

Chapter 39

Understanding “Knowledge Management (KM) Paradigms” from Social Media Perspective: An Empirical Study on Discussion Group for KM at Professional Networking Site

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims at studying a discussion group/forum at one Professional Networking site (LinkedIn) for understanding and exemplifying “KM paradigms” such as humanist paradigm, inter/intra organizational paradigm, technological paradigm, and socio-technical paradigms from the perspective of social media. Discourse and content analysis techniques based on qualitative research methodology are used in this study in order to understand the perception of the current status and future direction of knowledge management discipline through these expert comments that include storytelling, and which are based on the experience of actors. The focus is on determining new offered term/label instead of knowledge management of these discourses for defining the knowledge management discipline or science accurately. As a result, the differences of perceptions among members that represent different (such as academics/educators and practitioners’) backgrounds are also aimed to be identified. At the end, we hope to exemplify how existing information is shared and new knowledge is developed with respect to a specifically selected, related topic, Knowledge management, among the members of a Professional Networking site. The results can also be useful for other related studies on social networks and their social and professional impacts.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-61350-168-9.ch039

INTRODUCTION

Social and Networked Computing and Media

Designed to be disseminated through social interaction, created using, social media uses highly accessible and scalable publishing techniques, as well as Internet and web-based technologies to transform one-to-many broadcast media monologues into many-to-many social media dialogues, supporting the democratization of knowledge and information, and transforming people from content consumers into content producers. From business view, social media is also referred as user-generated content or consumer-generated media (Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_media). Social computing and networked media also *e-merge* as concepts that deserve special attention within this social media framework.

EC JRC defines (2009) social computing as a “set of open, web-based and user-friendly applications that enable users to network, share data, collaborate and co-produce content” (p.15). As an all-capturing definition social computing includes applications such as:

Social networking sites where users can share personal information with friends (such as Facebook) or professional background and interests with colleagues or potential partners for collaboration (such as LinkedIn); Blogs, where users can express themselves and interact with others; commercial websites where users can share tastes and assessments (such as Amazon), and online auction and shopping websites, where they can share opinions and jointly generate a reputation management system (such as in eBay); data-sharing websites where people can upload, share, tag and annotate photos or videos (such as Flickr or Youtube), and collaborative websites where users can jointly share and create new content (such as Wikipedia), as well as file-sharing websites; multi-player online games (such as World of Warcraft), and finally mobile

social networking and micro-blogging applications, where users can extend their thoughts and messages almost in real time to anyone interested (such as Twitter). (pp. 15-16)

Meanwhile, networked media incorporates decentralized forms of mass communication via which individuals and groups “can actively contribute to sharing and shaping a universe of media content”. (EC 2009, p. 10) As a result, new, innovative ways are investigated on supporting people in their daily lives, and on initiating technology-enabled social change that strongly involves users for co-creating networked applications. (<http://www.ist-citizenmedia.org:8080/display/PU/Abstract>)

Aim and Outline of the Paper

This paper aims at studying a discussion group/forum at one Professional Networking site (LinkedIn) as exemplifying the information sharing and knowledge development that occur via social media. For this aim of exemplifying the information sharing and knowledge development among the networkers, a discussion group/forum in the name of “Knowledge management Experts”, which was organized in the LinkedIn.com in December 2009, is selected. The specifically selected scenario of discussion has been started in the title of “*If the term knowledge management could get a do-over what would you call the discipline?*” The specific scenario, which was created by Art Schlusel, was “*You are now the King of KM and you have the power to call the discipline that promotes an integrated approach to identifying, retrieving, evaluating, and sharing an expertise’s tacit and explicit assets to meet mission objectives (or insert one of hundreds of ‘KM’ definitions here) to something new. Would you keep the ‘knowledge management’ or would you change it to something better? If so, what would that be and why?*”

In the group and over three months, 295 comments/opinions have been posted by approximately 75 Expert members who developed

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