Editorial

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Biographical notes: Piet Kommers is an 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 a Professor at the UNESCO Institute for Eastern European Studies in Educational Technology and Adjunct Professor at Curtin University in Perth, Australia.

Margriet Simmerling is a 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.

Big data has entered the arena of social media; in reverse, we may say that social media, and web communities in particular, are one of the richest resources for big data as well. Web-based communities are not only rich in the sense of large and expressive; they are especially rich in terms of socially aware and even vital for deriving trends in political apprehension and consumer behaviour as well. Not only the interaction between people is crucial; more and more it is people's interaction with content through 'liking', 'favouring', '+1-ing', 'upvoting' and 'sharing'. It is possible to observe a rising or falling trend and predict the rest of the lifespan. However, "is it also possible to capture the causes underlying trend?" This is the answer we are going after in this special issue.

- In the article 'Modelling content lifespan in online social networks using data mining' the authors John Gibbons and Arvin Agah describe a system capable of extracting data about content from OSNs, analysing the data with data mining techniques, using a model for content lifespan and popularity tiers, and then comparing the classifiers based on runtime and accuracy. They used publicly available data from Reddit, 4chan, Flickr, and YouTube via their APIs. For Reddit,

4chan, and Flickr, the authors observed the data in real-time immediately after publication for 24 hours or until the content was removed.

Crowdfunding is the second aspect of current web-based communities today: What makes a crowd funding project successful? Does it relate to the community behind the initiative?

- Jens Lechtenbörger, Florian Stahl, Vanessa Volz and Gottfried Vossen provide insight into various variables related to the success of crowdfunding projects based on continued crawling of Kickstarter and Startnext. In the article 'Analysing observable success and activity indicators on crowdfunding platforms', they include variables related to community aspects and analyse them in detail.

In respect to *learning and teaching*:

- Sibren Fetter, Wim Van der Vegt and Peter B. Sloep point out that research on learning in networked settings has taught us that, with the right mechanisms in place, group formation may be facilitated, a process which ultimately may lead to the establishment of genuine communities. This mechanism builds on the notion of ad hoc transient groups (AHTGs) and it deploys a technology that helps to stock these groups with network members who are willing to and capable of supporting each other. In the article 'Fostering online social capital through peer-support', the ability of AHTGs to create productive groupings of people in large-network settings is tested. The results are analysed and conclusions generated. New research questions are formulated.

Concerning *online communities of practice*:

- Margarida Marques, Maria João Loureiro and Luís Marques present empirical evidence to support the potential of the online community of practice. The article 'Science teaching strategies developed in an online community of practice: a case study' give a valuable contribution to the existing literature about science teaching strategies.

Related to the *adoption of social networking in healthcare systems*:

- In the article 'Examining the risks of social networking adoption in the Bhutanese healthcare system', Peldon and Tomayess Issa address the research approach of social networking adoption to the healthcare system. The article is remarkable with its subject on an experimental approach made in a specific area in the world. The new findings from this study add new theoretical significance to the current literature review.

Thus far there have been few papers which have explored the impact of participation within *online communities and engagement in health-related behaviours*.

- The present study 'Prediction of health behaviours of users of online weight control communities: the effects of social support, and social connectedness' represents a novel and fascinating insight into the role of online communities and weight control. Chen Ling, Paul Branscum and Xiaoquen Wang made an original contribution to the field.

- In the article 'Sharing to be sociable, posting to be popular: factors influencing non-static personal information disclosure on Facebook among young Dutch users', Ardion Beldad seeks to understand factors that would affect disclosure of information by Facebook users.

Last year, we celebrated the tenth volume of this journal's life. In this final issue of the 11th volume, we present articles addressing community research in various domains: models to classify content, crowd funding platforms, teaching strategies, health behaviour and Facebook usage. Eighteen authors from seven countries (the USA, Germany, New Zealand, Portugal, Australia and The Netherlands) inform us about the latest research and developments.

It is a challenge to present these interesting articles. We hope it will inspire you in contributing to new research and initiatives in the domain of web-based communities and real 'social media' the coming time.