

Chapter 5

Sustainable e-Recruiting Portals: How to Motivate Applicants to Stay Connected throughout their Careers?

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ABSTRACT

Since most e-recruiting portals suffer from outdated applicant profiles and receive little user return as soon as applicants have found a new job, in this study, the authors explore how to motivate applicants to keep their profiles up-to-date and stay connected with one specific recruiting portal throughout their careers. The authors interviewed applicants, system analysts and programmers of an Austrian e-recruiting portal. Narratives showing striking differences between these three stakeholders' interpretation of system requirements for long-term usage are discussed. The identified requirements point to niche recruiting: integrating social network and community features for specified user segments sharing a similar social identity and fostering pre-existing offline ties among users for career purposes. Implications are sketched for more sustainable e-recruiting research, design and development.

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INTRODUCTION

Communication between customers using a web service and the staff responsible for the service's development (such as system analysts, programmers, web designers, system testers, etc.), is oft absent although it is important in all phases of systems development. This communication is crucial, from a sustainability point of view, and is even more essential during requirements analysis. In its simplest form, requirements determination entails eliciting and encoding into the new system the requirements that potential and/or current users verbalize to system analysts. Usually, the analyst works with end users to establish an understanding of their needs, then designs system alternatives and writes up a documentation of those requirements for the programmers. One consistent finding in the literature concerned with IS (Information Systems) development is the communication difficulty between analysts and users (Bostrom, 1989). The communication between analysts and users is often problematic due to cognitive and vocabulary-type limitations (Byrd et al., 1992). Much interview-type research portrays a mismatch in the expectations of analysts, programmers and clients.

Several IS researchers argue that the interview remains the best elicitation technique for requirement analyses (Alvarez & Urla, 2002). Independent of the type of interview (e.g., structured or unstructured), this technique depends on interactional talk between those who (re-)design or further develop the service and those who use it. Since the obtained data is, in this sense, partly a function of the talk between a (potential) client and a system designer, the study of this talk is central to the understanding of how information is captured in this client-analyst link. While much attention has been given to the problematic nature of system analyst-to-client communication, very little of the extant research involves any intermediate communication among system designers, programmers and users; there is not much research

that analyzes their different interpretations of requirement specifications and communications outcomes (Pfleeger & Atlee, 2010).

This paper seeks to make a contribution to the scholarship on requirements analysis in the context of sustainable e-recruiting services. Based on in-depth interviews with users, system analysts and programmers of a niche e-recruiting platform for engineers, we show how differently these three stakeholders interpret system requirements for long-term usage. We will argue, based on their insights, that so-called domain expert researchers (i.e., those professionals with expertise in a specific related field such as e-recruiting platform design) may add value (incl. unbiased requirement insights) from narratives of involved participants in a system-development project. Using such an intermediary expert researcher for purposes of interpreting and comparing focused communication outcomes may help in better recognizing, understanding, and ultimately making use of the experiences of involved parties. This type of captured tacit knowledge may enable e-recruiting providers to better serve their customers and help them to differentiate themselves from other providers. We first review the relevant literatures; we then present the research site and the collected data. Following, we illustrate the narrative analyses, results and derive concluding as well as future-study insights.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

IS Requirement Analyses and User Involvement

The idea of involving users in IS development stems from the belief that involving users provides multiple benefits. As a result of their pre-involvement, potential users may form stronger intentions to actually use the new/revised service; it might even enhance their service experience. It will further increase user accountability for the system's

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