us the latest findings.

More research is presented by Alton Y.K. Chua and Radhika Shenoy Balkunje. They investigate the different types of interaction in online discussion communities. This article, beyond knowledge sharing-interactions in online discussion communities, widens the horizon of scholarly inquiry by performing a content analysis of messages in online discussion communities to uncover other important forms of interactions other than knowledge sharing. Specifically, the article presents and examines online interactions demonstrated by ODC users.

It is interesting to read the findings from Italy: the Nostalgia Bits project. Luca Morganti, Andrea Gaggioli, Silvio Bonfiglio and Giuseppe Riva focus on the attitude elderly like to do: reminiscence. The purpose of the website is to create significant resource for other generations and for connecting the elderly users with members of their own generation. In the article 'Building collective memories on the web: the Nostalgia Bits project' website features are identified that are shared between elderly and children and create a sort of reminiscing community sharing knowledge of the past.

In the article 'Managing virtual communities of practice to drive product innovation', Daniel Rongo shares with us several ideas how communities of practice can support new product development. Rongo introduces the 'social wage' as a non-financial reward system to support activities such as developing a new product.

Sami Miniaoui and M. Basel Al-Mourad presents recommendations for the development of platforms serving communities of Practise, based on several surveys within the PALETTE project. In the conclusion a vision on the general layout is presented, as well as relevant features that must be included in the platform.

James Benhardus and Jugal Kalita outline in their article 'Streaming trend detection in Twitter' methodologies for using streaming data, tf-idf term weighting, normalised term frequency analysis, and other criteria to identify trending topics on Twitter. The authors investigate the ability to extract and identify pertinent information from a continuously changing corpus with an unconventional structure.

The article 'Culture and brand communications in social media: an exploratory analysis of Japanese and US brands' is a study, exploratory in nature. Adam Acar, Daiki Takamura, Kaho Sakamoto and Ai Nishimuta indicate that brands should be aware of the culture of their customers and fine tune how social media messages are communicated. Important finding for brand managers exploring cultural differences.

The last article presents interesting results of a field study addressing the three most popular Web 2.0 technologies: blogs, wiki's and social networking sites. Are these technologies useful for educational purposes and studying support? A survey amongst Greek students show that the usage of wikis and blogs is not very high however students do use wiki's and blogs for learning purposes. Future research is proposed.

We hope you are inspired to start and/or continue publish research around 'Social networking for web-based communities'. Let us keep in touch!