

Chapter 5

Local Forum as a Knowledge Source

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ABSTRACT

An internet forum can be used as a crowdsourcing tool for searching for new knowledge and the latest non-standard ideas being a result of forum members' joint creative work. On the basis of these regularities, criteria of the forum maturity in processes of its formation and advance are elaborated. Basing on these results on a 2015 analysis of the forum, formed on the ground of the Universidad Tecnologica de la Mixteca (UTM), the State of Oaxaca, Mexico, a moment when the forum reaches its maturity was revealed. These conceptions are suitable for forming a thesaurus and taxonomy prototype of socio-cultural, environmental, and economic problems in Mixteca region. In its turn, a forum thesaurus gives opportunities for the regional community to understand a degree of its involvement into revealing and discussing the most actual regional problems on the internet.

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INTRODUCTION

Web Forum as a Crowdsourcing Technology

Recent years has shown that by virtue of the ubiquitous Internet development, it is possible to organize separate discussion and search for a solution for a local territorial and/or social problem, using the creative potential of the territorial or social community. In order to carry out a discussion and search (if possible), one often employs the survey method, but a local web forum specialized on the problem, is the best choice among low-cost tools.

The discussion of a problem at the forum gives the following advantages:

- Openness of questions allows each asked person to freely express his/her own opinion, suggest original ideas, actively consider and estimate the consciousness and propositions of others;
- Absolute voluntariness of participation; self-evident filtration of forummembers.

A web forum can be used as a crowdsourcing tool for searching for new knowledge, the latest non-standard ideas being a result of forum members' joint creative work. Sometimes the mentioned knowledge is new only for the forum community, but in the majority of cases, only forum members or forum managers are interested in gaining the innovations owing to joint search for replies onto questions stirring them.

Forum discussion can bring to light a situation, where an interference of local community or partnership with the state are required to solve the problem, new or out of conscious formerly; for instance see: (Samorodova, 2015; Warner, 2011; Vasilkova, 2015).

A web forum is an open, dynamically upcoming, hence complex, system. In many works, where forums are under analysis, researchers are interested in all stages of their development, when information exchange processes can be represented as "mutual synergetic cycle" inside which people create a continuous flow of the information, placed into the interrelated data repository; for instance see: (Stern, 2013; Paulus, 2007; Zhang, 2007; Wei, 2013; Makagonov, 2014).

However, researchers are more often interested only in analyzing the results of discussions with respect to all the communities, where forums exist. In order to analyze the forum groundwork, it's desirable to be sure, that the main part of the work has already been done, the results of discussions are final and will not undergo any serious changes. This stage is usually highlighted with lowering of the forum members' activity within the limits of a close subject matter when the

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