
Editorial

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Biographical notes: Piet Kommers is a Professor of UNESCO Learning Technologies and affiliated with the Universities of Twente and Utrecht, 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 an Adjunct Professor at the 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.

Social media travelled all the way from subsidiary to real-impact factors for your social network, job searching and credibility nowadays. Even we see that persons deliberately visit or avoid face-to-face meetings as it may ameliorate or hurt their social media reputation. In other words: yes, social media do matter! As you will read in the underlying articles, web communities gain momentum, not only through complex network computation; more and more web community members value social recognition based upon the way they see others respond to each other. What is the impact of social status in web-based compared to face-to-face communities? It is the prompting effect of the web's long term memory, whereas local communities through every-day life wash away the more extreme experiences more quickly.

This also rises an agenda for how web-based communities should balance between fore-versus background data: how steeply should history be put into the background? For instance, recently, Facebook actively prompts its members to re-share events from one or two years back. This might trigger passion for the person who then experiences the grandeur of years back, not being aware that you're their circles of relationships it is a detrimental souvenir after all.

In this special issue, research from different parts of the world comes together: scientists from Brazil, Egypt, India, Spain and Italy give input to new progress on the developments around web-based communities and social media. All articles relate to the question how social media change the behaviour of people. The last article is accepted for publication in the special issue with the title: The sustainability of virtual communities organised by our guest editor Aaron French.

The first article 'Persuasive technology in online social networks: a systematic literature review' is a literature review (meta-analysis) and refers to using persuasive technologies for changing behaviours. It focuses on related taxonomy principles found in the social network environment. Ruas et al. relate their findings to online communities' strategies, practices and implications for practice and tools design.

The next article, 'Applying emotions in social network connections model' presents research that is innovative, appropriate and relevant to the *IJWBC* aims and objectives. Alsheref proposes a new model to calculate the existing 0 and 1 connections model for social networks analysis. The suggested approach to include a colour indicator to represent the emotional levels of specific connections/reasons in SNS (social networking services) is intriguing.

Customer participation in online brand communities is a mayor challenge for companies nowadays. Kamboj and Rahman reviewed more than 100 papers to know how prior research proposed their models with different constructs to explain members' participation in online brand communities. In their article 'Customer participation in brand communities on social media: a systematic literature review' their findings are presented, gaps are identified and future research is proposed.

Ananda et al. undertook a study that contributes to augment the knowledge about social media strategies used in Facebook by Italian and Spanish SMEs from the fashion industry. Three Spanish brands and one Italian brand appear to take a transactional marketing approach, while the other two Italian brands adopt a hybrid transactional/relational approach. The article 'SME fashion brands and social media marketing: from strategies to actions' is of interest for all professional working in the field of social media and business. Facing the fact that the marketing of a business is very much dependant of the opinion of the customers, online social networks plays an important role. Do we trust the company or its product? What is the opinion of other buyers? Can we trust their opinion?

Dutta and Bhat present research result based on the elaboration likelihood model. In the article 'Effect of perceived relational characteristics of online social network on e-WOM and purchase intention: exploring mediating role of trust' detailed observations and valuable advises are provided to increase the impact e-WOM on the sales figures.

We hope that you derive additional awareness and research agendas from this special issue. Please feel happy to respond on our blog <http://www.inderscience.blogspot.pt/> and our yearly conferences <http://www.esociety-conf.org/> and <http://www.webcommunities-conf.org/>.