

Chapter 5

Social Contexts in an Information Rich Environment

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ABSTRACT

'Information Management' has seen a tremendous transformation over the years from various forms of traditional analogue/digital techniques for managing information to more current digital forms that employ various heterogeneous technologies aimed at enhancing the task of information management to a level that is more robust, reliable and effective. As one would expect, the application of social computing technologies (SCT) to modern information management contexts has played a particularly useful role to facilitate the process of information sharing, document authoring, communication and collaboration between users in various domains. As such, these technologies have seen increased interest from business and industry, cultural institutions, educational institutions and government. This chapter presents a general overview of the use of social computing technologies in various application domains, discusses various considerations and challenges, and presents a scope for future solutions to those challenges. The conclusion is that while it is generally accepted that SCT's have the potential to improve communication and collaboration in various organizational and social settings, one must elicit the precise social behavioral models in which it is trying to improve or replicate and some measure to gauge those improvements. In such an instance, the authors suggest ethnography would be particularly useful.

PREFACE

In this chapter, we will discuss social computing software and web 3.0 technologies with respect to information management systems as used in

the context of information rich environments. We narrow our discussion on the topic to the various challenges and issues conferred from the use of the said technologies under various social and digital settings; For example: the use of social computing applications in conjunction with mobile computing and pervasive technologies in the

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enterprise and other organizational settings such as museums and galleries which are representative of cultural institutions.

Both organizational enterprise and cultural institutions are two different examples that we will use to illustrate our points. We argue that the interpretation of the contexts for any environment under study to which must be modeled requires an immersive examination of the natural flow of information and interaction between users from both sociological and technological standpoints.

Thus, the central issues we discuss in this chapter are:

1. We provide a discussion on the aspect of social interaction leaning towards Web 3.0 (the next progressive version of the web), with respect to the next generation of information management systems. We give a general discussion on the topic and subsequently narrow our discussion to the adoption of Web 3.0 and social computing technologies in museums (Museum 3.0) and the enterprise (Enterprise 3.0). Some challenges are outlined, and some directions for possible improvements for some specific challenges.
2. The role of social interaction in information management is also discussed and the issues construed in various domains and application contexts.
3. We also discuss various considerations and requirements for utilizing social software.

1. INTRODUCTION

Information as we know it today typically consists of various forms of structured and/or unstructured data in both analogue and digital formats and can be recognized as a resource independent of its physical properties. Collectively, the management, collection, retrieval, enrichment and maintenance

of such information is commonly referred to as '*Information Management*' (Boaden, 1991).

Information Management (*IM*) is a very broad topic and is a responsibility that has been around for a very long time and has continually evolved over time to meet various demands and challenges presented by modern technological and sociological innovations and the new ways in which people manage, share, create and retrieve information. The primary constituents of Information Management consist of: the actual information content (e.g. information documents, emails, journals etc); the uses of the information (e.g. communication, content publishing, enriching information repositories etc); the processes and rules that govern information management (this encompasses the business rules and constraints that govern how the information is accessed and utilized); and the systems that enforce those processes (this takes into account the various systems that enforce the business rules and constraints specified by the aforementioned IM constituents).

Information Management solutions come in a variety of shapes and forms and range from very simple systems to highly complex systems and encompass systems such as:

1. Content Management Systems (CMS): A CMS is a system that supports the creation, administration and publishing of digital media and/or electronic texts (Bovey, 2005)
2. Wiki Systems (WS): systems that enable collaborative document authoring through participation of various authorized members of the system (Neumann & Erol, 2008).
3. Document Management Systems (DMS): systems used to monitor and track the creation, manipulation and storage of digital documents (Sutton, 1996).
4. Collaboration Software Systems (CSS): systems designed to enable multiple individuals to collectively participate in a common task to achieve a common goal (Grudin, 1994).

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