

Chapter 10

Models of Participation in Social Networks

Giulio Angiani

Università di Parma, Italy

Monica Mordonini

Università di Parma, Italy

Paolo Fornacciari

Università di Parma, Italy

Michele Tomaiuolo

Università di Parma, Italy

Eleonora Iotti

Università di Parma, Italy

ABSTRACT

The most important technological trend of the last years has been the rise of social networking systems to social phenomena involving hundreds of millions of people, attracting users from several social groups. Social networking systems blur the distinction between the private and working spheres, and users use such systems both at home and in the workplace, both professionally and with recreational goals. Social networking systems can be equally used to organize a work meeting, a dinner with colleagues or a birthday party with friends. For example, the chat systems that are embedded in social networking platforms are often the most practical way to contact a colleague to ask an urgent question, especially in technologically oriented companies. Moreover, several traditional information systems have been modified in order to include social aspects. Currently, social networking platforms are mostly used without corporate blessing, maintaining their status as feral systems.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-1963-8.ch010

INTRODUCTION

The most important technological trend of the last years has been the rise of social networking systems to social phenomena involving hundreds of millions of people all around the world, attracting users from several social groups, regardless of age, gender, education, or nationality.

Social networking systems blur the distinction between the private and working spheres, and users are known to use such systems both at home and in the workplace, both professionally and with recreational goals. Social networking systems can be equally used to organize a work meeting, a dinner with the colleagues, or a birthday party with friends. For example, the chat systems that are embedded in social networking platforms are often the most practical way to contact a colleague to ask an urgent question, especially in technologically oriented companies. Moreover, several traditional information systems have been modified in order to include social aspects. Several organizations allow external social networking platforms to be used (e.g., Facebook was available for Microsoft and Apple employees before the general public launch). Some organizations have created an internal social networking platform (DiMicco & Millen, 2007), or allow other social platforms for specific purposes (Millen et al., 2006).

Currently, social networking platforms are mostly used without corporate blessing, maintaining their status as feral systems. According to DiMicco (2008), most users that use social networking platforms for work purposes are primarily interested in accumulating social capital, either for career advancement or to gather support for their own projects inside the company. In order to understand how a social network could be used to increase interactions, information sharing and benefits in teams and organizations, it is useful to refer to analytical models, based on both network topology and users' own interests.

Social networks are typically studied using Social Network Analysis, a discipline that focuses on the structural and topological features of the network. Also, participation in such networks has long been studied as a social phenomenon according to different theories. Understanding the status of a social network, or the usage pattern of an online social networking platform, requires to study the system according to both static and dynamic models. Moreover, the theories of participation in social networks allow users not only to study, but also to guide the dynamics of a given social network.

The chapter is organized in the following way. First, we will describe the different kinds of virtual communities, social media technologies, and applications which are available. Then, we will focus on models and theories of participation in social

27 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: www.igi-global.com/chapter/models-of-participation-in-social-networks/174027

Related Content

Social Network Models for Enhancing Reference-Based Search Engine Rankings

Nikolaos Korfiatis, Miguel-Ángel Sicilia, Claudia Hess, Klaus Steinand Christoph Schlieder (2008). *Social Information Retrieval Systems: Emerging Technologies and Applications for Searching the Web Effectively* (pp. 109-133).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/social-network-models-enhancing-reference/29161

Using ICT to Strengthen the Voices of the 'Poor' Without Asking Who Will Listen

Charlotte Scarf (2012). *International Journal of E-Politics* (pp. 21-39).

www.irma-international.org/article/using-ict-strengthen-voices-poor/67806

Educational Serious Games Design

Ilias Karasavvidis (2019). *Advanced Methodologies and Technologies in Media and Communications* (pp. 106-116).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/educational-serious-games-design/214544

From Street Protests to Facebook Campaigns: Political Cynicism, Efficacy and Online Political Engagement of Sri Lankan Students

Chamil Rathnayake (2015). *International Journal of E-Politics* (pp. 42-58).

www.irma-international.org/article/from-street-protests-to-facebook-campaigns/124892

Systems Design with the Socio-Technical Walkthrough

Thomas Herrmann (2009). *Handbook of Research on Socio-Technical Design and Social Networking Systems* (pp. 336-351).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/systems-design-socio-technical-walkthrough/21418