Introduction

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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 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 like *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.

Heljä Franssila is a researcher and PhD student at the Tampere Research Center for Information and Media (TRIM) at the School of Information Sciences (SIS) in University of Tampere in Finland. Her current multidisciplinary research interest has concentrated into information ergonomics in knowledge work, lean information management, computer-supported collaborative work and productivity impacts of new collaborative, mobile and location aware technologies in industrial work environments.

Artur Lugmayr describes himself as a creative thinker of future media environments, and his scientific work is situated between art and science. He has over 15 years experience in the wider field of digital media from a business, technological, and content creation perspective. His experience extends towards digital television, digital film making, virtual reality, media business information management, business consultancy, social media, ambient media, and creative media designs. His vision is to create innovative media experiences with emerging media platforms tagged with solid business models and processes. He is a Full Professor for Entertainment and Media Production Management at the Department of Business Information Management and Logistics, Tampere University of Technology (TUT) and founded the EMMi – Entertainment and Media Production Management Lab, as well as the Ambient Media Association (AMEA), among many other activities.

Olli Sotamaa is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the School of Information Sciences, University of Tampere. He has published in and edited special issues for several recognised scholarly journals including *Convergence*, *First Monday*, *Fibreculture, Games and Culture*, *Game Studies*, *International Journal of Arts and Technology* and *Simulation and Gaming*. His current research interests include co-production, cultures of game industry, and creative labour.

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1   Introduction

We have seen the rise of significantly novel and powerful types of communication and collaboration media during the last decade. Some of the most compelling and promising of such media types, from the standpoints of both business-oriented and non-profit organisations, are the concepts of Web 2.0 and social media. These collaborative approaches enable for instance the engagement of customers and citizens in very novel ways, as well as reducing barriers for reaching people directly by managers, CEOs, and the employees of the public sector and non-profit organisations. Through social media, individuals and groups of people can build new meanings and new knowledge using communities and internet-based technologies.

According to a number of studies, marketing, public relations, innovation management, intra- and inter-organisational communication and organisational learning can be hugely facilitated by recognised innovative ways of using social media. As a result, business organisations, non-profit organisations and the public sector are facing both the benefits and the challenges in the social-media-based new ways of influencing opportunities of individual persons, increased democratisation, changing rules of competition and previously unseen forms of business models. In the well-being and recreational sectors, we are probably just in the beginning of the path towards novel types of social experiences, which include for instance motivating people to sports and other

recreational activities, and emotionally heightened sense of collectiveness in a wide range of public events and even political elections.

The fast wider adoption and public interest in social media has its roots at least partly in the growing popularity of the originally non-commercial public social media applications such as Facebook, wikis and blogs, as well as the later micro blogging services such as Twitter. However, social media and its possibilities should not be reduced to merely the above social media types, which is the mistake commonly made by managers, academics and individuals. There is a downside in the former hugely popular pioneering applications of social media – the adoption and attitudes towards social media seem to be affected by the above phenomena, and in practice, people often seem to associate social media strongly to especially Facebook and Twitter, which are only a very minor part of the social media genre.

Defining social media is not very easy and straight-forward. The sub-concept 'Web 2.0' can be defined as technologies that enable users to communicate, create content and share it with each other via communities, social networks and virtual worlds, making it easier than before. 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., 2009). 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). The broader concept '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 or the service. A large number of different types of social media-related 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).

Taking into consideration the wideness and perhaps the current vagueness of the social media concept, as well as the relatively young age of social media, despite the extant social media hype and already a huge amount of literature published, the use and the potential of social media in many different specific contexts, is still quite superficially understood.

This special issue of *IJSHC*, 'Contemporary social media topics in business and public organisations', aims to bring answers to some of the currently topical questions and challenges raised from the application of social media in various contexts.

2 Papers in the special issue

This special issue for *International Journal of Social and Humanistic Computing* is one of the outcomes of the Academic Mindtrek Conference 2010. The aim of this special issue is to reflect upon, examine and review the use of contemporary social media approaches in various business and public sector contexts.

