
Editorial

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Biographical notes: Zhangying He is a Veteran Product Manager in designing/managing web/mobile applications and software products in APAC and USA since 2000. Besides working as an IT practitioner, she actively participates and authors on academic researches. Her research interest focuses on real world applications of open source, virtual team, product design and management.

Piet Kommers is an Associate Professor at the Department of Media, Communication and Organization of the University of Twente, the Netherlands. He is a pioneer in media-based education and has undertaken new ways to represent prior knowledge. Concept-mapping methods were articulated in terms of learning styles. Media-like gaming and 3D virtual environments were tested against traditional instruction and proved to elicit students' naïve concepts more vigorously. His recent interests lie in the effects of media on social awareness and in the creative attitude towards finding solutions to survive financial crises. The notion of the networked society becomes increasingly tangible in web-based transient communities. Based on this perspective, the question becomes more and more opportune as to how education is going to address this new social reality. Will strategic networking become a curricular goal in itself?

Since the past ten years, web-based communities have proliferated to a broader range of applications and web services. They share some common aspects, such as networking, collaboration, user-created information, and knowledge sharing. Web communities originate from the conjunction of Web 2.0 services, initiated by O'Reilly (2005), but today the scope is far beyond that. The original concept was centred on PC-based web services. With the advancement of mobile technologies and the integration of mobile, web, and cloud, web-based communities have become the central stage of people's digital life, at both the personal and professional levels, and can be accessed from anywhere at any time by a plethora of web-enabled devices, not only personal computers, but also tablets, smart phones, connected TVs (Ahson and Ilyas, 2011) and other new product forms, such as wearing products, and so on.

Wherever there are internet connections, there are web communities, in both developed and developing areas around the world (Kohut et al., 2012). Although social media and social networking services are still the most popular web services, there are much broader categories growing rapidly to serve both mass and niche markets, for consumers and corporate users. Such services, for example, can be entertainment, personal management services, social activities, work applications, or healthcare services.

In this special issue ‘Rethink the challenges and opportunities in the emerging of mobile and web community’, we present six papers, written by 13 authors from Mexico, India, Finland and Germany. They address the issues and opportunities for these web-based community services, including social media, social gaming, location-based online diary, social applications and the TED education community. We notice that web-based communities and the social media, in one way, are the targeted research subjects and, in another, they are also new approaches to collecting data for these studies.

- 1 We begin our special issue with a paper titled ‘Messages on social networks and its impact on social capital’ by Susana González, Gabriel Valerio and Dagoberto Herrera, who investigate the correlations and impact of the amount of negative messages in web-based communities with social capital and crime in Monterrey City, Mexico. Through their qualitative and quantitative analysis, they were able to identify the themes of negative messages in social networks and how the exposure of these negative messages correlates with perceived social capital and crime.
- 2 Our next paper, ‘Design ‘the Pori hidden beauties geocaching series’: computer-supported collaborative web-based learning and sharing experiences’ by Pirita Ihamäki, examines the learning model through collaboration integrated with social media (Facebook), GPS geocaching social game (the Pori hidden beauties), face-to-face classroom teaching, together with real-world game hunting activities in the Pori National City Park. The study reveals that web-based virtual communities are a powerful extension of collaborative learning, community building and knowledge-sharing in the formal student learning process. It hopes the research could lead to further studies and experiments in integrating student learning with today’s proliferated web system and communities.
- 3 The third paper, ‘Cultural influence on online community use: a cross-cultural study on online exercise diary users of three nationalities’ by Sanna Malinen and Piia Nurkka, uses quantitative data from an online diary community to explore the perception and behaviour differences due to cultural differences and cultural impacts. The study reveals that the Spanish are the most interested in social networking, collaboration, and content-sharing, whereas the Germans are the least active in participating within the social community. This study also provides some suggestions about localisation and product design features in the context of different national cultures.
- 4 The next paper, ‘A novel method for clustering tweets in Twitter’ by Shanmugam Poomagal, Palanisamy Visalakshi and Thiagarajan Hamsapriya, discusses a proposed tweets-clustering method, which takes place by using suffix tree clustering (STC), along with semantic similarity among the posted tweets, to identify the themes of the tweets. It does this by retrieving 200 snippets from the internet and then comparing the performance of the proposed method with the

existing methods. This proposed web-clustering method has a strong implication not only for groups that tweet but also for other web-based communities to share knowledge, and to suggest connections and interests based on content. By performing this clustering, tweets which are semantically similar can be clustered together, from which the number of tweets on a particular topic, and the user community who shared those tweets, can be identified. The identified user community could then be suggested to the corresponding advertisers, so that both advertisers and the users would benefit.

- 5 The fifth paper, 'Purchase intention and word of mouth in social apps' by Mayank Sharma, Pradeep Kumar, and Bharat Bhasker, addresses the factors and analyses the impact of these factors on the purchase of virtual and digital goods, such as avatar, music, games, software, and digital files in social applications associated with social network sites. This paper proposes a Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and is an important contribution to our understanding of social self-image expression, customisability, and aesthetics when designing social applications associated with web-based communities.
- 6 The final paper of this issue, titled 'Motivation to collaboration in TED Open Translation Project', by Lidia Cámara de la Fuente, targets the studying of the key motivating factors that drive volunteers to spend time and effort to contribute to the TED virtual community in the form of the Open Translation Project (OTP). There are many researches about code-based open source software development, but there are only a few empirical researches on non-code-based crowd-sourcing phenomena in web-based communities. Its link is vital, in order to allow readers and future authors to understand how the TED-OTP model could be expanded and used in the formal learning environment, such as secondary schools, colleges and universities.

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