After a thorough double-blind review process with a number of reviewers with expertise in the special issue topics, seven papers were accepted for publication in this special issue. The authors are from five different countries, representing different types of expertise and viewpoints to the topic of social media. The topic itself requires very varied and deep understanding from multi-disciplinary research. The accepted papers do, respectively, represent a relatively wide variety of approaches and topics within the field of social media and community use in varied contexts and topics, from online sports communities and collective heart rate research to studies of social media strategies in media companies and novel ways of social marketing. They also represent a wide variety of methodological approaches, including both empirical and literature/theory-focused research, all helping to build a foundation to fast-evolving social media practices and studies.

'The role of social media for media companies', by Drulă, identifies ways in which media companies expand their production and business by the better consideration of user generated content in the purpose of facilitation the creation of an online audience or the creation of new media products. The study shows that the related management methods and practices have evolved differently in different media companies through the implementation of the new media platforms, and that there are clear differences in the achieved implementation efficiency.

'Enriching shared experience by collective heart rate', by Perttula, Tuomi, Kiili, Suominen, Koivisto and Multisilta, studies the novel use of mobile device-enabled collective heart rate. The paper evaluates it as one of the new features that could enhance the shared experience among the audiences in co-creational spaces and public events, such as sports events, bringing intensiveness into the audience experience and creating a sense of collectiveness and togetherness by novel technologies. The study is interesting because it introduces a novel way of user involvement with the techniques of mobile phones and heart rate measurement belts.

'From design participation to civic participation – participatory design of a social media service', by Bäck, Friedrich, Ropponen, Harju and Hintikka, introduces a novel social media-based approach to support civic participation and integration of immigrants. It presents critical issues and lessons learnt during the design process. It raises up, for instance, that when designing services for civic participation, more focus should be put on designing and testing concrete participation processes, and that well-designed community management practices are needed.

'Personal content in online sports communities: motivations to capture and share personal exercise data', by Ojala, studies the users of three different online sporting communities, clarifying for instance the social needs and motivations to share content in online sports communities. Even though the primary need for most users was to create and maintain a personal training diary, they saw also various types of clear benefits in sharing their data with the other members of the community, for instance, in order to gain important information on exercising as well as peer support.

'Social stream marketing on Facebook: a case study', by Trattner and Kappe, exclaim that very little is known about the benefits and performance of social network-based marketing campaigns, despite their huge popularity and presumed success. To make a contribution, they analyse the results of an ad-driven social network marketing campaign centred on the social media platform Facebook. They also present an analysis of simple real-time measures to detect the most valuable users on Facebook.

'Investigating Facebook's acceptance and satisfaction: a study in the Greek university community', by Giannakos, Pateli and Chorianopoulos, investigated the uses of the social network site Facebook, and the influence of these uses on user acceptance and satisfaction. It examined how the four Facebook uses, social connection, social surfing, wasting time and using applications, shaped the level of users' behavioural intention and satisfaction regarding Facebook. Social surfing and wasting time had a significant impact on users' satisfaction.

Finally, 'Understanding the user generated content and interactions on a Facebook brand page', by Cvijikj and Michahelles, aims to contribute to companies' understanding of utilisation of social networks as a marketing platform, approaching the problem from the perspective of understanding the user generated content and interactions. They bring up that daily users exhibit significantly more interest in brand profiles, and that triggering the user interaction could result in optimisation of the marketing investment. They conclude, for instance, that improving the level of user's activity would be a worthy goal for the companies, achieved through a stronger moderation, e.g., encouraging posters and preventing or discouraging aggressive posts and comments.

3 Conclusions

We believe that the included studies make a valuable contribution to the current understanding of social media in the context of applying social media in business and public sectors. We hope that the papers' contributions also help to develop new openings and novel research for the better understanding of the role of social media and communities. We hope that we can see an increase also in the practical applications supported by these kinds of pioneering studies. Quite possibly, in the course of time, maybe even very briefly, we might see such ways to apply social applications that we cannot properly imagine at this point of time.

Acknowledgements

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